

Social Security payments to go all-electronic in 2013

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Treasurer of the United States Rosie Rios has started an official count-down clock, marking one year until the March 1, 2013 deadline when all federal benefit recipients must receive their Social Security and other federal benefit payments electronically. Treasurer Rios urged remaining paper check recipients to switch now and help taxpayers save \$1 billion over 10 years.

Currently, about 90 percent of Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments are being made electronically. For the first time in recent history, the number of monthly paper check payments for Social Security, Veterans Affairs and other federal benefits has dropped to approximately 7 million — down from a high of 11 million in 2010.

“As this deadline approaches, we’re urging the remaining 10 percent of federal benefit recipients who still receive a paper check to make the switch to electronic payments as soon as possible,” said Treasurer Rios. “The switch to electronic payments is a win-win for federal benefit recipients and for taxpayers. It provides a safer, more secure, more convenient way for Americans to access their federal benefits, while also improving government efficiency and delivering more than \$1 billion in savings. The sooner everyone makes the switch, the sooner we’ll realize

those benefits.”

The Treasury Department published a final rule in December 2010 to gradually phase out paper checks for federal benefit payments. Since May 1, 2011, all people newly applying for federal benefits, including Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veterans Affairs, Railroad Retirement Board, Office of Personnel Management benefits and other non-tax payments, have had to choose direct deposit or the Direct Express® Debit MasterCard® card at the time they sign up for their benefits. March 1, 2013 is the final deadline by which all remaining federal benefit check recipients must receive their money electronically.

The Treasury Department’s Go Direct® public education campaign is helping people understand what they need to do to get their money electronically.

“We’ve come a long way in informing Americans that direct deposit is a faster, easier and more reliable way to receive their money, but there is still more work to do,” Rios added. “We are continuing that strong commitment to public education, aggressively reaching out to check recipients with information about how to easily make the transition and helping them through the change.”

The Treasury Department will include information in all check recipients’ March 2012 payments,

reminding them to switch ahead of the deadline and offering them information about their electronic payment options. Additionally, the Go Direct campaign is now working with more than 1,800 partner organizations throughout the country to spread the message, developing a new series of public service announcements and providing other supportive materials such as an instructional video about how to make the switch online or over-the-phone and about how electronic payments work.

Federal benefit recipients can switch to electronic payments online at www.GoDirect.org or through the U.S. Treasury Electronic Payment Solution Center toll-free at 1-800-333-1795. Check recipients should have the following information on hand when making the switch to an electronic payment option, including the Direct Express® card:

- Social Security number or claim number
 - 12-digit federal benefit check number
 - Amount of most recent federal benefit check
- If signing up for direct deposit to an existing financial institution account, individuals will also need:
- Financial institution’s routing transit number — often available on a personal check
 - Account number and type (checking or saving)

Conservation program sign-up is now open

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is reminding landowners, farmers and ranchers that the opportunity to enroll in the Conservation Reserve Program general sign-up is here.

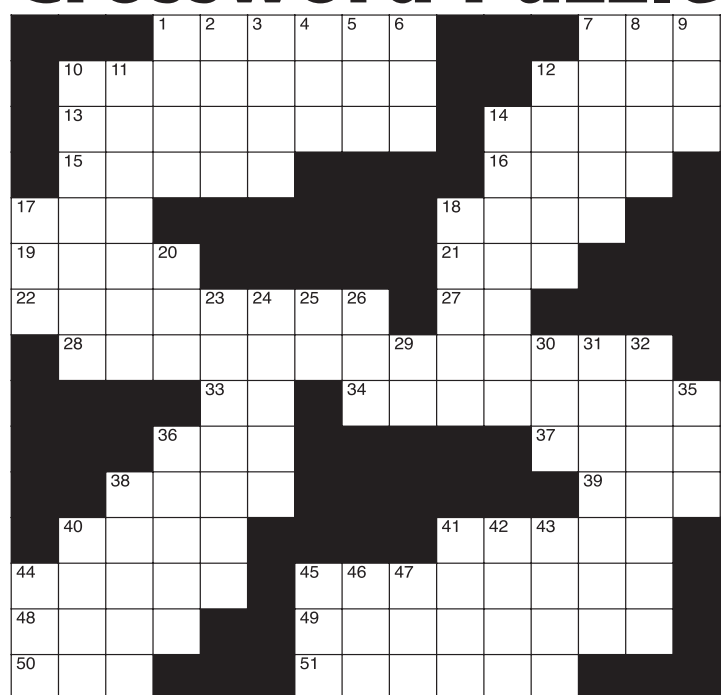
Producers who want to offer eligible land can enroll now through Friday, April 6, at the Farm Service Agency service center.

Conservation Reserve is a voluntary program that assists farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers to protect their environmentally sensitive land. Producers enrolling plant long-term, resource-conserving covers in exchange for rental payments, cost-share and technical assistance.

Producers are encouraged to con-

tact their local FSA service center or visit FSA’s website at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp for additional information.

