

# ***SOUTHEAST AREA EXTENSION SAYS***

By: Kaye Kasza, CSU Extension Agent

Contact: [Kaye.kasza@colostate.edu](mailto:Kaye.kasza@colostate.edu) or 719-456-0764

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 27, 2010

## **Money Smarts for New Grads**

SOUTHEAST AREA--- This is an exciting time for graduates and parents! As you help your grad prepare for college, or for stepping out on their own in a job, be sure they are ready for the financial world. Follow these tips to help your young adult get started off right.

Teach them the importance of tracking their financial transactions. Start with tips for properly managing checking accounts:

- Keep accurate balances by regularly entering all transactions into a check register. One forgotten ATM withdrawal could cause a cascade of bounced check or overdraft fees.
- Using non-network ATMs can rack up significant service charges. So choose a bank or credit union with convenient ATMs, or use your debit card for cash back when shopping.
- Ask if your bank provides free phone or email alerts when your balance dips below a certain level, checks or deposits clear, or payments are due.
- Debit cards are safer than carrying cash and are accepted by most merchants. Ask if your card offers "zero liability," which means you pay nothing for unauthorized or fraudulent purchases.

Ease into credit cards. Using credit cards responsibly helps build a solid credit history, which your kids will need later in life. But credit is essentially a loan that must be paid back, so urge them to tread carefully:

- Start with only one credit card. Try never to owe more than 30 percent of the credit limit on the card.
- Pay off the full balance each month; interest adds a lot to the repayment amount.
- Using credit cards for cash advances often adds fees.
- Don't be tempted by free giveaways or low introductory rates that often rise dramatically after a few months.
- Look for cards with no annual fee and a lengthy grace period before finance charges begin. Compare cash advance, late payment, balance



**Southeast Area  
Extension**

## **County Extension Offices**

### **Baca County**

772 Colorado St.  
Springfield, CO 81073  
719-523-6971

### **Bent County**

1499 Amb. Thompson Blvd.  
Las Animas, CO 81054  
719-456-0764

### **Cheyenne County**

425 S. 7<sup>th</sup> W.  
P. O. Box 395  
Cheyenne Wells, CO 80810  
719-767-5716

### **Crowley County**

603 North Main St.  
Courthouse Annex  
Ordway, CO 81063  
719-267-4444, ext. 7

### **Kiowa County**

1305 Goff  
P. O. Box 97  
Eads, CO 81036  
719-438-5321

### **Otero County**

411 N. 10<sup>th</sup>  
P. O. Box 190  
Rocky Ford, CO 81067  
719-254-7608

### **Prowers County**

1001 S. Main  
Lamar, CO 81052  
719-336-7734

transfer, over-the-limit and other fees. A good place to comparison shop is [www.bankrate.com](http://www.bankrate.com).

Your kids are about to enter the most exciting period of their lives. Make sure they do so with their eyes wide open about the importance of sound personal financial management skills.

CSU Extension offers up-to-date, unbiased, research-based information to families in Southeast Colorado. For more information, contact your local office: Baca County 719-523-6971, Bent County 719-456-0764, Cheyenne County 719-767-5716, Crowley County 719-267-5243, Kiowa County 719-438-5321, Otero County 719-254-7608, Prowers County 719-336-7734. Or find us on the web at: <http://www.extension.colostate.edu/SEA>. CSU Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

###