



Choice News

FIRST CHOICE CREDIT UNION'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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DECEMBER 2024

CHRISTMAS CLUB

As we all know, Christmas time can be a hard time financially for some people. We have the perfect solution for you. Open up a Christmas Club Account and you won't have to worry about how you will afford Christmas ever again. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3. First, let us know you would like to open up a Christmas Club.

Second, just decide if you want a check mailed to you or if you would like it deposited directly to your regular savings or checking account. Third, wait for your money to be disbursed to you at the beginning of November. You can even have it on payroll deduction, that way you will never miss a deposit.

DIRECT DEPOSIT YOUR TAX REFUND

With more than three-quarters of the nation's taxpayers receiving refunds each year, the wait for your refund could be timely. But First Choice Credit Union can help make the wait for your refund shorter and easier by suggesting that you direct deposit your income tax refund.

In addition to having the security of an electronic transfer, you are likely to receive your refund **MUCH** faster than waiting for a paper check to arrive in the mail. More than half of tax filers now use direct deposit for these reasons.

To direct deposit your tax refund, you will need First Choice Credit Union's routing number (**275979393**), and your account number. **(Please note that your SAVINGS and CHECKING account numbers are different. Contact a Member Service Representative, or Cathy in Bookkeeping to ensure that you are using the correct account number.)**

For more information on direct depositing your refund, visit www.irs.gov or contact First Choice Credit Union.

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

This account for children ages birth to 18 years, keeps growing each year. This year we paid out \$306.00 to the kids who brought in their report cards and for birthdays. This account has awesome incentives for our young savers. To find out more, please call (715)-387-8405 or stop in for details.

IMPORTANT TAX INFORMATION

If you received dividends of \$9.99 or less on your account, you will not be receiving a 1099 for your taxes. That is because the IRS does not require us to send out a 1099 to members who earn \$9.99 or less in dividends. Only members with loans secured by a mobile home or Real Estate will receive a 1098 form. Your interest paid for 2024, will be located on the first page of the December 31, 2024 statement. Please keep this statement until you receive your 1099 or 1098. These will be mailed out to you by January 31, 2025.

58th ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The 58th Annual Meeting of First Choice Credit Union will be held at the Eagles Club in Marshfield, WI on **Saturday, February 15th, 2025**. A meal of chicken, beef tips, and all the trimmings will be served **starting at 12 PM (noon)**.

The Annual Meeting will follow at approximately 12:30 PM. This will be a full Annual Meeting, with all of the reports and elections of Board Members.

Upon completion of the meeting, we will be having entertainment, so we look forward to seeing you at the meeting. **The cost of the meal is \$10.00.** We do need you to sign up in advance if you plan to attend. **Please call us at (715)-387-8405 or stop at the credit union to sign up for the meeting.**

Please watch our website, Facebook page, and the January 31, 2025 monthly statement for details. We hope to see you there.

INTERNET DO'S & DON'TS

The internet provides the world an infinite number of resources for entertainment, education, and social connection. Unfortunately, there are also dangers that users may encounter. The internet has many benefits but is also home to risky sites, scams, and cybercriminals. Let's look at some do's and don'ts:

The Do's:

- 1. Use strong passwords:** Passwords are the primary protection for social media accounts, education, and online games. Strong passwords consist of 10 characters that include a lower case, upper case, a number and a symbol. Each account should have a specific password that is not repeated. Using the same password for everything is risky.
- 2. Use two-factor authentication:** Passwords are not the only way to secure online accounts. Two-factor authentication adds another step in protecting important information. This involves security questions, a code sent back to a device, or an email PIN Number. Without access to the code, PIN, or security questions, hackers have no way to take over your account.
- 3. Keep personal information to a minimum:** Social Media accounts ask many personal questions when setting up a new profile. Many of the questions are unnecessary and can actually create a security risk. Location information should not be shared, as well as any banking or payment information.
- 4. Look for the padlock in the URL:** The internet is filled with sites that are not secure and leave users at risk of having personal information stolen. When browsing the internet, look for the padlock in the URL, which indicates it is a secure site to navigate.

The Don'ts:

- 1. Don't click on suspicious links:** While browsing, it is common to come across pop up ads. These are often scams or a disguise for a dangerous link. Do not click on these.
- 2. Don't visit sites that aren't secure:** When sites are secure, they use the protocol "HTTPS" which can be found at the beginning of the websites URL. Watch out for sites that still use "HTTP"; these sites are vulnerable to cyberattacks.
- 3. Don't download games or software from unverified sites:** Games should only be downloaded from verified platforms such as Google Play Store, the Apple App Store, or the official stores of game consoles such as PlayStation or Xbox. Many low cost game sites are not safe and can lead to your computer being corrupted.
- 4. Don't save passwords or payment information on sites:** Saved payment information leaves shopping accounts vulnerable to being misused if the account is hacked or the device is stolen. Passwords and payment information should be stored securely without being saved to autofill on sites such as Amazon.

ThreatAdvice 2022 (<https://www.threatadvice.com>)

NIGHT DEPOSIT INFORMATION

We are asking our members to help strengthen our security when making deposits through our Night Deposit. When you put an envelope in the night drop, please make sure your name and account number (if you know it) are written on there. If you are depositing any cash, please write the amount on the envelope also. Finally, please put instructions on the envelope as to where it should be applied. (loan payment, savings, checking, etc.)

Thank you for helping us provide you with a safe and secure experience.

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

As many of you are aware, Dennis Kmiec, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of First Choice Credit Union, passed away after an illness, on October 15th, 2024. At the annual fall picnic, a presentation was made to commemorate and honor Denny's decades of service to First Choice CU, and the credit union movement. In his honor, the Board Room at the credit union has been named the Dennis Kmiec Board Room. Denny was very appreciative of this recognition, and the staff, board members, and audit committee members celebrated with a tribute cake, made especially for Denny. Denny was a very humble man and was motivated to help people who were in need. The long lines at his visitation and funeral showed the positive impact he had on his many friends, co-workers and others he knew. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, Kaye, and his daughter, Denise. Denny was one of "the good ones" and he will not be forgotten.

Submitted by Rob Schulz