Crossword Puzzle



- CLUES ACROSS**
1. Admirer
 7. National security department
 10. The first State
 12. Fallow deer
 13. Flowed over completely
 14. He had a golden touch
 15. Blocks
 16. Muslim call to prayer
 17. A fashionable hotel
 18. Greek god of war
 19. Rended
 21. Box (abbr.)
 22. Severe headache
 27. Common greeting
 28. Reduced to submission
 33. Equally
 34. Briefly hold back
 36. Woman (French)
 37. N’Djamena is the capital
 38. Not kind
 39. Times past
 40. Bird of the family Cracidae
 41. Metric linear unit
 44. Father of Psychology Wilhelm
 45. Commonly encountered
 48. Swiss river
 49. Heavy unglazed drapery fabric
 50. Community Relations Officer (abbr.)
 51. Sidewalk material
- CLUES DOWN**
1. Protoctist
 2. Coat with plaster
 3. Nocturnal birds of prey
 4. Airforce of Great Britain
 5. Before
 6. Communist color
 7. Partners with mamas
 8. Arabian gulf & sultanate
 9. Cony
 10. Plunder
 11. Make bigger
 12. Dress up garishly
 14. Gin with dry vermouth
 17. Opposite of LTM
 18. Feels ongoing dull pain
 20. A major division of geological time
 23. Unsusceptible to persuasion
 24. Norwegian playwright Henrik
 25. Empire State
 26. Ethiopia
 29. The man
 30. Officers’ Training Corps
 31. Of an African desert
 32. Furniture with open shelves
 35. Yeddo
 36. Union general at Gettysburg
 38. Moons of Jupiter author Alice
 40. Plant that makes gum
 41. Acarine
 42. University in N. Carolina
 43. The quality of a given color
 44. WW2 female grunts
 45. Licenses TV stations
 46. They —
 47. The 13th Hebrew letter

The crossword puzzle brought to you by:
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Magicians to perform in Oakley

Magicians Kevin and Cindy Spencer will appear at the Oakley High School auditorium at 2 p.m. (Mountain Time) Sunday, April 15.

Magic is no longer merely about baffling the audience by doing something seemingly impossible, the couple says. We’ve seen it all before. Magic these days is about spectacle, drama, danger and personality, and the Spencers are the masters of the new magic theatre.

The Spencers say they’ve redefined the art of illusion by combining original theatrical elements with cutting-edge illusions. One of the most sought-after illusion teams in the business, they have been named Performing Arts Entertainers of the Year for six consecutive years. Their peers have recognized them as International Magicians of the Year.

With one of the largest touring illusion companies in the United States, the Spencers transport several tons of illusions and special effects from city to city.

“Theatre of Illusion” is a sophisticated production filled with original magical creations designed exclusively for the couple. People levitate, walk through walls, vanish and reappear. In one illusion, the entire audience is asked to participate in a stunning, interactive mind-reading experience.

Kevin Spencer created the Healing of Magic program designed for rehabilitation professionals. Simple magic tricks are used to speed patient recovery by improving motor coordination and cognitive skills. He recently released Hocus Focus for special education teachers and students. It combines education and imagination to help children improve their abilities in planning, sequencing, organizing tasks, fine-motor skills, concentration, and more.

For more information, go to www.SpencersMagic.com, www.MagicTherapy.com and www.HocusFocusEducation.com.

HaysMed to sponsor cancer symposium

HaysMed will sponsor a Cancer Symposium on Saturday, March 31, at the Hadley Rooms at HaysMed, 2220 Canterbury in Hays. The program runs from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (Mountain Time) with registration beginning at 7:30 a.m.

Speakers include Drs. Anne O’Dea, January Fields, Manmohan Biring and Sameh Abuerreish, all with HaysMed.

Topics to be covered include: factors associated with increased risk of developing breast cancer; genetic counseling and testing for

inherited breast cancer syndromes; modifiable risk factors for breast cancer; epidemiology of Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma; treatment strategy and drugs used for subtypes of Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma; epidemiology and screening practices for colorectal disease; common inherited diseases associated with colorectal cancer; pathophysiology, staging workup and basic surgical principles for treatment of colorectal cancer; principles of chemotherapy in the adjuvant and metastatic settings and current

trends in lung cancer screening.

The program is designed for physicians, nurses, social workers and other interested healthcare professionals. This course is approved for continuing education credit.

Fees are \$50 for non HaysMed associates, \$25 for critical access hospital employees and no charge for HaysMed Associates. A light meal is included.

To register call 1 (800) 248-0073 Ext 5500. or email dmclaren@haysmed.com.

FUN BY THE NUMBERS

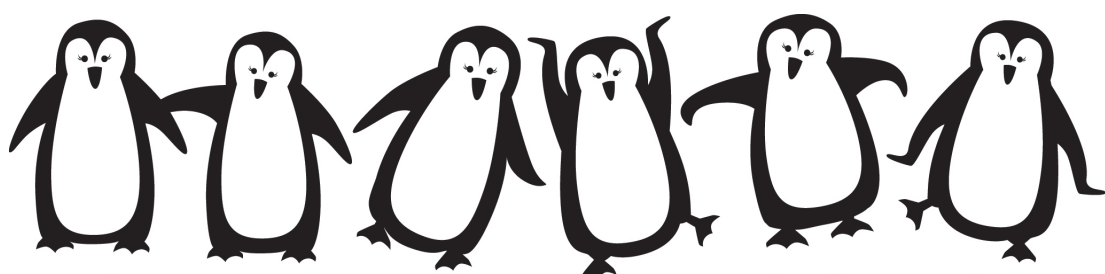
8	3	4		1	
		7	6		
	7	3		9	8
1				2	5
4		6	1	3	9
7	6				
	1				2
6	4				3
		8	5	1	7
				4	

Level: Beginner

Like puzzles? Then you’ll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here’s How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



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