



# Beaver County Times

## No need to clip these supermarket coupons

Patti Conley, Times Staff | Wednesday, February 23, 2011

ROCHESTER - Kim Little lugs a binder of print coupons thick as a big-city phone book when she does her grocery shopping.

By redeeming coupons and discounts she accrued for gasoline purchases, the Beaver resident began February saving \$94 at the Giant Eagle in Rochester.

Each month, Little said, she saves between \$500 to \$700 at area stores using coupons for groceries, toiletries, cosmetics and pet food for her family of five, their five cats, two dogs and guinea pig.

"It's a way of life for us," said Little, who doesn't mind spending an hour each week clipping print coupons from newspaper and mail inserts and then sorting them by UPC code in the binder.

She sporadically uses the coupons sent by her mother, who prints them from store and coupon websites on the Internet. "I don't like them because the saving doesn't seem to be as much," Little said.

But the Beaver resident isn't quite ready to embrace new E-coupon programs that area stores such as Giant Eagle and Shop 'n Save began offering to loyal customers about a year ago.

The process eliminates paper, saves time and provides one-stop shopping, said Greg Morse, head of marketing at YOU Technology, a San Francisco-based digital marketing company that helps brands and retailers with digital promotions, couponing and loyalty.

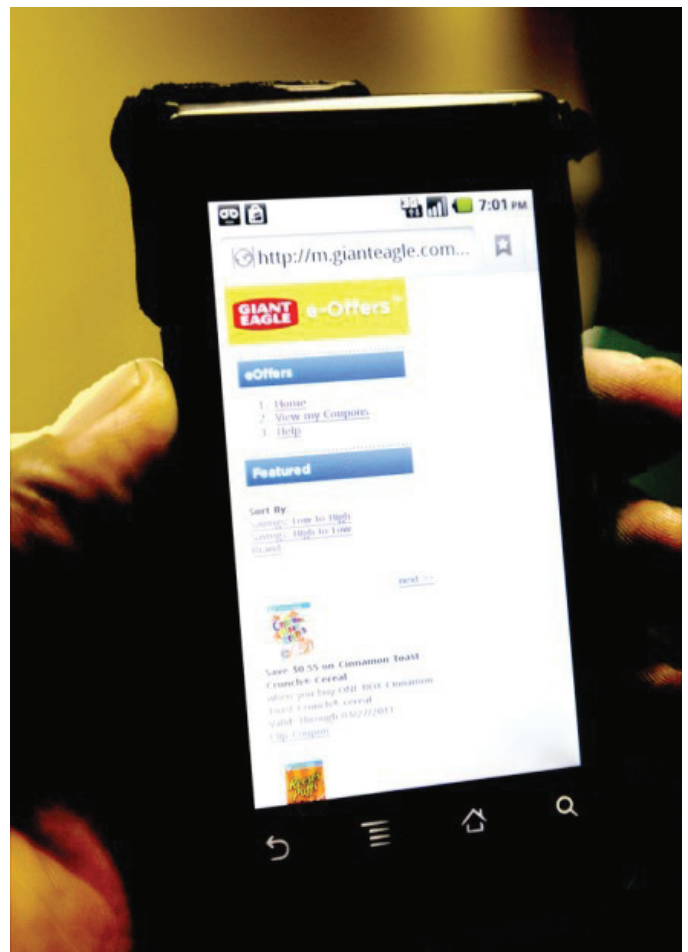


Photo by: Sylvester Washington Jr.

**Supermarket coupons can be downloaded using smart phones.**

## YOU Technology in the News

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E-coupons, also called digital coupons, begin with a loyal customer/shoppers card such as the Advantage card at the 228 Giant Eagle stores and the Perks card at more than 70 independently owned area Shop 'n Save stores.

Shoppers with cards register for the E-coupons program on the store's website. Once registered, they can view the list of available coupons, select the coupons they want, and then download those coupons directly onto their customer card. Some store websites may also include links to the E-coupon services they use.

When the shopper buys the item at the store with the card, the discount is automatically given at the checkout, Morse said. Once redeemed, the coupon is cleared from the shopper's card, he said.

E-coupons are also going mobile. Customers at participating Shop 'n Save stores in western Pennsylvania can access, view, download and store manufacturers' E-coupons directly to their customer cards by using their smart phones.

Giant Eagle's eOffer mobile version also allows customers to use any Web-enabled phone to look at, clip and load electronic offers to their customer card, according to the store's website

Little isn't technology savvy yet, but will become so.

"Change is hard for anybody, but I'll have to eventually go with the flow as technology changes if I want to keep our savings going," she said.

But printed coupons aren't going the way of phone books just yet.

In 2010, shoppers across the United States redeemed 3.3 billion coupons. Of that total, 44 percent were print coupons that shoppers clipped from inserts in newspapers and inserts delivered by mail.

Last year, mail inserts accounted for the largest volume of redeemed coupons and were the most distributed, according to Inmar, a Winston-Salem, N.C.-based promotion transactions provider.

In 2010, however, redemption of mailed coupons decreased by 11 percent while all other methods of coupon redemption increased, Matthew Tilley, Inmar's director of interactive communication, said in an e-mail. Those included Internet coupons, instant redeemable coupons and shelf pad coupons.

Specifically Internet print-at-home coupons accounted for 2.8 percent of the 3.3 billion redeemed coupons last year.

"Other methods are emerging as options, but the determining factor will be what works best for consumers and what ultimately helps brands sell their products," Tilley wrote.



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