Town & Country CREDIT UNION

Feb. 2018

Log onto our website at www.towncountrycu.com

The Gift of Getting Organized

Organizing your financial records is one of the best gifts you can give your family. By setting up a workable system and telling family members about it will ensure they know how to pick up the pieces should there be a crisis or death.

Getting organized doesn't mean finding a place for everything. It means knowing what to keep and for how long, where to store documents, and when to shred outdated statements.

Consider these tips to get started:

1. Eliminate waste. Toss items you don't need, such as receipts for small purchases or groceries, or records on autos you no longer need. To prevent identity theft, shred documents with Social Security numbers or account numbers. Consider software organization tools, or going paperless. Sign up for online credit union and brokerage statements.

2. File it. Set up a simple filing system that anyone can follow, separating active from inactive files.

3. Protect it. Get a safe deposit box for anything that would be difficult to replace if destroyed, such as birth and marriage certificates, titles, household inventory, investment certificates, and military records.

4. Establish a routine. Open and sort mail daily. Arrange bills so you can pay them about the same time each month. Every year or so, weed your files.

Mark your calendars for Town & Country Annual Meeting

February 20, 2018 • 6 p.m.

at Town & Country Credit Union
1414 Chatburn Avenue, Harlan, IA
(No dinner served)

Carelessness Can Cost You

Many Americans are concerned about someone stealing their credit card, check, or debit card numbers, but they may be ignoring one easy way thieves can access financial accounts: receipts.

Disregarding receipts that have valuable information greatly increases the risk of credit and debit card fraud. Thieves easily can find receipts with valid account numbers in trash cans. Some easy steps you can take to prevent thieves from stealing your financial information:

* Shred all preapproved credit offers, credit and debit card receipts, insurance forms, financial statements, and other paperwork containing personal and financial information;

* Check credit union statements and other financial statements monthly for discrepancies and order a credit report once a year to make sure no one else is using your personal information to obtain credit cards or services;

* Don't print your Social Security number on your checks and don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet; and

* Be hesitant about giving personal or financial information over the telephone.

Get more mileage out of your money.

102 N. Elm St., Avoca
712-307-6881

AVOCA HOURS: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 am- 4 pm; Sat. 9 am- 12 pm

An Easy Plan for a $500 Car Repair Bill

The average car repair bill costs between $500 and $600—an amount that would have many Americans reaching for their credit card.

A recent survey from AAA found that 33% of American drivers would need to go into debt to pay for a car repair. That translates to 64 million drivers without enough savings to cover a routine expense.

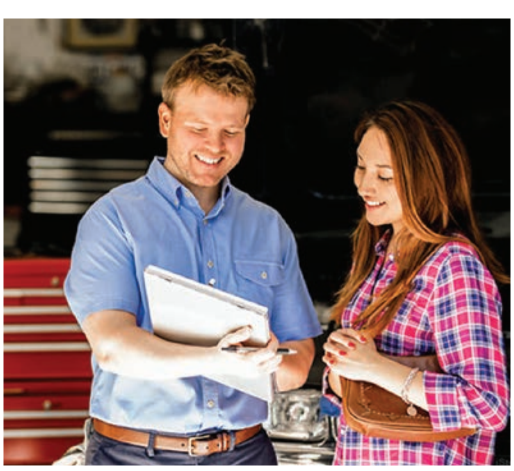
How can you avoid being one of them? AAA counsels putting $50 a month aside in savings for a car-care fund.

"To avoid a surprise down the road, drivers should budget for monthly payments, insurance premiums, fuel costs and the inevitable expenses of routine maintenance and repair," says John Nielsen, AAA managing director of automotive maintenance and repair.

To avoid such a crisis, AAA makes the following suggestions:

- When buying a new or used car, look at not only the price and the monthly payment, but also how much that car is likely to cost to own over coming years. Rankings such as Kelley Blue Book's five year cost to own rankings can give you some reasonable estimates.
- Stick carefully to the maintenance schedule recommended by the manufacturer. Today's cars are better made and can last longer than in the past. But to get the most out of them, keep up the maintenance.
- Find a repair shop you trust.
- When you do have to go in for a repair, get a written estimate for the work. Try negotiating the estimate and ask if the shop gives any applicable discounts

No matter how new or well-made your car, some repairs are inevitable. So avoid that anxious feeling when hearing the repair cost by knowing you have money set aside to cover it.



Take These 4 Steps to Save for Retirement

Making small changes in how you spend money can help beef up retirement savings. But, being financially secure during retirement will take some commitment and planning along the way. Take these steps to get on track:

Create a spending plan.
Often when people create a budget, they feel they're depriving themselves. Instead, think of your budget as a spending plan. This plan will help you set priorities so you can become more focused and save for your goals.

