

the Grapevine

January 2010 Issue



A semi-annual newsletter dedicated to informing our membership on current activities, promotions, service updates and the like.

OUR MEMBERSHIP:

Any person working in the health care field in the tri-county area (Cambria, Somerset, and Blair) is eligible to join.

Family members are also welcome.

We have 5 convenient offices to serve our membership.

Our ATM's are always surcharge free.

We have over 30 years of financial experience.

ANNUAL MEETING

Credit Unions ... What makes them so much different from banks? It's YOU! That's right, YOU ARE THE DIFFERENCE, because it's YOU that has ownership and control. Every member has the opportunity to run, nominate and elect your Board of Directors who will represent them in managing your Credit Union.

Every March, HEALTHCARE FIRST CREDIT UNION holds its Annual Meeting for the entire membership to attend. This year's meeting will be held on Thursday, March 18th at The Boulevard Grill Restaurant (Warehouse Room) on Southmont Blvd., Johnstown from 2:00 pm to 5:30 pm. The business meeting will start 2:00 pm with nominations from the floor being accepted for any positions open on the Board. This year, two Board positions will need to be filled. After all names have been accepted, a ballot will be issued for all members to vote. Results will be given before close of meeting.

We strongly encourage all members to attend and participate in the Annual Meeting. It's important that you vote for your Board of Directors . . . they represent you, they are your voice.

MEET YOUR BOARD

The HEALTHCARE FIRST CREDIT UNION is very fortunate to have such an experienced Board of Directors. Between the seven members of the board, there are over 79 years of experience efficiently running your Credit Union.

Our Board Chairperson, Elaine Maher, has been on the Board for over 22 years and held the position of President for the past 20 years. Board members Denny Bobroski (30 years), Denise Weisbrodt (13 years), Dave Kaiser (8 years), Amy Noon (3 years), John Kaiser (2 years) also served on your Board. Our newest Board member, Lary Koval was elected to the Board early this year and has been a great edition.

Our Board of Directors meet monthly to review policies, programs, finances and general housekeeping duties. They have great confidence and trust having Paula Nihoff as our President/CEO of our Credit Union. "We are extremely lucky to have Paula running the show here at HEALTHCARE FIRST CREDIT UNION. I don't think there is another credit union executive out there that can compare with her. She truly runs a top notch organization and one that members can feel very confident about", says Board Chairperson, Elaine.

As with all credit unions, our Board of Directors receive no salary, no bonus, no perks (except maybe a pizza or a sub during a 3 hour board meeting). They volunteer their services because they believe in this Credit Union and want it to be successful . . . and it is!



SEMINAR SERIES CONTINUES

They say you shouldn't *blow your own horn* but when you do something and it's pretty successful, why not let everyone know about it. Our FREE seminar program *is quite the hit*.

We started back in June of this year with our seminar, "Plastic 101". We continued conducting a seminar a month with other great subjects like "You and Your Credit Score", "Young Adult Banking", "Life Planning" and "End of Life Planning". Some of the seminars were conducted by our President/CEO, Paula, and when the subject material needed outside expertise, we brought in guest speakers.

With the hustle and bustle of the holidays, we curtailed the seminar schedule until January. We will resume again on Wednesday, January 27th. Because of the large response we received on our seminar, "You and Your Credit Score", we decided to do this one again so that more members can have the opportunity to attend and learn about this very important subject. Normally, our seminars start at 6:00 pm at the Franklin St office, but since this seminar already was conducted twice at the 6:00 pm time, we are going to do this one at 1:00 pm and hopefully members that couldn't come in the evening can make an afternoon class. If you are interested in attending, you will need to preregister in advance. Also, if you give your permission, we will have your credit score pulled for you so that you will be able to understand it and discuss any questions you may have with a staff member.

We truly encourage members to take advantage of our free seminar series . . . it's not something that is offered by many other financial institutions. If there is a subject that you would like us to cover at an upcoming class, please let us know and we will do our best to cover the matter.

Hope to see you in class!

CREDIT UNION NEWS

In an attempt to communicate with our membership as much as possible, we have been doing a monthly newsletter in addition to the semi-annually "Grapevine". We include the monthly newsletter in the draft account statements that go out monthly (we don't mail them to the entire membership because the cost of postage is prohibitive). If you do not get a monthly statement in the mail, but would still like to read the newsletters, you can pick one up at any of our offices, you can give us your email address and we will email it to you, or you can go to our web site (www.healthcarefirstcu.com) and all newsletters are there to view.



