



# Best Interests

**The Ameritas Employees Credit Union Newsletter**

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**VEHICLE RATES  
REDUCED THIS SPRING.**

**April 26th – June 4th,  
.59% off of all base rates.**

## **Ameritas Employees Credit Union Privacy Policy Statement**

Ameritas Employees Credit Union collects nonpublic personal information about you from the following sources:

- Information we receive from you on applications or other forms
- Information about your transactions with us or others, and
- Information we receive from a consumer reporting agency

We do not disclose any nonpublic personal information about you to anyone, except as permitted by law. If you decide to terminate your membership or become an inactive member, we will adhere to the privacy policies and practices as described in this notice. Ameritas Employees Credit Union restricts access to your personal and account information to those employees who need to know that information to provide products or services to you. Ameritas Employees Credit Union maintains physical, electronic, and procedural safeguards that comply with federal regulations to guard your nonpublic personal information.

## **New Wheels Start Here**

Spring into summer behind the wheel of a new vehicle. Whether it's new or just new to you, remember that chances are the best place to finance it is at the credit union. We offer great rates on both new and used vehicles.

And because we want you to buy the vehicle that's right for you and not the one the dealer wants to sell you, you will be in a better negotiating position

with a pre-approved loan from the credit union. It may be wise, however, to keep how you plan to finance the vehicle off the table until you have negotiated your best price and are ready to close the deal. That's because dealer financing is a profit center. If you divulge you have already secured a pre-approved loan at the credit union, the salesperson will try to make up for the loss of dealer financing somewhere else in the negotiation.

Thanks to the Web, you can now do most of your vehicle-buying research from the comfort of your computer. If you have any questions, call on us. We help members with vehicle purchases almost every day. We're happy to share our experience and expertise with you.



## **Credit Unions Celebrate 101st**

America's credit unions passed the century mark in 2009 and will celebrate their 101st birthday this year. The first credit union in the U.S. served the parishioners of St. Marie's church in Manchester, New Hampshire, rural French Canadians who had immigrated to work in textile mills, who had no safe place to save and nowhere else to go to get a loan at a fair price. Today, credit unions serve people from all walks of life, and have provided many consumers with a safe harbor from the economic maelstrom. As a not-for-profit financial cooperative, we're still dedicated to the idea that people come first. Serving you, our valued member-owner, is the only reason the credit union exists. It's a philosophy that serves us all well, in good times and bad. As we celebrate another milestone, it's a good opportunity to thank you for your continued support of the credit union.



## Clean Up Those Dormant Accounts

Spring is the time for the annual ritual of housecleaning for many people. Also, make it the time of year to clean out those old, dormant accounts you may have at your credit union. Take a few moments to go through your accounts to see if you have any that have become inactive. If so, please take the time to contact the credit union about reactivating the accounts or closing them.

## Lessons from the Great Recession

Economists are pointing to signs that the economy is rebounding. But like the Great Depression, the Great Recession has changed the way most people view risk. For example, 45 percent of respondents to a November 2009 Consumer Report's survey reported that they were charging less on their credit cards.

The personal savings rate, which fell to less than 1 percent of disposable personal income in 2005, began to rise again in May 2008 and inched toward 5 percent in the second quarter of 2009, but had receded to just over 3 percent in the third quarter, according to statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Anxious workers view unemployment rates not seen since the 1980s with fear and trepidation about their own jobs, but economists expect the stabilization in the housing market and the potential for U.S. exports to the rising middle class populations of China, Brazil, and India to help create jobs. When the unemployment rate declines, consumer spending will likely return.

But will consumers return to a 'spend now, worry later' philosophy? Or will they continue to use credit prudently, save more of their personal income and live within their means? That depends on whether they have learned any lessons from the Great Recession.



### Going Green Tip

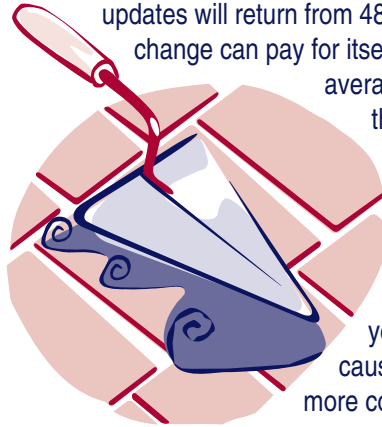
Don't throw away those dead single-use batteries. Recycle them!

