



BIG SKY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION NEWS

June 30, 2009



Home Equity Loan: Still a Smart Way To Borrow

The housing bubble may have burst, but that doesn't necessarily mean you've lost all the equity in your home. While the value of many houses has dropped, if you have lived in your home for a few years and are current on your mortgage payments, you will likely have built up some equity. And if you need money for major home repairs or renovations, a new vehicle, or other productive purpose, tapping that equity can be a smart way to borrow. That's because the interest on your home equity loan may be tax deductible; consult your tax advisor for more information. In addition to potential tax savings, a home equity loan can provide you with more favorable terms than other loans or sources of credit. For example, if you are planning to replace your leaky roof or your drafty windows, a home equity loan will certainly cost you less than running up charges on your credit card at the home improvement center. If you need cash, a home equity loan may be just the ticket. So stop by or call the credit union today to find out more.

Vacation Time: Home Or Away, Let Your Credit Union Help

Whether your vacation plans include exotic ports of call or just calling on friends and visits to nearby attractions, your credit union can help. With a vacation loan from the credit union, you can enjoy well-deserved time off from work knowing you won't be facing a mountain of credit card bills when you return.

Start by putting together a spending plan. If you are traveling, figure the cost of transportation, accommodations, food, and attractions. If yours is a "staycation," your costs will be more modest, but you will still want to account for any extra meals out, tickets to local festivals, or admission fees to area museums and parks. Once you know how much you'll need, call or stop by the credit union to apply for a vacation loan. Chances are using this plan will save you money. That's because you won't run the risk of maxing out your credit cards, caught up in a devil-may-care-I'm-on-vacation spending spree. So call or stop by today.

Debit/ATM Card Privileged Status

As a Big Sky Federal Credit Union Debit Card/ATM Card holder you are part of the Privileged Status Network. The Privileged Status Network allows you to use your card at any Privileged Status ATM machine across the country with no surcharge fee. When you travel you may want to check the Privileged Status Locator at shazam.net to see where the nearest Privileged Status ATM machines will be along your travel route. Just enter the name of the city and state in the box under the Privileged Status Locator header and select search. A list of ATM locations will appear and the Privileged Status emblem will appear next to the address of the ATM machine. And as always there is no surcharge fee when you use your Big Sky Federal Credit Union Debit/ATM Card at the ATM machine located next to the Drive-Up Window at the Credit Union.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS



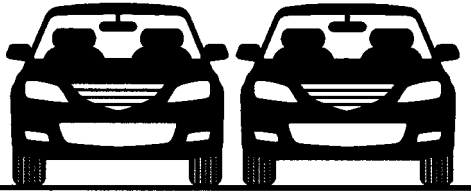
A DAY AT THE RACES

Sat, August 22nd
@ MetraPark Grandstands

Stop By Your Credit Union For Free Tickets

While Supplies Last
Sponsored by
The Midland Empire
Chapter of Credit Unions





If you're thinking **VEHICLE**
Think **CREDIT UNION** loan

Used Cars! Lemons Or Lemonade?

There was a time that buying a used car was said to be the same as buying someone else's troubles. But today, vehicles are much more reliable and your chances of finding a good, pre-owned one that fits both your budget and your transportation needs are greatly enhanced. When you buy a new vehicle, the minute you drive it off the lot, it loses thousands of dollars in value. When you buy used, someone else has absorbed that depreciation. In addition, you have several research tools at your disposal to help you make a sound buying decision. Web sites, such as www.edmunds.com and www.kbb.com (Kelley Blue Book), can help you compare features and prices. Dealers often offer pre-owned certification, extended warranties, and vehicle history reports on many of the used vehicles on their lots.

Before making your offer on a used car, either to a dealer or a private party, ask to see the service history. It also may be well worth the money to have a trusted mechanic check over the vehicle to look for obvious problems. Then, see the credit union for financing, where you will find favorable rates and terms to fit your budget.

What Is a Share Secured Loan?

Credit union share secured loans are available for members who are in need of funds but do not wish to deplete their savings. This type of loan allows members to borrow money by using their own savings funds as collateral. Your share account or certificates will be held as collateral for the loan, and once the loan is paid off, the hold is released. And, you will continue to earn interest on the balance in your share account or share certificates even though there is a loan against your account(s). You also will be borrowing money at a much lower interest rate than you could with an unsecured loan. A secured loan is also a great resource for anyone who is looking for a loan to establish credit or reestablish credit.

Stop by or call your credit union today to find out more about a share secured loan. Guaranteed approval with no credit inquiry required, and in most cases, funds are available the same day.



Back To School Loan Lightens Load

Even if you don't outfit your children in the hottest athletic shoes or the latest designer fashions, getting them back to school-ready can be costly. Instead of running up your department store credit card balance, come to the credit union for a back to school loan. You'll save two ways:

First, check the interest rate on that department store card. You may be surprised to learn you're paying 22%, 23%, even 25% on your unpaid balances. A personal loan from the credit union will cost you less.

Second, with a credit union loan, you can set your budget and stick to cash. Consumer experts note people who pay cash almost always spend less than those who use a credit card.

Other money-saving tips:

✓ Inventory current wardrobes. Buy only what you need. Check with friends with children in a similar age group to see if you can trade gently worn, but out-grown clothing.

✓ Visit used clothing stores and garage or yard sales. You may find many items you need.

✓ Stores offer loss-leader items such as pencils or crayons as early as July - stock up on these basic items, even if you haven't received your school's supply list.

Improving Your Credit Score

Having a high credit score can mean the difference of thousands of dollars in saved interest expense compared to others with a lower score. If your credit score isn't as high as you want it to be, take control by following these tips:

1. Always pay your bills on time. Your payment history represents 35% of your credit score.

2. Don't close older accounts you have paid off. The positive factor for your credit score is how much available credit you have at your disposal when compared to your credit balance. Also, 15% of your credit score is based on the length of your credit history - that includes the age of your oldest account as well as the average of all your accounts.

3. Don't apply for credit too frequently. Applying for too much credit too often will decrease your credit score because this is a characteristic of high credit risk groups.

4. Keep your credit card balances low. If you max out your cards, it will affect your credit score negatively. The more debt you pay off, the better your score. A good rule of thumb is to keep your credit card balances below 25% of your credit limits.

5. Minimize loan applications. Every time you apply for a loan, the potential lender requests your credit report for review. This can hurt your credit score. Make all loan requests within a two-week period. All credit report lookups are bundled together as one single request - not multiple requests.

6. Ask for a credit limit increase. Increasing your credit limit makes the debt/credit limit ratio look better. Don't use the extra credit or you defeat the whole purpose of improving your credit score. The goal is to have as much available credit and use as little as possible.

7. Remember to check for errors on your credit report. Contact the credit reporting agencies to fix any errors.

It pays to increase your credit score. It also takes discipline and dedication. It's worth it when you reach a good credit standing that allows you to qualify for loans, lower interest rates, and more.

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Monday-Friday
9:00 am - 5:30 pm

Your Savings At The Credit Union Can Help Only \$250,000

NCUA



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CREDIT UNIONS™