

## Great Iowa Treasure Hunt Record Breaking Summer

A stop at my Great Iowa Treasure Hunt booth during the Iowa State Fair paid off for many fairgoers. New this year, fairgoers were able to claim directly at the booth and take advantage of our easy-to-use online claiming process. State and County Fairgoers found over 8,000 unclaimed properties, totaling more than \$625,000 in value. The largest claim was over \$63,000.

The last week in September, I announced the addition of over 60,000 Des Moines-area properties to the Great Iowa Treasure Hunt. The additional properties represent over \$11 million added from the City of Des Moines class action franchise tax lawsuit. The amounts range from \$10 to over \$300,000 and my office will have these properties for 18 months and will then return the remaining funds to the City. In the last week of September, our office received a record number of calls, people stopping by our office, visits to our website and claims submitted. But even more importantly, we set a record number of claims paid in a single month as a result of the attention the program received in the press. 4,853 people received checks in September for a total of \$1,387,106!

Since 1983, the Great Iowa Treasure Hunt has returned over \$233 million. Corporations, business associations, financial institutions and companies across the nation report millions of dollars in unclaimed property to the state treasurer each year. Common examples of unclaimed property include money in forgotten savings and checking accounts, uncashed insurance benefit and payroll checks, lost stock and dividends, abandoned safe deposit box contents, utility refunds or deposits.

Visit the Great Iowa Treasure Hunt at [GreatIowaTreasureHunt.gov](http://GreatIowaTreasureHunt.gov) to begin your search. Like Great Iowa Treasure Hunt on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GreatIATreasure) and follow the program on Twitter [@GreatIATreasure](https://twitter.com/GreatIATreasure) to stay up to date on future events.

## Tip from the Treasurer: Protecting yourself after the Equifax Breach

Last month, we learned that over half of the United States' adult population was affected by the Equifax data breach. The breach lasted around six weeks – between mid-May through the end of July – and the hackers received access to people's names, Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses and some driver's license numbers. More than 200,000 credit card numbers were also stolen.

Whether you were a victim of this breach or wish to protect yourself from future breaches, the [Federal Trade Commission](#) recommends the following steps be taken:

1. **Check Credit Reports:** You are entitled to a free annual credit report from each of the three major credit reporting agencies – Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. It's important to request a report from all three each year and verify the accuracy of your accounts and activity. Visit [AnnualCreditReport.com](#) to access your free reports, and visit [IdentityTheft.gov](#) for more information on how to report identity theft.
2. **Credit Freeze:** If you're worried about new accounts being opened in your name, consider placing a credit freeze on your files. This prevents access to your reports and limits inquiries that are required to open new accounts. This may cost money and does not protect against fraud on previously opened accounts. For more information on credit freezes, visit the [Federal Trade Commission's Credit Freeze FAQ](#) page .
3. **Monitor your Existing Accounts:** Verify that any and all activity on each of your credit, bank, and loan accounts was authorized by you. If you believe your account may have been compromised or have a question about activity, call the company that manages the account.
4. **Place a Fraud Alert:** This is an alternative to a credit freeze. By placing fraud alerts on your files, creditors are made aware that you may be a victim of identity theft. While they can still receive a copy of your credit report, they must take the necessary steps to verify your identity whenever a credit inquiry is made. For more information on fraud alerts, visit the [Federal Trade Commission's](#) page .
5. **File Taxes Immediately:** Because scammers may try to file taxes or apply for a job in your name, it may be beneficial to file your taxes as soon as you have received all of the necessary paperwork. It is also important to promptly respond to any letters from the IRS, and verify that any correspondence from the IRS is legitimate.

For more information on identity protection after a data breach, visit the [Federal Trade Commission's](#) page on Identity Theft .

## **College Savings Iowa is Giving Away a \$1,000 Account**

College Savings Iowa recently celebrated College Savings Month during the month of September. College Savings Month is a nationally recognized celebration of 529 plans around the country, and is used to raise awareness and participation for those interested in saving for college. Here in Iowa, I also announced our next account giveaway to celebrate and we opened entry for a \$1,000 College Savings Iowa account. The giveaway can be found at [iowa529contest.com](http://iowa529contest.com) and is open until the end of 2017. Visit our giveaway website and fill out the information required to register to win.