Go online and visit [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com). Plug in your zip code to find a location close to you that recycles them or a location that has a program that provides free shipping.

## Sprucing Up This Spring?

### See Us for a Home Improvement Loan

The housing bubble may have burst, but even a stagnant housing market shouldn't prevent you from making home improvements that will enhance the quality of your life. Just don't expect to recoup all of your investment in a major home improvement if you were to try to sell your home. For example, according to the data from the 2009-2010 Cost vs. Value survey conducted by Remodeling Magazine, the national average cost of a midrange bathroom remodel is \$16,142, and adds \$11,454 to the home's resale value, recouping 71 percent of the cost. Most updates will return from 48 percent to about 80 percent, although one change can pay for itself: a steel entry door replacement runs an average \$1,172, adds \$1,470 in resale value, thus recouping 128.9 percent of the cost.

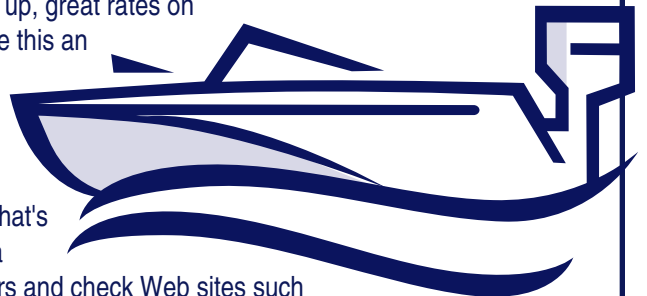


On the other hand, delaying some projects, like replacing a leaky roof, could end up costing you more in repairs down the road. Or if you love your house and your neighborhood, but a growing family is causing overcrowding, adding space may be a more cost effective solution than a move.

Evaluate your options and if it's time to feather your nest, see the credit union about a home improvement loan. We have rates and terms that can fit most budgets. Call on us today.

## Ahoy! Boat Loans Now Available

Attention fishers, sailors, and water skiers! Is Summer 2010 your date for fun on the water? If you've always wanted to own a boat, or if you're looking to trade up, great rates on boat loans make this an exceptional time to buy. If you're buying new, visit boat shows to see what's available from a variety of dealers and check Web sites such as [www.boats.com](http://www.boats.com) or [www.boattrader.com](http://www.boattrader.com). These Web sites also have used boats for sale, as do sites such as Craig's list ([www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)). Classified ads and local sailing or boating clubs are a good source of pre-owned boats as well. While buying a used boat offers substantial savings, exercise caution. Find out why the boat is for sale, if it's been involved in any incidents or has any hurricane damage. Then, set your course for the credit union for the best deals on financing.



# National Credit Union Youth Week April 18th – 24th.

Receive a special gift for any \$25.00 deposit to a youth account.

Limited to the first 50 only.



## You're The Star During Credit Union Youth Week

It's all about youth during National Credit Union Youth Week, April 18-24, 2010, and this year's theme "Get in the Savings Game" celebrates the advantages young members have when they start saving now. That's because you have time on your side. In the savings game, that's like having a huge group of fans cheering for you. Your money earns money because of the power of compound interest. Even if your savings earn just 1.0% APR (annual percentage rate), if you start with \$25 and add \$25 a month (about \$6 a week), you'd have \$6,669 after 20 years and \$10,524 after 30.

So visit us online or stop by the credit union to find out how to be the star of the Savings Game. National Credit Union Youth Week is celebrated every year in April as part of Financial Literacy Month.

## What is ... A Share Certificate?

A share certificate is a special account you can set up with the credit union for savings you don't need immediate access to. Think of it as a wallet with a lock. You agree to keep your money in the account for a specified amount of time, say six months or a year. In return, the credit union will pay you more interest than you would earn in a regular share savings account. If you have an unexpected expense and you need your money back before the term is up, you'll have to pay an interest penalty. That means that a share certificate is an ideal way to save for things like the security deposit on your first apartment, the down payment on a car, or furnishings for your dorm room. You can predict with some degree of certainty when you will need the money, so match the term of the certificate for that time frame. Typically, the longer the share certificate term, the higher the interest rate. That's your reward for planning ahead.

## Does Your Cash Disappear?

Does this happen to you? You get money for doing extra chores or as a gift. Or you get an allowance. But before you know it, it's gone. This is a familiar mystery story for a lot of kids. It happens to a lot of grown-ups, too. Money disappears when you don't have a plan for how to spend it. This plan is called a budget. Making a budget isn't hard. It starts by keeping track of what happens to your money. Every time you spend money, write it down in a notebook. Do this for a couple of weeks. Then take a look at where your money went. You may be surprised how much you spend on little things, like candy.