Contribute to retirement savings plans.
In addition to contributing to an IRA (individual retirement account), contributing to your employer's retirement saving plan can help build your nest egg as well. Contribute as much as you can each paycheck, and contribute at least the amount needed to get your employer's match, if one is offered. If you don't, it's like leaving free money on the table.

Plan for the unexpected.
Whether it's unexpected car trouble, a health problem, pet expenses, or housing repairs, a good rule of thumb is to have at least three to six months of income set aside in an emergency savings account. Not everyone has this much money on hand right away—start small and build your emergency fund as you're able to save more. Having an emergency savings account protects you from having to stop saving for retirement or dip into your retirement savings to pay for unexpected expenses.

Start saving and keep saving.
No matter if you're saving for retirement or another goal, saving is a rewarding habit. It's never too early or late to start. if you have to, start small and try to increase the amount you save each month. Use automatic deposits and transfers at your credit union to build your savings without having to put a lot of thought into it. Make saving for retirement a priority by creating and sticking to your spending plan to meet your goals.

What Newbie Home Buyers Need to Know

Buying your first house is an exciting time, but admittedly a little scary, as well. The allies at your credit union have your back. They can help you minimize anxiety by being prepared.

If you haven't already, call a loan officer there and have a conversation about your questions and your goals. The lender is likely to share with you some version of these steps:

Know your credit report

Go to annualcreditreport.com and get your credit report from all three of the reporting agencies; you get one free report a year. This step is important because your credit score can make a huge difference in how much you qualify to borrow and what you pay for the money.

Usually, we suggest you order one credit report every four months from a different credit bureau. But when your plan is to buy a house, check all three at once because your goal is to identify anything that could scuttle your loan or drive up its cost. If you find errors, correct them. That won't happen overnight so, even if your home purchase is several months in the future, make sure your credit report is up to snuff now.

If the facts are accurate and reflect a sloppy credit history, expect to spend at least six to 12 months cleaning things up with flawless credit habits.

Here's how much difference it makes, if you qualify: On a $150,000 30-year fixed-rate (3.85% annual percentage rate) mortgage, with an excellent score of 760 or higher, your monthly payment would be $703 and you'd pay $103,033 in total interest. But a credit score of 620 would cost $846 a month (5.4% APR) and rack up $154,407 in total interest payments.

Know what other documents will be useful

When you talk with a lender about applying for a home loan, you might need several other records:

• *W-2 forms.* Make copies from the past two years.

• *Paystubs.* Copy your two most recent ones.

• *Financial account statements.* Collect statements, including those from retirement accounts, for the past few months.

• *Lines of credit.* If you've opened any in the past six months, you'll need copies of those statements because they might not show up on your credit report.

• *Information about vehicles you own.* Include make, model, and resale value.

• *Auto-loan account information.* Include account numbers and statements.

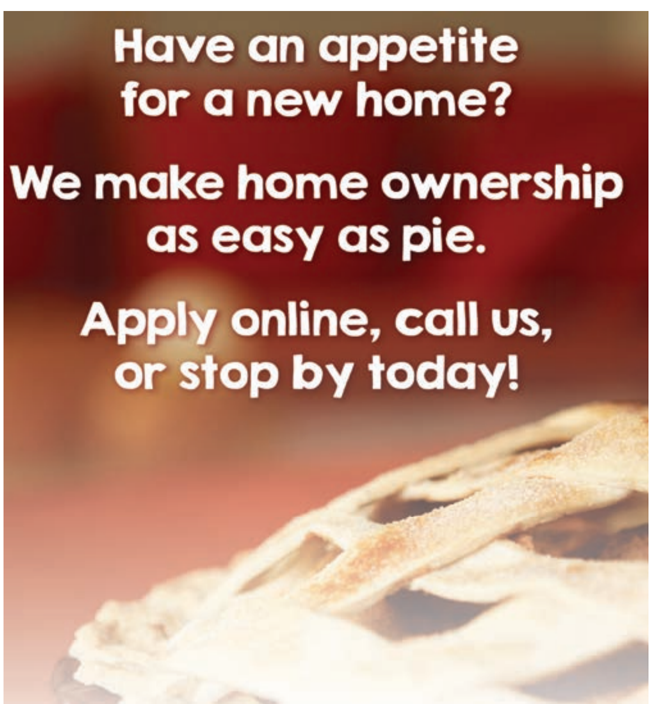
• *Credit card account information.* Include numbers and types of cards, balances, and minimum payments.

