

News Column for Use Week of 9/2/19  
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River Valley Extension District  
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## **Monitor Your Credit Report**

By law, everybody can obtain three free credit reports each year. Are you? Only 1 in 3 adults are checking their credit reports in the state of Kansas, according to the 2012 National Financial Capability Study, which is a project of the FINRA Investor Education Foundation (FINRA Foundation). Monitoring your credit is an important part of your financial well-being.

The information in your credit report affects your life many ways. It tells your financial story and history and can affect your ability to get a loan, set your insurance and interest rates, secure a job, or rent a house or apartment. Check your credit report for free three times each year to verify lines of credit, payment history, and identify ways to improve your credit for the future.

Another reason to check your credit report is to help stop identity theft. With the continuing advancement of technology, identify theft seems to be more prevalent in our lives each day. It is seemingly regular news that data breaches and settlements that may impact you have occurred with credit card companies, restaurants, box stores, and more. This means your information, possibly social security, credit card, or bank account numbers, could be in the hands of the wrong person.

The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires each of the nationwide credit reporting companies – Equifax, Experian and TransUnion – to provide you a free copy of your credit report, at your request, once every 12 months. Requesting your credit report is easy. Head online to [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). You may order your reports from each of the three nationwide credit reporting companies at the same time, or you can order your report from each of the companies, one at a time.

You never need to provide a credit card number to obtain your free credit report. Be aware, some companies may market a free credit report, but then ask for your credit card information and may charge you for a report or service after a free trial.

After receiving your credit report, check it for accuracy. Consumers are responsible for finding and correcting any errors. Information on how to dispute or correct any information will be provided by the credit reporting agency.

If you would like to receive a reminder email and educational information three times each year to request your free credit report, please complete the form online at <https://tinyurl.com/CreditCheckReminder>. Reminder emails will be sent by Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Extension Agent, and delivered on January 1<sup>st</sup>, May 1<sup>st</sup>, and September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

If you have questions regarding your credit report or any money management concerns, please contact Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Extension Agent, at 785-527-5084 or [mthayer@ksu.edu](mailto:mthayer@ksu.edu).