Understanding Your Credit Report

Parts of a Credit Report:

1. **Personal Information** includes your name, Social Security number, date of birth, up to three addresses (past and present) and place of employment.

2. **Public Records** include information like bankruptcies, judgments, tax liens, state and county court records and in some states, overdue child support. Depending on the type of account, a public record can remain on your credit report between seven to ten years. Only severe financial mishaps appear in this section, not criminal arrests or convictions. Because public records can severely damage your credit, it’s best to keep this section clear.

3. **Account History** section contains the bulk of the reports information. It includes each of your credit accounts and details about how you’ve paid. Your account history will be very detailed, but it’s important that you read through it to make sure the information is reported correctly.

4. **Credit Inquiries** list all parties that have accessed your credit report within the past two years. There are two types of inquiries – hard and soft. Hard inquiries are only shown to lenders, and are made when a lender checks your credit report to approve you for credit. Soft inquiries are those made by lenders for promotional purposes. This type only appears when you personally review your credit report.