



The ONE SOURCE for all your credit reporting needs

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## CREDIT SEMINARS

We will have two seminars in May. The first will be on May 22nd at 1:30pm at our office in Pekin.

The second one will be on Wednesday, May 23 at 1:30pm at the Spring Valley City Hall at 215 N Greenwood St., Spring Valley.

We will review the FCRA, with emphasis on Permissible Purposes, Notifications and disputing and correcting information.

We will also review credit reports, how to get the best information, why you get different information from each bureau, Soc. Sec Searches, Collection Reports, credit scoring and New Account IDs and verifications.

Be sure to check our web page for the latest alerts and notices. Call or e-mail us today to reserve your place at either seminar.

## CREDIT REPORT CHARGES

You must be sure of the information you enter, when pulling a credit report! **When you click the ENTER or SUBMIT button, you are charged for the inquiry.** If you are unsure if you have previously pulled a report, you can check the **"Archived Reports"** for previously pulled credit reports. Experian stores your reports for 6 months. They store the name only for another 6 months.

If you are using **KCB Express Searches**, just click on **"Application List."** If the inquiry was more than 6 months ago, just click on **"My Applications"** and click on **"My Archived Applications."**

If you are using the MCL Merged and Mortgage program, applications are stored for over a year. Just click on **"Find Report."** There are several ways to locate old reports.

**DO NOT PULL A REPORT UNTIL YOU ARE SURE OF THE DATA YOU WILL BE USING!!**

## TRY THE NEW COMPREHENSIVE SEARCH!

MetroNet has a new search!

**Comprehensive search** is a dynamic, one click search request identifying updated contact information. Comprehensive search uses the best of the File One database, in conjunction with the MetroNet database,

providing address history with current occupants, current address, telephone numbers from credit and non-credit sources, and potential relatives within a fifty mile radius.

## CREDIT REPORTING SERVICES

KCB Information Services is the only Experian and Equifax reseller in Central Illinois.

If you have any questions or problems about your present credit products or if you wish to add or change any of your services, please call us first. If you call Experian or Equifax about a question or problem with a present product or service, they will tell you to call us.

If you call them to sign up for a new service or product, they may tell you to call us or they may assign you a new log in and charge you more than if you took the product through us.

So, call us for any of your credit reporting needs.

## BANKRUPTCY FILINGS ARE COMING BACK

When the federal bankruptcy law was tightened in October 2005, many people feared that the relief from crushing debt that bankruptcy is supposed to provide would be badly compromised. But today, two facts are clear. Far fewer people are filing, less than half the previous number. And the law still works for those in the direst circumstances. Judy and Henry Vandemark of Highland have been there. Late last year, they started talking to a bankruptcy attorney after falling behind on a personal loan from a finance company, Beneficial Finance. Efforts to work out a repayment plan they could afford failed, they said. "They wouldn't give an inch," Henry Vandemark said. "Even when we first discussed it with the lawyer why we wanted to go to bankruptcy, our lawyer contacted their lawyer ... They basically forced us into the bankruptcy. Otherwise, we would have lost our home." Judy Vandemark said a six-month effort to work things out with the loan came to nothing and that had went to worse. "They put a hold on my checking account," she said. Bills were paid with money orders. Attempts were made to get help through other finance arrangements, but the loan company didn't want to hear it," she said. Bankruptcy was the last resort. "I really didn't want to," she said. "What was I going to do?" A Beneficial spokeswoman, Kate Durham, said the company's privacy policy prohibits speaking to third parties about any customer's situation. (3-19-2007, creditandcollectionnews.com)

## RECENT STUDY SHOWS CONSUMER DEBT WORSENING

A recent study done by a major credit bureau shows U.S. consumers are relying on their credit cards more than ever. According to Experian's latest National Score Index, compiled from a random sampling of 3 million consumers in the credit bureau's database, 51 percent of the U.S. population has at least two credit cards and 14 percent have 10 or more cards. Also, 14 percent are using at least half of their available credit, according to the same study. The results "tend to suggest, on average, people in the last couple of years are accumulating more debt and are utilizing credit cards more than in the past," said Pete Bolin, manager of analytics for Experian. The study also shows that consumers are using their credit cards as an "overall financial vehicle" rather than just an emergency tool, he said. Westsider Steve DuPlessis, co-owner of Office Xperts, said that at one time he had about \$43,000 of credit-card debt, including \$15,000 for his business. Over the course of two or three years, his family been able to whittle that down to less than \$10,000, and they've cut up three cards as they've paid them off, he said. "We've become responsible credit-card users over time," he said. (3-26-07, creditandcollectionnews.com)

## CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

If you get a hit on a US National Criminal background check, you will see computer hyperlinks after the word "COMMENTS."

These are links to the state data base where the information originated. Some times there will just be a computer address and other times there will be a description of the individual. If the link ends in "JPG," that means there is a picture of the individual on file.

You need to copy (right click) and paste the link into the address bar on your web browser. Then you need to delete the words before "http://". Sometimes there will be two separate links on the same line. You can only run one at a time, so you will need to delete one of the links.

If you have any questions getting these links to come up, give us a call and we will talk you through it.

## CREDIT TRAINING

If you are unable to attend our seminars, we can provide training at your business. We



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would be glad to meet with your credit personnel and review and/or explain any of the products we offer.