The link to our giveaway site can also be found on our Twitter and Facebook. You can get your friends and family involved in college savings by sharing our posts to help them get signed up for the giveaway. Follow and like our social media pages to get more updates and information about the College Savings Iowa 529 plan.

During College Savings Month, I always like to stress the importance of getting the whole family involved in saving for a child's future education. Everyone knows that parents can save for their child with a College Savings Iowa account, but many don't know that a grandparent, aunt, uncle or even a family friend can open their own accounts for the same child. With the whole family involved in saving, your children will feel the preparation and love when it's time for them to head out on their higher-education adventure.

## IABLE: Becoming an Authorized Individual on an IABLE Account

Since IABLE's inception in February of this year, we have received many questions regarding parent and guardian access to IABLE accounts. With IABLE, a savings program for persons with disabilities, a parent or legally appointed person can open and manage an account on behalf of his/her child or dependent, if certain conditions are met.

The Account Owner, known as the Eligible Individual, may designate an Authorized Individual to open and act on his or her IABLE Account. This Authorized Individual may act on the Account Owner's behalf with respect to the Account if:

1. The Account Owner is not able to exercise signature authority over the account, OR
2. The Account Owner has legal capacity, but has granted another person power of attorney.

If you are the parent of an Eligible Individual who is under the age of 18, you may enroll as an Authorized Individual during the enrollment process and do not need to provide additional documentation. If you are a court appointed guardian or conservator of an Eligible Individual who is under the age of 18, you may enroll as an Authorized Individual during the enrollment process and may be asked to provide documentation that grants you the authority to manage an ABL account on behalf of the Account Owner.

If you are the parent or other legally appointed person of an Eligible Individual who is 18 or older, you may enroll as an Authorized Individual during the enrollment process if you have documentation showing you are able to act on behalf of the Account Owner in financial matters. You must provide the appropriate documentation before you will be allowed to establish the account. Because each state has different laws regarding substitute decision making, IABLE will review documents for non-Iowa residents based on the laws of the state in which that document was issued. **Please note: a guardian appointed by an Iowa court typically only has authority to make decisions over the physical person, not over the person's property. Therefore, a guardian in Iowa typically does not have the authority to become an Authorized Individual.**

The following outlines what is necessary to become an Authorized Individual in certain situations where the Eligible Individual is 18 or older:

1. If the Account Owner lacks capacity, you must provide the appropriate authorizing documentation showing you are able to act on behalf of the Account Owner in all financial matters. A conservator appointed by the court for an Eligible Individual must provide a copy of Letters of Appointment by the court
2. If the Account Owner has legal capacity but has granted another person Power of Attorney, you must provide a copy of signed Power of Attorney forms that address the ability to act on financial matters.
3. If the Account Owner has legal capacity and wants another person to be able to transact on the account as well, the Eligible Individual can name an Authorized Agent. There are four levels of access that can be granted, from receiving statements only to full Power of Attorney over the account.

## Iowa Student Loan's Fall Giveaway

This fall, Iowa Student Loan is sponsoring a giveaway of fifty \$1,000 College Savings Iowa accounts. This giveaway is open to parents and/or guardians of Iowa middle or high school students (grades 6 through 12). Their giveaway encourages parents and guardians of students in grades 6-12 to learn more about how to help their children prepare academically and financially for college and other postsecondary options. We appreciate Iowa Student Loan awarding the winnings in the form of a College Savings Iowa account!

Participants who register for the giveaway must be willing to open, or already have, a College Savings Iowa account. Visit the Iowa Student loan [website](#) to view the new Parent Handbook module and register to win before the October 23 deadline! Don't forget to share Iowa Student Loan's giveaway with your friends or family who have middle and high school students on Facebook, so they can get involved too.