• *Other loan account information.* Include student loans and personal loans.

• *Gifts.* If any money for your down payment was given to you, identify how much and where it came from. Be prepared to document that it's a gift and not a loan.

When you call to make an appointment, ask what papers you should bring with you.

Know what you can afford.



Thinking about a Home Equity Loan??

Are you thinking of remodeling your home? Now's a great time to get a home equity line of credit (HELOC) to help you finance a renovation or remodel.

Here are just some of the changes you can make:

* Add more living space: Open up your kitchen, add a nursery, update your bathrooms, or turn your bedroom into a master suite.

* Personalize to fit your lifestyle: Add a three-season porch or a swimming pool.

* Become more energy efficient: Replace your roof or windows or add solar panels.

The advantages of using a HELOC include:

* Potential tax benefits: Home equity interest payments are generally tax-deductible.

* Lower monthly payments: Interest rates on HELOCs are typically lower than credit card or personal loan rates.

* Greater financial control: With a HELOC, you withdraw and pay interest on only what you need when you need it.

Town and Country Credit Union can help you get a great rate on a HELOC. Call 712-235-5555 or visit us in person. Ask for Desirae.

5 Ways Good Credit is Your Safety Net

A healthy savings account is your best defense against life's curve balls. But sometimes setting aside some money every paycheck isn't enough—particularly when you're just starting out in life.

A good credit score can be an additional safety net, providing you access to low-interest credit options that can help cover any expenses your emergency savings can't. Here are your options:

1. Credit cards Can be useful for relatively small emergencies. Of course, this requires that you haven't maxed out your credit card on espresso and concert tickets. Keeping a decent chunk of your spending limit available will not only offer you a good lifeline, but can also boost your credit score. Plus, a good credit score can earn you the best rates.

2. Signature loans Also called personal loans, they can be used for making purchases like car repairs or for doing projects like updating your kitchen. Signature loans are good for moderate-sized projects.

3. Car equity loan Did you know that if you have paid off your car, or if you owe less than its worth, you can often take out a loan against your equity? If your car is newer than 10 years old, these loans usually offer significantly lower rates than signature loans or credit cards. Just keep in mind that you no longer own the car outright—you will have to pay off the loan if you decide to sell your car.

4. Home Equity Loan If you own your own home and have available equity in it (again, you owe less than your home is worth) you can take out a home equity loan. This is a one-time lump sum loan, usually of a sizeable amount. This can be good for big projects, like remodels, additions, building a shop, or paying off your other higher-rate debt.

5. Home Equity Line of Credit These are much like a home-equity loan, except instead of taking out one big lump sum, you can use the line of credit like a credit card. You can make purchases, pay the balance down, and make new purchases. This is great for regular projects or sizeable emergencies.

Your lender might be able to offer you other options, but these are the main tools you can use to build a safety net. Even better—by using your available credit options, making payments on time, and paying things off, you are continuing to build your credit score.

Open any TCCU Personal Checking Account with a $200 Deposit and Receive **$100**

Plus We'll Give You Your First Box of Checks FREE!

Plus: FREE Internet Banking • FREE MasterCard® Check Card

Some restrictions apply.

BEST RATES IN THE AREA ON

✔CDs ✔Auto Loans ✔Mortgages

The TCCU Advantage...

- Credit Unions are not-for-profit institutions
- Members share ownership of the credit union
- Members have a voice in how the credit union operates
- Since credit unions are not-for-profit institutions, any excess earnings are returned to the members in higher deposit rates and lower loan rates and fees (on average) than other financial institutions
- Credit unions focus on service to their members/owners
- Directors and committee members are all volunteers

Auto Loan Rates

As Low As:

2.99%

Model years 2013 & newer, with less than 60K miles.

NO PAYMENTS FOR 90 DAYS

Best CD Rate In Town!

We Will Match the CD Rate of Any Bank in the Avoca & Harlan Area

Plus Add **0.40%** A.P.R.

** New money only. Minimum $10,000 and Maximum $250,000.*

Good only at Town and Country Credit Union, Avoca and Harlan, Iowa. The credit union reserves the right to limit deposits or terminate this offer any time without notice. Penalty for early withdrawal. Offer subject to change without notice.

MEMBER PROMISE:

We promise to: simplify your financial life; work in your best interest; make your privacy our top priority; have fair and competitive rates and fees; and provide personalized options to help you achieve financial success.