### **TJ MAXX PARENT COMPANY DATA THEFT IS THE WORST EVER**

**The intrusion, hands the retailer the dubious honor of surpassing the 40 million stolen customer record mark, something that only CardSystems had been able to achieve.**

TJX Co., the parent company of T.J. Maxx and other retailers, on Wednesday dropped a bombshell in its ongoing investigation of a customer data breach by announcing in an Securities and Exchange Commission filing that more than 45 million credit and debit card numbers have been stolen from its IT systems. Information contained in the filing reveals a company that had taken some measures over the past few years to protect customer data through obfuscation and encryption. But TJX didn't apply these policies uniformly across its IT systems and as a result still has no idea of the extent of the damage caused by the data breach...

TJX claims it also doesn't know "whether there was one continuing intrusion or multiple, separate intrusions," according to the SEC filing. What the company does know is that on Dec. 18, it learned of suspicious software on its computer systems. By Dec. 21, "there was strong reason to believe that our computer systems had been intruded upon and that an intruder remained on our computer systems," the filing says. Given that the intruder was still operating, U.S. Secret Service advised TJX officials that disclosure of the suspected intrusion might impede their criminal investigation and requested that the company keep a lid on the incident until law enforcement gave them the green light to announce the breach. (By Larry Greenemeier, InformationWeek, March 29, 2007)

### **STOLEN LAPTOPS HOLD INFO ON 11,500 CHILDREN**

**Law enforcement agents are searching for three laptops -- holding the names, birth dates, and addresses of child patients -- that were stolen from a National Health Services office in the United Kingdom.**

Three laptops containing personal information on 11,500 children were stolen earlier this month from a National Health Services office

in the United Kingdom and police are worried the information may fall into the wrong hands.

The computers were taken from Primary Care Trust office on the afternoon of Wednesday, March 21, according to an advisory from the Nottinghamshire County NHS. The laptops contained the names, addresses, and dates of birth of child patients between the ages of 8 months and 8 years old.

"There was no health information or other details on the stolen computer," said Wendy Saviour, chief executive of the Nottinghamshire County NHS, in a written statement. "The information was protected by a password, which reduces the chances of anyone being able to see the information. We have, however, written to all the 9,742 families affected by this theft to inform them of what has happened."

The NHS or National Health Service was set up in the United Kingdom in 1948 to provide health care for citizens based on need, not on the ability to pay. The trust is responsible for planning and paying for health care, including school nursing, dentistry, and home health visits, for 649,173 Nottinghamshire residents.

"We take our responsibility to keep personal information safe very seriously," said Saviour, who added that the theft is being investigated by law enforcement. "Action will be taken to ensure that lessons are learned." (By Sharon Gaudin, InformationWeek, March 27, 2007)

### **CONSUMER CREDIT GROWS AT SLOWEST PACE SINCE OCT.**

Outstanding U.S. consumer debt grew at its slowest pace since October in February, held back by a small gain in nonrevolving credit, the Federal Reserve reported Friday. Overall consumer credit rose by \$2.97 billion in February, or 1.5% annualized, the Fed said. The increase was much less than expected. Economists surveyed by MarketWatch were predicting consumer credit would rise by \$7.3 billion in February. Auto loans and other forms of nonrevolving credit rose by \$478 million, or 0.4% annualized. That's down from a gain of \$5.38 billion, or 4.25% annualized, in January. Revolving credit such as credit cards rose by \$2.49 billion, or 3.4% annualized, reversing two months of declines. The data do not include debt backed by real estate, like mortgages or home-equity loans. Total outstanding debt was \$2.41 trillion in February, according to the Fed report. Credit growth in January was revised to \$6.6 billion from the previously estimated \$6.4 billion. (4-9-07, creditandcollectionnews.com)

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### **LAPTOP THEFTS AT IRS LEAD TO LOSS OF TAXPAYER INFO.**

In three and a half years, Internal Revenue Service employees reported the loss or theft of at least 490 computers and other sensitive data while the agency's computer security organization was notified of only 24% of the incidents, according to an audit released recently by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA).

Of 387 incidents reported, the inspector general determined that 176 incidents likely did not involve any loss of taxpayer data, but 126 incidents involved the loss of personal information for at least 2,359 individuals.

TIGTA reported it was unable to determine the effect on taxpayers for 85 incidents due to a lack of details in the incident documentation.

A separate test of 100 laptop computers currently in use by employees determined 44 of them contained unencrypted sensitive data, including taxpayer data and employee personnel data. In addition, 15 laptops had incorrect settings that would allow anyone to bypass the password controls and access the contents on the laptop.

Consequently, it is likely that a large number of the lost or stolen IRS computers contained unencrypted data that could be easily accessed and read. Also, backup tapes were not encrypted and adequately protected at non-IRS offsite locations reviewed.

TIGTA says the IRS has taken or planned appropriate corrective actions. That will include security personnel refining incident response procedures to ensure sufficient details are gathered regarding taxpayers potentially affected by a loss. (© 4-10-2007 CreditandCollectionsWorld.com)

### **KCB INFO SERVICES HOURS**

Monday - Friday 9:00am to 4:30pm

KCB Information Services offers: Consumer credit reports, Business Credit reports, Employment Credit reports, Residential Mortgage Credit Reports, Merged Credit Reports, Criminal background checks, Tenant Screening Reports, Flood Zone Determination, Flood Life of Loan Certification, Identity Authentication and eFunds Debit Reports.

The KCB Information Services has served businesses since 1928 and serves Central Illinois for Experian and Equifax.

*A great pleasure in life is doing what people say cannot be done.*