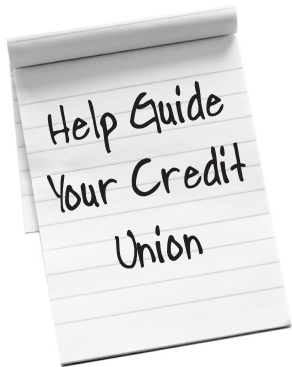


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Did you know that your credit union Board of Directors consists of volunteers elected from the membership? As a member of Omaha Douglas Federal Credit Union, you have a vote in who serves on the Board of Directors. You can even run for a position on the Board. The Board has the responsibility of directing credit union activities and policies.

implementation; hire, supervise and evaluate the chief executive officer; and work with others to help the credit union provide the best possible service to its members. If you are interested in running for the Board of Directors, contact a member of the Nominating Committee for a nomination resume.

Sandra Montgomery, Chair

444-5066

Dan Silvis

444-6712

Bridget Hadley

444-4110

Alan Thelen

444-5135

This year, three three-year positions on the Board will be contested and nominations are now being accepted.

If you're interested in running for a seat on the Board of Directors, you should be prepared to make a commitment to attend a monthly meeting (about one to two hours in duration) to monitor the financial condition of the credit union and ensure continued sound operation; approve interest rates and dividends; establish policies for products and services; approve plans and budgets and monitor their

Nominations must be submitted to a member of the committee or to the credit union by January 31, 2012. Nominations may also be added to the ballot until if accompanied by signatures of 1% (48) of the membership.

Names of all nominees will be posted in the credit union office by March 15, 2012. If there are more nominees than open positions, the voting will be held for two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. Members may also vote at the Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 26th. Look for more details about the Annual Meeting in our next newsletter.

FIVE THINGS TO DO IN JANUARY

It's no surprise that January is a big month for making resolutions. And if you've been

making resolutions for a while, you know how many of them fall by the wayside before February.

These suggested resolutions are different in two ways—they're in the 'set and forget' category, and they can make your life so much easier that you're likely to keep them:

1. **Set up direct deposit.** Once you arrange to receive regular payments like your paycheck or Social Security and pension checks with direct deposit, you'll never have to worry about making timely deposits again. You'll know that your deposit is in your account exactly when you expect it to be.
2. **Set up automated transfers to savings to pay yourself first.** The next smart step, after direct deposit, is to get funds into savings right away so they can begin earning dividends from the get-go.
3. **Automate your mortgage payment.** Even with the typical grace period that most mortgage lenders allow, it's always a

good move to take care of that big monthly payment. Again, you'll never have to worry about making the payment on time.

4. **Automate minimum credit card payment or payments.** The penalty for a late credit card payment is not pretty. Set up an automated payment to cover at least the minimum due on all your credit cards; you always can pay additional amounts so you retire those debts as soon as you can. Set payments a few days before the due dates to protect your credit score.

5. **Arrange to have any overdrafts automatically covered from your savings account or overdraft line of credit.** Even if an overdraft is rare in your household, it can happen to the best money managers. Make sure you can cover any inadvertent overdraft with a direct transfer from your savings account and there's another worry you'll never have again.

If you've already managed these resolutions, think of one or two more that could help you get on and stay on the straight and narrow financially.



HOW TO EARN AN 800+ CREDIT SCORE

Some people go a lifetime striving to hit a hole-in-one in golf or bowl a 300-game. It might surprise you that some folks are reaching for an 850 credit score. It can be done—try some of these suggestions to improve your score:

* Know how your FICO score is calculated. FICO, the Minneapolis-based company that created the credit score model, considers five elements when calculating a score:

1. Payment history
2. Amount owed
3. New credit
4. Amount of available credit
5. Types of credit used

Check your score on a regular basis to see how you stack up in each of these categories.

- * **Check your credit report.** Everyone is entitled to a free annual credit report from each of the three main credit bureaus. Request them online from annualcreditreport.com, and report any errors directly to the report provider.
- * **Keep balances low.** Charge less and avoid maxing out your available credit.
- * **Pay on time.** Making timely payments is the No. 1 way to improve a credit score. Payment history accounts for 35% of the FICO score.

You may not be aiming for an 850 score, but following these guidelines can certainly give your current score a nice boost.



PREPARE BEFORE YOU SHOP TO GET THE BEST CAR DEAL

If getting a good deal is important to you, it's critical to prepare for all aspects of a vehicle purchase before you even begin to shop. Otherwise you're likely to pay too much.

The first step in preparing is to figure out exactly what kind of vehicle you want. Ask yourself how big it needs to be, whom and what you'll be transporting, and how important fuel economy and various safety features are to you.

Also consider what extras you want. If you've decided beforehand what features you need, you're less likely to get talked into adding others.

There are numerous publications and online resources available to help you decide what car best suits you. For example, Edmunds' buyers' guides (edmunds.com), Consumer Reports (consumerreports.org), the Kelley Blue Book (kbb.com), and J.D. Power and Associates (jdpower.com) all include vehicle descriptions, ratings, reviews, comparisons, and other useful information.

It's also important to know what monthly payment amount fits your budget. As a rule of thumb, your total

monthly car payments--for all vehicles you own-- shouldn't exceed 20% of your monthly take-home pay.

Most importantly, you need to know how much your desired vehicle is selling for in your area. It might be quite different from other markets. One source for this information is Edmund's True Market Value Pricing page (edmunds.com/products/tmv).

If you plan to finance your purchase, get preapproved for a low-interest loan at Omaha Douglas Federal Credit Union before you shop. Then, with financing in hand, you can negotiate on a cash basis with dealers.

