

A few steps can keep your identity safe

It is the hottest topic in the news media. Identity theft is a problem that is not going away anytime soon. Last year, 635,000 consumers filed complaints of identity theft at a total of \$547 million in losses. While identity theft is difficult to prevent, there are several ways to protect your good name.

The Federal Trade Commission offers these tips to help from becoming a victim.

- Always sign the back of your credit cards
- Keep a record of all your account numbers, company names, expiration dates, and toll free numbers in a location separate from your cards in case they become stolen
- Watch your card when transactions occur
- Check your statements with receipts to make sure the charges are correct
- Notify all card companies of address changes
- Participate in the annual free credit report program to verify all transactions on your credit report

Make sure to avoid:

- Letting others borrow your credit cards
- Leaving cards out for others to see the numbers
- Giving your account number out on the phone or internet unless you are certain you are talking to a trustworthy company

Another way to protect yourself is to consider identity theft insurance and restoration service. Identity theft insurance and restoration service can act as an affordable safety net in the event your identity is compromised in spite of precautionary measures. The peace-of-mind afforded with this type of coverage and service costs just pennies a day.

Hill District Federal Credit Union Members may be eligible for special auto insurance rates. For a comprehensive review of your insurance needs, please call:

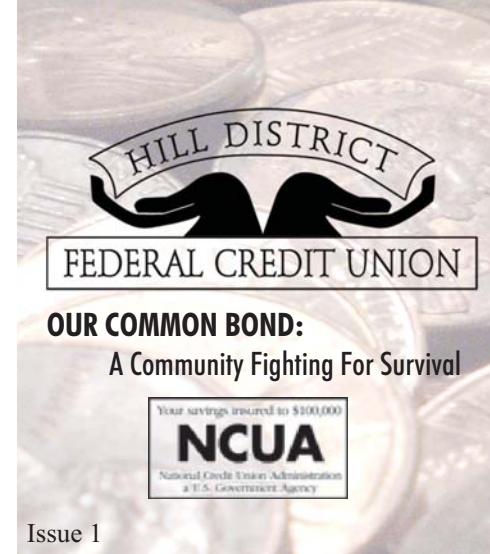
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Hill District Federal Credit Union
2021 Centre Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219



Common Cents

Issue 1

*The quarterly newsletter
for members and friends of
the Hill District Federal
Credit Union*

WHAT'S INSIDE

A Message from the Manager:
Find out what new services are
coming to HDFCU



Beware of Rent-to-Own
Opportunities



Ways to Protect Your Identity



Recover from Post Holiday
Debt



Keeping Track of Debit Card
Activity



How to make Holiday
Shopping Easy

Hill District Federal Credit Union
2021 Centre Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

A Message From the Manager Richard Witherspoon

Your credit union is alive and well in providing outstanding financial services to this community. We are serving people of meager means and individuals that have had the ability to improve their quality of life. As we strive to continue our mission in the community, there is a need to evolve and perform at the highest standard possible. If we continue to do "business as usual", we will not fulfill our mission and not give you, the member, our best. You are the owners of this great institution and deserve nothing short of our best.

With this in mind, we believe it is time for the credit union to expand. We are going to offer some new services to the membership to better serve their needs. We are not considering the competition factor with other financial service providers because we know we do not have the capacity or resources that they have. Our sole objective is to give our members what they have requested and need from us. The new services have been inquired about for many months and we have been working very diligently to bring them to you. A brief outline of these new services is as follows:

Online balance inquiry – you will be able to view your account activity. You will be able to transfer funds from your share account to your share draft account.

Bill payment center – you will be able to pay most of your bills at the credit union.

Wire transfer – you will be able to transfer funds from your account at the credit union to another financial institution.

Mortgage and home equity – you will be able to secure your mortgage through the credit union.

The new services have a launch date of November 1, 2007. We hope and pray that we are successful in this effort.

Central Baptist Joins the HDFCU Family

One other aspect of our growth that we are undertaking is another credit union merging with us. That credit union is Central Baptist Federal Credit Union. There are about 300 members in their credit union. We are in the process of completing that effort. It should be completed by October 31, 2007.