Our newsletters are an excellent source of information on what's happening with your Credit Union, financial safety tips, our newest promotions, seminar news and other interesting tidbits.

YOUR TICKET to "Financial Education"

Our next free seminar is:

"YOU AND YOUR CREDIT SCORE"

**Wednesday - Jan 27th at 1:00 PM
1152 Franklin St., Johnstown**

Wonder what your CREDIT SCORE is and what you can do about it? This seminar will answer all your questions. Members and guests are invited.

Only requirement for attending is to **preregister at any of our offices or call us at 535-2606**. When you register, **ask to have your credit score available for you** at the meeting.

PHOTO BELOW (left to right):

Front Row: Any Noon, Elaine Maher & Denise Weisbrodt
Back Row: John Kaiser, Lary Koval, Denny Bobroski & Dave Kaiser



RECAPPING OUR LAST SIX MONTHS

ON LINE BILL PAY - We launched our redesigned Bill Pay Program back in mid-August. The conversion went very well and members in the program really like how easy it is to use . . . There's nothing fun about paying bills, but at least now, it's not such a hassle.

30th ANNIVERSARY PARTY - What a great time was had by all that attended the party at Ace's back in October. We enjoyed great food, dancing and a lot of socializing.

FREE SEMINARS - Classes are being well received and attendance continues to grow.

OCTOBER BREAST CANCER AWARENESS - The Credit Union helped to promote Breast Cancer Awareness Month by wearing Pink, having a special "Think Pink for a Cure" Day with assorted pink treats and gifts". We also took part in the Breast Cancer "health fair" at Conemaugh - Lee Campus and Main Campus.

INTERNATIONAL CREDIT UNION DAY - We celebrated this special day back in October with an Open House for our members.

EMAIL ADDRESS DRIVE - We started working on developing a list of members email addresses so that we can quickly and cost effectively send out valuable information to members. Please give us your email so that you can be included.

FLU PANDEMIC - "Defense Program" was put into full swing with the onset of the flu this Fall.

SPRINT MOBILE PROGRAM - Any Credit Union member can get a special 10% discount on cellular program and phones.

REDESIGN OF OUR WEB PAGE - We are in the process of redoing our web site with an early Spring launch.

WALNUT UNIFORM & EMBROIDERY - Partnered with them so members can save 10% on any uniform, shoes and accessories.

WHAT IS YOUR CREDIT CARD DEBT REALLY COSTING YOU?

Check out this web site. Put in what you owe, the percentage rate you are paying the credit card company and let it calculate how long it will take you to pay off your balance and how much interest you will be paying. Warning: you better be sitting down - it's quite shocking (and this comes from the federal reserve, so it's accurate).

www.federalreserve.gov/creditcardcalculator

Hello Members:

Hope you all enjoyed a great holiday season. Can you believe it's 2010? I swear it was only a year or two ago that we were worrying how to handle that Y2K thing ... it's been 10 years since that!

Normally, I would be writing the members about the state of the economy or an update on the Credit Union but this time I'm going to change gears a bit. I'm very concerned about the trouble our members can get into with credit card debt and I and the Board feel obligated to try to help. It's so easy for us to spend using those plastic cards. Sometimes we do it because we need to purchase something that we just don't have the money for right now and sometime we do it because we want to treat ourselves to something. Either way, we can find ourselves in trouble when the bill comes at the end of the month. The really sad part of this is the high interest rates that come with these charge cards...some as high as 31% interest. Many of us don't even realize how high they are or how the interest is calculated. It's different from normal consumer interest.

So, as I mentioned above, your Credit Union is here to help if you need it. We have come up with a promotion that can make a major difference to you in getting out of credit card debt. Starting December 21, 2009 and available until March 31st, 2010, the Credit Union will be promoting a special loan program for you to paid off or pay down any or all of your credit cards. The interest rate on this "create your own loan" can be as low as 3.6% APY for a 3 year term. Our interest rate is not compounded which is a much greater cost savings to you. It's rather difficult to explain in a letter the advantages there would be by paying off your card debt this way rather than continuing to pay the credit card companies their regular interest rate or even doing a low interest rate balance transfer with them, but there truly is. If you have credit card debt and you're making monthly payments and not seeing your balance drop very much, then you need to come and talk to us. Honestly, we can help. Bring in your credit card bills and we will sit down with you and figure out how much you really are paying the credit card companies in interest and how long it will take you to pay off your debt (even if you don't purchase anything else). Then, we will "create your loan" and show you how you will get out of debt much, much sooner and pay a lot less in interest. You will be shocked to see the difference.