Basic Steps to Financial Fitness

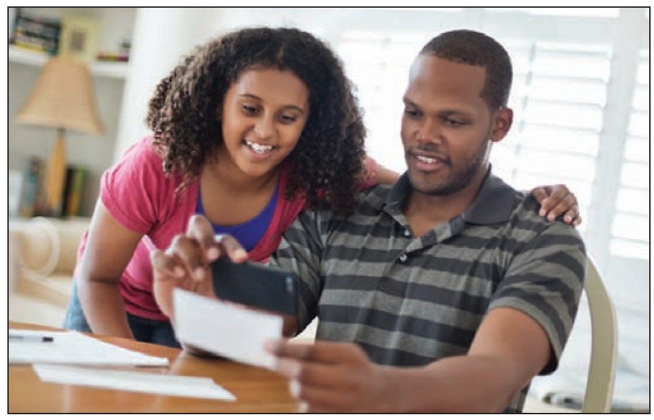
Your finances and the decisions you make about them change over time and are different from your friends' or your parents'. Still, some broad guidelines may help you get a handle on your financial plans.

* For mortgages, lenders expect your payments to be no more than 28% of your monthly gross income (income before taxes, Social Security, and other deductions). Another method says that your PITI (principal, interest, property taxes and insurance) plus your total long-term debt (car payments, college loans, installment payments) should not exceed 36% of your gross income.

* How much should you be saving? Financial experts suggest three to six months' take-home pay in a savings account. That can take time to build up, and you may need to raid your account even while you're adding to it. Still, if you consistently put aside 5% of your take-home pay, using payroll deduction, you'll reach your goal.

* For long-term retirement savings, at minimum put a percentage into your 401(k) that equals what your employer will match. Anything less and you're actually giving up free money. Ideally, contribute the maximum your employer allows into your 401(k). Can't swing that much while you're saving for your child's future education expenses? Keep this in mind: You can borrow to meet higher education expenses, but you can't borrow for retirement expenses.

Talk to the professionals at your credit union to learn about all the services available to help you meet your goals.



Teach Teens Financial Responsibility

When your kids were little, you frequently heard requests such as "Will you read me a story?" or "Can we go for a bike ride?" Now that your offspring have morphed into teenagers, their pleadings often involve asking for money—your money.

How can you tame their cash demands and avoid the money wrangles, while also instilling a sense of financial responsibility? Here are a few ideas:

- Make the most of "teachable moments"—Look for opportunities in your day-to-day interactions with your teen when you can slip in a money "lesson." For instance, if you're out shopping together, you can talk about your own shopping choices or why you're delaying a purchase.
- Provide hands-on experience—These types of experiences have more impact for teens than just listening to you talk. For instance, have your teenager make the grocery list for the week. At the market, he'll see for himself how big a chunk of the family budget goes toward groceries.
- Model money monitoring—Sit down with your teen to go over her list of expenditures for the week. Discuss such questions as: Was this a want or a need? Why did your balance get so low at this point? What could you have done differently in your spending?
- Introduce plastic, perhaps—You'll need to decide if your teen is mature enough to manage a debit card. You could give your teen a prepaid debit card with a spending limit. Again, go over transactions together.
- Talk about the future—What will come after high school? If it's college, what portion of expenses will the teen have to cover? Older teens also begin to think about career choices. This is a good time to talk with them about saving for retirement. It's never too early to have that conversation.

Member Services

Share Savings and Share Draft
Checking Accounts
Free Check Imaging
Holiday Club Accounts
Certificates of Deposit
Kirby Kids Club
Teen Club
Bill Pay
Voice Response
Reloadable Debit Cards
24-Hour ATM
Vehicle Loans
Home Equity Loans
Mortgage Loans
Personal Loans
Business Loans
Lines of Credit
Visa Gift Card
9.9% APR MasterCard
Debit Cards
Direct Deposit
Photocopy Services
Phone Transfers
Payroll Services
On-Line Services
Free Internet Banking
Free Notary
Drive-up Services
Wire Services
Fax Services
Night Depositories
Credit Life and Disability Insurance
Gap Insurance
Draft Images
Auto Insurance
Home Owners Insurance
Term Life Insurance
Accident Insurance
Whole Life Insurance
Variable Annuities
Fixed Annuities
Loan-term Care Insurance
Variable Universal Life Insurance
Mutual Funds
Folio Investing (50 Stocks)
529 College Savings Plan

Harlan Hours:
7:30 A.M. – 5 P.M. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday;
9 A.M. – 5 P.M. Wednesday; 8:30 A.M. – 12 P.M. Saturday

Avoca Hours:
8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday-Friday; Saturday 9 A.M. – 12 P.M.