We are also revamping our website to include links to give the membership access to services that would interest them.

With all that we are attempting to accomplish in terms of expansion and growth, our goal and objective is to provide a credit union that will improve the financial health of the membership and the community. With your continued support we are sure this is obtainable. So on behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Hill District Federal Credit Union, I would like to say thank you.



Rent-To-Own is NO BARGAIN!

Thinking about making a rent-to-own purchase? You may want to reconsider. Despite invitingly low weekly or monthly payments, rent-to-own customers can end up spending two to five times more than retail. Additional fees built into the transaction could result in triple-digit finance rates, says Bankrate.com.

When considering a rent-to-own agreement, read the contract carefully and check the fine print. Understand exactly how much the payments will be and whether or not the figure includes tax. Ask if there are add-on fees, and if so, what are they and how much? Find out when payments are due and what late fees will be incurred.

The contract should determine who is responsible if the merchandise is broken, lost or stolen. One of the advantages of renting to own is that if the merchandise turns out to be faulty, the store is obligated to provide a loaner while fixing the original. In general, get all promises or guarantees in writing, since the written word is binding.

Instead of going the rent-to-own route, other options include charging the merchandise (even a 26 percent annual percentage rate – APR – is cheaper than renting to own), or check with your credit union for a loan. The even better route is to use the old standby: actually saving for the desired item!

Take a second look at your insurance



Special auto insurance offer for members of Hill District Federal Credit Union

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Jacqueline L. Smith, Associate Agent
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Hold on to Your Receipts

Has this ever happened to you? You've just finished your shopping and return home to a mailbox full of store ads announcing next week's sale featuring many of the items you just purchased. Murphy's Law at work? Yes, but you might have some recourse, so hold on to your receipts.

Just because an item you recently purchased at full price goes on sale, don't

assume you've missed out on a bargain. Take the original store receipt to the store's customer service department within seven to ten days of purchase and many will refund you the difference or at least give you store credit. The Better Business Bureau points out that this refund policy does not usually apply at specialty stores.

Keep Tabs on Your Debit Card

Debit and check cards make shopping convenient. They work like checks, are accepted by retail merchants like a credit card and draw money directly from your checking account. But the features that make them convenient are reasons you should take the same precautions with your debit card as you do with your cash and credit cards.

To ensure your account is protected, keep track of your card. Hold on to the receipts you get with each debit transaction and compare them against your monthly statement.

If your debit card is lost or stolen, promptly notify your financial institution by telephone and follow up with a letter. Doing so will limit your liability for any unauthorized use. Under the terms of the federal Electronic Funds Transfer Act, if you notify your financial institution within 24 hours of discovering your card is missing, your liability is zero. If your first indication that your card has been used without your knowledge is an entry on your monthly statement, you have 60 days to contact your financial institution, during which time your liability is limited to \$50.



Recover from Post-Holiday Debt

For most consumers, credit card bills and depleted savings/checking accounts often lead to the post holiday financial blues. But even if giving generously from your heart has given you a lump in your throat, swallow easy – there's are ways to recover.

If you're faced with more credit card bills than you can handle, it's important to get your debts organized and prepare a plan to recover. First, you have to be realistic about the situation you're in. Then be committed to rebuilding your financial picture. Ignoring credit balances will only lead to bad credit

reports.

If you cannot pay the minimum monthly required by a creditor, contact the company. Many card companies will work with consumers to create a payment schedule acceptable to both parties.

Finally, review your spending patterns and make sure you're not relying on credit too much. Focus more attention on saving throughout the year to cover year-end gift purchases. By doing so, next year's post holiday season won't have to include digging out of debt.



NEWS... YOU CAN USE

Do you have trouble remembering your PIN?

If so, here's a simple solution: enter them in an address book, disguising them as the last digits of a fake phone number.

Although Gift Certificates & Gift Cards make great gifts, remember they are non-refundable and non-redeemable for cash. If lost or stolen, most merchants will not replace a gift certificate.

Don't eat and Drive. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says that more than 1.5 million car crashes annually result from driver distraction or inattention. Studies show that eating is one of the most distracting things you can do while driving – so don't eat when driving.

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