We really want to help our members out of this credit card "headache". Let HEALTHCARE FIRST CREDIT UNION be your aspirin! Call or stop in and let's talk.

Paula

President, CEO

HEALTHCARE FIRST CREDIT UNION

ARE YOU FEEDBACKING ???

In our last monthly newsletter, we discussed the importance of giving your Credit Union feedback, comments or suggestions so that we can make your Credit Union the best it can be. As a little incentive to do so, anyone submitting feedback will be entered into a contest to win a *mini notebook computer* (if you also include your email address, we'll enter you twice for the contest).

We have received a nice amount of feedback notes from our members so far and everyone has been giving us their email address too. So, what are you waiting for? Have you dropped us a note yet? You don't have to write a lot ... even one or two lines is great (good or bad ... it's important to us). Deadline for contest entries is January 15, 2010 and the prize drawing and notification will be on January 20, 2010. We want to hear from you. Send note, letter, or email to:

(Feel free to call Nancy at
888-296-8728 if you prefer)

HealthCare First Credit Union
% Nancy
1152 Franklin St.
Johnstown PA 15905
email: nurban12@yahoo.com

GOT NEW CAR FEVER?

Some of us purchase a newer car *because we really need a newer one*. Others purchase one just *because they want something new*. And, many times a person decides to buy a new one *because they finished paying off the last one* and they're ready to "trade up". Whatever your reason for considering buying a newer vehicle, **HEALTHCARE FIRST CREDIT UNION** can help with our new "Cold Weather/Hot Deal - Car Promotion".

We have just reduced our car loan rates starting December 21, 2009 through March 31, 2010.

So, here are the **"toasty new rates"**:

New/Used Auto Loans (2006-2010)

1-4 years -- 4.0% interest APR

5-6 years -- 4.5% interest APR

These rates are still based on 80% financing.

I don't mind going back to daylight saving time. With inflation, the hour will be the only thing I've saved all year.

- Victor Borge -

PROTECT YOURSELF



Times are scary these days. We are always wondering how can we protect our identity from being stolen. The

most important thing you can do is to be careful when you give out any information that is pertinent to your financial identity. Here are a few simple but important things you can do to safeguard yourself.

1. Do not sign the back of your credit cards. Instead, write "PHOTO ID REQUIRED" in that space.
2. When you are writing checks to pay on your credit card accounts, DO NOT put the complete account number on the "For" line. Instead, just put the last four numbers. Credit card companies know the rest of the number, and anyone who might be handling your check as it passes through all the check processing channels won't have access to it.
3. Put your work phone number on your checks instead of your home phone or don't give a phone number at all. Never have your social security number printed on your checks and only provide it if it is absolutely necessary. Never have your social security card in your wallet either.
4. Photo copy the contents in your wallet (charge cards, license, medical cards, etc) and do both sides. Keep the photo copy in a safe place. This way, if you lose or have your wallet stolen, you will know exactly what is missing and where to call to cancel cards and get replacements ... and do it immediately.
5. File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where your credit cards, etc were stolen. This proves to credit providers you were diligent, and this is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one).
6. This one is very important. Call the 3 national credit reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and also call the Social Security fraud line number. The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen, and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit. Here are these important numbers:

Equifax 1-800-525-6285
Experian 1-888-397-3742
Trans Union 1-800-680-7289
SS Admin. Fraud Line 1-800-269-0271

DON'T HELP SOMEONE ELSE "BE YOU"

**CONGRATULATIONS to the WINNERS
of the \$25 CHRISTMAS MONEY TREES**

Franklin St - Deb G.
Main St - Donna B.
Richland - Pam B.
Martinsburg - Marilyn G.
Davidsville - Chris L.

**QUESTIONS or COMMENTS - Contact: Editor, Nancy
888-296-8728 or nurban12@yahoo.com
www.healthcarefirstcu.com**

CREDIT CARD HEADACHE?
PAY OFF YOUR CREDIT CARD BILLS NOW
HEALTHCARE FIRST CREDIT UNION
"CREATE YOUR OWN LOAN"
RATES AS LOW AS 3.6% APY
CALL for DETAILS @ 888-296-8728
PROMOTIONAL RATE EXPIRES MARCH 31, 2010

Maximum loan limit is \$10,000 - 5 years maximum term
Proceeds must be made payable directly to the credit card companies
Must be new loan money (cannot be used to pay off a HealthCare First CU visa card or loan)
Promotional Rate Period: December 21, 2009 through March 31, 2010