Now, think about what you really want. If you want a big item like a video game, you will need to save part of your money. Then when you have enough, you can buy it. A budget helps you solve the mystery of where your money goes. And it helps you get the things you want.



## FYI: More Hope for the College Bound

The cost of higher education seems to defy the laws of gravity - going up and never coming down. But as part of the federal economic stimulus package (the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act), signed by President Obama in February 2009, more parents and students will qualify over the next two years for a tax credit to help pay for college expenses. Called the American Opportunity Credit, the new credit modifies the existing Hope Credit for tax years 2009 and 2010, making the Hope Credit available to more families. A broader range of taxpayers, including many with higher incomes and those who owe no tax, are now eligible to claim an annual tax credit of up to \$2,500 per student. That is a \$700 increase from the previous Hope Credit.

It also expands the list of qualifying expenses. "Qualified tuition and related expenses" now includes expenditures for "course materials," defined as books, supplies and equipment needed for a course of study whether or not the materials are purchased from the educational institution as a condition of enrollment or attendance. A computer purchase may qualify for the credit if it is needed for enrollment or attendance at the school. The new law also allows the credit to be claimed for four post-secondary education years instead of two. You are not allowed to "double dip," however, by paying for the same expenses with funds from a Coverdell Education Savings Account.

For more information, review IRS Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or at the library.

## Stagger Your Free Credit Reports

Free credit reports (not credit scores) are available to every consumer with a social security number, on an annual basis. The law allows consumers to receive copies from all three credit bureaus: TransUnion, Equifax, and Experian. You may order from just one credit bureau or all three at the same time through the Annual Credit Report website ([www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)).

Credit experts say that the best way to get your three annual credit reports is to stagger them throughout the year. The advantage of ordering one now and others later (for example, one credit report every four months) is that you can keep track of any changes or new information that may appear on your credit report. Also, by staggering your reports throughout the year, you will be able to monitor your reports for signs of identity theft or fraud year round. Remember, if you order all three credit reports at the same time, you will not be eligible to request them again until twelve months, or one year, has passed since your first request.

## Planning to Move or Have a Name Change?

If you are planning on moving, remember to add the credit union to your moving checklist! Let us know, as soon as possible, your new address and phone number. By keeping your credit union up-to-date, we won't lose you and you won't have delays in receiving your mail from us.

If you have a name change, you will need to come by the credit union to update your signature card.

And don't forget, if you move out of state, you can continue being a member of the credit union. Once a member, always a member.



**FOR  
SALE**

## Set Up a Savings System

1. Pay off credit cards. Pay down high interest debt such as credit cards.
2. Build up an emergency fund. Put aside at least six months' expenses that can be tapped into for unexpected expenses such as medical bills, car expenses, etc. By doing this, it will help you not slip back into debt with unplanned expenses.
3. Pay yourself first. Use automatic payroll deduction or automatic transfers from your checking account to put money into a separate savings account.
4. Start out small and then increase. Begin by tucking away 2 to 3 percent of your paycheck. Then try to increase your savings rate to 10 percent.
5. Employer savings plan. If the company offers a matching savings plan (example 401K), take advantage of it to match your contributions.
6. Save your raises. Whenever you get a raise, increase the amount you are saving. You don't have to save it all, but the more you save the better.
7. Live within your means. If you don't need it - don't buy it.
8. Stick with your plan. Just because you might have a setback doesn't mean you stop saving.

## Attention Rate Shoppers: Your Credit Union Has a Deal for You

If you're looking for competitive rates on savings or low rates on loans, we think you'll find the best rates in town at the credit union. That's because, here, you're a member, not just a number. As a member-owned financial cooperative, we're here to serve you, not make a profit for temperamental stockholders. So whether you're saving for that long-awaited vacation, holiday shopping, or college tuition, we have a savings plan to help you reach your goals. If you need financing for a new car, home improvements, or debt consolidation, you'll find the rates and terms to fit your budget. At the credit union, we believe people are worth more than money. And that translates to higher rates on savings, lower rates on loans, and better service. Contact the credit union today to find out what deals we may have for you.

## THE LAST WORD

- The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back in your pocket.
- People can be divided into three groups: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened.