



Consumers CENTS

1ST QUARTER 2005

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION
FOR CONSUMER'S CHOICE
CREDIT UNION MEMBERS

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New Building UPDATE

As some of you may have noticed our building project is complete. We have now added on 4,000 square feet and completely remodeled our old building. We have extra member service offices, a new surcharge free ATM, extra drive-thru lanes (including a special truck lane for easy access), upgrades to our drive thru equipment, safety deposit boxes, a boardroom and extra storage space.

We would just like to send an extra special THANK YOU for putting up with the inconvenience caused by the remodel. We apologize for the drive thru being closed, full parking lot and any other difficulty you may have experienced.

We have 53 years of trusted and personal service and still going strong.

2005 Scholarship Applications

At Consumers Choice Credit Union we know how expensive furthering your education can be. Whether it is enrolling in a college, university or trade school, the expense can be overwhelming. We would like to help! We will be awarding one student a \$1,000 scholarship. To be eligible for this scholarship you must meet the following criteria:

- Applicant must be a member in good standing at Consumers Choice Credit Union.
- Applicant must be accepted at an accredited college/ university or trade school.
- Scholarship recipient must maintain full-time status at an accredited college/university or trade school.
- Applicant must have and maintain a GPA of 2.75 or higher.
- Applicant must be a high school senior, full-time college student or member continuing their education.
- Applicant must submit a 400-600 word essay on a selected topic, postmarked no later than March 19, 2005 with completed application enclosed.

Scholarship applications will be available at the credit union beginning mid-January of 2005. Please direct any questions about the Consumers Choice Credit Union Scholarship Program to: Christopher Johnson, (989) 799-5580.

Have You Tried It Yet?

OUR NEW SURCHARGE FREE ATM!

We now have our surcharge free ATM up and working. It is located on the back of our building just before you get to drive thru lane number 1 and right next to our night depository.

What does surcharge free mean? It means, you can use any ATM card and we will not charge you any fees for your transactions. It does not matter what institution your card is from. You may incur some fees from your current institution if you do not meet their specific requirements, but no fees from us.

Our drive-up ATM is a well lit and open 24 hours a day!

Safety Deposit Boxes

Get yours today! We now have safety deposit boxes available for our members. We are offering 3 different sizes:

- 5 X 5 \$20.00 Annually
- 3 X 10 \$30.00 Annually
- 5 X 10 \$40.00 Annually

We have limited availability so call or stop by the credit union today to get yours!

VISA Rate Dropped To 8.9%

Do you have a high interest rate credit card? Well, now is your chance to get rid of the high interest payments you have been making on your current card and transfer it over to our low **8.9%** Consumers Choice Credit Union Visa Card.

ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual business meeting is scheduled to take place on April 28, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. We will be hosting the annual meeting at our credit union and will be having some snacks and prizes.

Mega Buck and Student Achiever

Our Mega Buck Toys-R-Us certificate winners for last quarter were...

Raven Spaulding-Haenlein

Dennis Quankenbush II

Zachary Conrad

Amanda Minor

Hailey Albert

Cassie Goodwin

Each time a Mega Buck member visits our credit union and makes a deposit, their name will be entered into a monthly drawing for a \$10 gift certificate to Toys-R-Us.

Our last quarter Student Achiever winners were **Katrina Nava, Lauren Ebelt** and **Connie Ryder**. They each won a \$20 deposit into their account. If a Student Achiever visits the credit union and makes a deposit into his/her account, they will be entered into the drawing at the end of each month. The more deposits you make, the better your chances of winning. Hope to see you all soon!



Climbing Out of Debt

Finding yourself over your head in credit debt doesn't take much these days. Many of us acquire our "wants" by obtaining things on credit. Problem is, the more responsibly you handle credit, the more credit you are offered to achieve the lifestyle you desire. If not careful you can become enslaved by credit – always paying for the past with nothing in reserve for the future. For many, credit becomes the only way to maintain their current lifestyle. If you find yourself barely meeting your bills, or are already swamped with debt, take control before it's too late.

The first step is to analyze your spending habits. Keep a detailed spending record for one month, to start. Once you see where your money is going, you can evaluate your habits and make better choices.

Once you get a handle on what you're spending, design a plan to cover all your expenses each month from entertainment to clothing to auto repairs. Remember to include upcoming expenditures such as insurance and tuition. Use our new free Budget Smart Software available on our webpage. (See article below).

Within your plan, set attainable goals. Short-term and long-term goals will help you to reduce your debt. For example, set a short-term goal to pay off your credit card debt. Determine a time frame and carry just one card for emergency use only. Another goal could be to refinance debts, where possible, to obtain lower interest rates and reduce your monthly payments.

It's also important to involve your spouse and children on a regular basis to gain their cooperation and support. Review your plan and make spending decisions and future goals together. A spending plan gives you a way to get a clear picture of your wants and needs and distinguish firmly between them. A plan will also help you to reduce your current debt and gain control of your finances today and into the future.

Budget Smart

Consumers Choice Credit Union has responded to members' requests for an easy-to-use software tool for budgeting, adding BudgetSmart to its extensive list of exclusive quality financial products.

The user-friendly software tool uses simple graphics, 'pop-up' menus, and bar charts to help members manage their money more effectively. BudgetSmart gives a clear, concise method for tracking spending and an easy formula to establish a budget. It also offers tips for improving areas of overspending or inadequate savings, and will allow 'what-if' scenarios to demonstrate the impact of a major purchase or change in income on the user's budget.

We are offering the program to members for free, downloadable from our website www.choicecu.org.



PAID TAX RECEIPTS

It is property tax time again! If you have a current mortgage or home equity loan with our credit union, please provide us with your paid tax receipts.

Upcoming Elections

The nomination committee is seeking members interested in running for positions on the board of directors.

The committee will review the member's qualifications and ability to serve. If you are interested in becoming a nominee, please contact Jeanne Hartwig at our credit union or one of the following committee members:

Foster Findlay • Gene Engerer

Visa Gift Cards Are Here!

We now have the ability to offer our members the new Visa Gift Cards.

You can get them in any increments between \$25-\$500 and we have them in stock at the credit union. The cost to obtain one of these cards is \$5.00, plus the purchase amount.

These gift cards are to be used just like a credit card, but it's a pre-paid balance. They are extremely convenient for gifts, college students or any special occasion. If the card is somehow lost or misplaced, you can have the card reissued for a \$10 fee. So stop by today and get that convenient gift for your family, friends or co-workers.



Serving Our Community with Trust and Personal Service

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