

Paper Federal Benefit Checks To Cease

(KNZA)--In an effort to save taxpayers money and be safer and more convenient, the U.S. Department of Treasury has announced it will discontinue the printing and mailing of paper federal benefit and non-tax payment checks, such as Social Security, on March 1.

Citizens who receive paper checks will be required to choose whether they want to receive these funds by direct deposit into an account at a financial institution or through a Direct Express debit card account sponsored by federal government agencies. This selection is made by visiting www.godirect.org, www.usdirectexpress.com or calling the U.S. Treasury Electronic Payment Solution Center at [1-800-333-1795](tel:1-800-333-1795).

With direct deposit, funds are automatically deposited into a designated checking or savings account owned by the payee.

With the benefit debit card, the card account balance is loaded by the paying federal agency. Users can access their money at ATMs, make purchases wherever Debit MasterCard is accepted, and pay bills. Most traditional uses of the card are free of fees, such as purchases at retail locations and cash back with purchases. Once the card is loaded, funds may be transferred to an owner's financial institution account. Optional services are subject to fees listed on the web site and as disclosed in the card issuance mailing.

One service on the card that is not free is ATM withdrawals.

Most entitlement recipients have already switched to direct deposit over the past years, so ceasing the printing and delivery of paper checks will affect a small percentage of recipients.

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