Lastly, find out what your existing car is worth so you don't accept an excessively low trade-in offer.

Then, visit a number of dealerships and see what they'll do for you. The more information you walk in with, the better deal you'll walk out with.

Call us today for all your auto financing needs.





THESE TRAPS MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR WEALTH

Money. It's hard to get and easy to lose. It doesn't take long for the wealth you've accumulated to disappear if you don't manage your money well or have a plan to protect your assets from sudden calamity.

Snares like the ones mentioned below could easily threaten your financial security. Planning ahead can protect you and your loved ones from getting caught.

UNDISCIPLINED SPENDING

The more you have, the more you spend — or so the saying goes. But not paying close attention to your cash flow may prevent you from saving enough money for your future. Manage your income by creating a spending plan that includes saving and investing a portion of your pay. A financial professional can help identify planning strategies that may help boost your savings and potentially reduce your taxes.

HIGH DEBT

With the easy availability of credit, it isn't hard to understand how many people rack up high credit card balances and other debt. Short-term debt will become long-term debt if you're paying only the minimum amount toward your balances. If you can't pay off your credit card debt all at once, consider transferring the balances to a card with a lower interest rate.

UNPROTECTED ASSETS

Your life, your property, and your ability to work should all be protected. Life insurance can provide income for your family if you die. Homeowners and automobile insurance can help protect you if your home or car is damaged or destroyed and provide liability coverage if someone is injured. Disability insurance can protect your income if you're unable to work.

UNMANAGED INHERITANCE

A financial windfall is great, but it also can be dangerous. Without solid advice on managing and investing the money, you could find that your inheritance is gone in a much shorter time than you would have thought possible. Consult with a financial professional to help you come up with a plan for managing your wealth. Setting aside a portion of the money to spend on a trip or other luxury while investing the rest may be one way to reward yourself and still preserve the bulk of your assets.

NEGLECTED INVESTMENTS

Reviewing your investments to make sure they're performing as you expected — and making changes in your portfolio if they're not — is essential. But it's also essential to periodically review your investment strategy. You may find that your tolerance for risk has changed over time. You'll also want to assess the tax implications of any changes you plan to make to help minimize their impact.

RETIREMENT SHORTFALL

If you're not contributing the maximum amount to your employer's retirement savings plan, you're giving up the benefits of pretax contributions and potential tax-deferred growth. Maximizing your plan contributions can start you on your way to a comfortable retirement — with no traps along the route.

Omaha Douglas Federal Credit Union Members Can Save Thousands with Invest in America

At Omaha Douglas FCU we know you work hard to earn your money. And we think you should you should keep as much of it as possible. That's why we've teamed up with Invest in America to bring you savings on the things you buy every day from trusted American companies.

Save thousands on everything from your cell phone bill with Sprint or a brand new GM vehicle to online discounts at over 1,200 major retailers with Shop America.

Discover how much you could save. Visit LoveMyCreditUnion.org



Holiday Closings

We will observe the following holiday schedule:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday, January 16

Presidents' Day
Monday, February 20

HOURS

MAIN OFFICE

8251 West Center Road

Drive thru 8:00 am to 5:30 pm
Monday through Thursday
7:30 am to 6:00 pm - Friday
9:00 am to noon - Saturday

Lobby 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Monday through Thursday
8:30 am to 5:00 pm - Friday

BRANCH OFFICE

1819 Farnam Street Room 704

Lobby 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Monday through Friday



IDENTITY THEFT: Protect Yourself from Predators

Defined as when one person masquerades under the identity of another, identity theft has flourished in recent years with the advent of online, faceless Internet lending and credit transactions.

Although it is almost impossible for consumers to completely guard themselves against identity theft, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and other consumer agencies suggest the following best practices that may help reduce the risk of loss.

- Before you reveal any personal, identifying information, find out how it will be used and whether it will be shared with others.
- Pay attention to your billing cycles. Follow up with creditors if your bills don't arrive on time. A missing credit card bill could mean an identity thief has taken over your credit card account and changed your billing address to cover his tracks.
- Guard your mail from theft. Deposit outgoing mail in post office collection boxes or at your local post office. Promptly remove mail from your mailbox after it has been delivered.
- Put passwords on your credit card, bank, and phone accounts. Avoid using easily available information such as your mother's maiden name, birth date, phone number, and child's name.
- Minimize the identification information and number of cards you carry to what you'll actually need.
- Do not give out personal information over the phone, through the mail or via the Internet unless you have initiated the contact or know whom you're dealing with.
- Keep items of personal information in a safe place. Be sure to tear or shred receipts, copies of credit applications, insurance forms, bank checks, and statements before disposing.
- Be cautious about where you leave personal information in your home, especially if you have roommates, employ outside help, or are having service work done in your home.
- Find out who has access to your personal information at work and verify that the records are kept in a secure location.
- Give out your Social Security number only when absolutely necessary. Ask to use other types of identifiers when possible.
- Don't carry your Social Security card; leave it in secure place.
- Order a copy of your credit report from each of the three major credit reporting agencies every year. Make sure it is accurate and includes only those activities you've authorized.
- Only do business with Internet companies that use a secure form to capture private information (such as an account number or credit card number). For example, you can tell if the form is secure if the lock or key symbol on your browser status bar is solid instead of broken or open and https appears in the URL line.
- Avoid the temptation of purchasing a product from a merchant or through an auction site where the deal looks too good.

If you feel you have been a victim of identity theft, contact the FTC's Identity Theft Hotline toll-free at 1-877-IDTHEFT (438-4338); by mail: Identity Theft Clearinghouse, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580; or online at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft>.