

Memphis Municipal Employees Federal Credit Union

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www.mmefcu.org



THE CREDITOR

How To Save With A High Debt Ratio

If you have a high debt ratio, you may feel that it's impossible to save: All the money you earn is being used for bills. It may be more difficult to save, but it is possible. Here are five tips:

- * Believe you can do it. You may have heard the saying, "If you think you can do it or you think you can't do it, you're right." Having the right attitude is essential.
- * Set goals, both small ones, such as "save \$10 by the end of the week" and large ones, like "get out of debt."
- * Stop borrowing. Keep credit cards in a hard-to-access place, for example, frozen in a container of water. That way, you won't be tempted to use them for impulse purchases.
- * Pay yourself first. From each paycheck, have money automatically deposited in your share account. What you don't see, you won't miss.
- * Save whenever you can. For example, at the end of each day, put your spare change in a box or jar. At the beginning of each month, deposit it in your share savings account. Even little amounts add up when you get into the savings habit.

POOR CREDIT CAN COST YOU



SOURCE: INFORMA RESEARCH SERVICES AND
MYFICO.COM. INTEREST RATES AS OF 8/15/08

Is your credit financially fit? What are your "financial fitness goals?" MMEFCU has your answer!!!

MMEFCU has everything you need to hit your financial "bulls-eye" and shape a better financial future. Come and review our expansive line of products and services designed to help you meet your goals at

FINANCIAL FITNESS EXTRAVAGANZA

Saturday, March 21, 2009 * 9:00 to 11:00am
577 Linden Avenue * Memphis, TN
38126 Continental Breakfast will be served.
RSVP (901) 528.2816 x210



Savvy Ways To Spend Your Tax Refund

Many people think of their tax refund as "found money," although it's really just money you've lent to your Uncle Sam for the past year. Yet, for anyone who has trouble saving, a tax refund can be the same as finding a wad of bills in an old coat pocket or money tucked under a mattress. So here are some savvy ways to spend it:

- # Go green. Change out your standard light bulbs with higher efficiency compact fluorescent bulbs, replace your gas-powered lawn mower with an electric one, or an older appliance with one with an Energy Star rating.
- # Stock up. If you have the storage space, and you are sure you will use the product, buying items in bulk can save money.
- # Get in shape. Use your refund to buy a new bicycle, running or sports gear, or membership in a health club. Hint: Exercising with family members or a friend makes it easier to stick with the program.

Keep Us Current With Your Address

Don't forget to let us know of your change of address if you move. We need your current address for sending statements and important tax information. Keep your account information safe by being sure it is going to your address and not the new occupants of your old house. And remember, once a member, always a member. So if you move out of state, you can continue being a member of the credit union.

Pressed for time?... In love with casseroles? This one is for you.

Breakfast Casserole....VOILA!!!

1 lb sausage, hot or mild
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, more if you like
1 cup biscuit mix
5 eggs slightly beaten
2 cups milk

Spread browned sausage in pan. Sprinkle with cheese. Mix together biscuit mix and eggs, then add milk to the mixture. Pour over cheese and sausage. Bake 35 minutes. VOILA!!!

Note: This may be made ahead of time. Serve warm with rice or grits, or simply jelly and juice.

When to Use Debit or Credit.....

Your best bet is to "limit your use of debit cards to cash-and-carry types of purchases," says Susan Grant, vice president for public policy at the National Consumers League, such as for groceries, at the gas station or dry cleaners.

But for expensive or sight-unseen purchases (those made over the Internet or by phone), credit cards offer much more protection. For instance, you can contest a credit card charge for a product that arrives broken, or if the product you bought stops working after two weeks.

"With a credit card, if you dispute a charge, it is taken off the record," says Ken McEldowney, executive director of Consumer Action, in San Francisco. "With a debit card purchase you are fighting to get your funds back into your account."

This gives you less leverage. You can contact your card issuer to see if they'll handle the dispute, but you'll probably have to take on the merchant yourself. And even if you succeed, you may be stuck with whatever the store policy is for cash or check returns.

IRA Contributions For 2008 Tax Benefits

The cutoff date is fast approaching for making contributions to your IRA account and claiming a tax deduction for 2008. April 15, 2009 is the deadline for 2008 contributions, so be sure to contribute before then if you plan to take advantage of the tax deduction.

If you don't have an IRA, stop by the credit union before April 15, 2009 and open one today. You don't have to make a huge initial contribution to get started. Start small and let it grow. We make it easy to transfer money from your checking or savings account into your IRA on a regular basis, so your money will grow safely and securely at your credit union.

DEBIT OR CREDIT: WHICH IS SAFER?

A few years ago it was easy to tell the difference between a credit card and a debit card. You used your debit card at the ATM with a personal identification number, and you used your credit card for purchases. But today both types of cards carry familiar credit company logos, both can be swiped at the checkout counter and both can be used to make online purchases.

But even though debit and credit cards look and act the same, legal protections and the steps to settle problem purchases are quite different.

To protect and serve

Government regulations and voluntary industry policies will protect you if a credit or debit card is used to make unauthorized purchases. But the protections for credit cards are much broader.

- **Credit cards.** Under federal law, if someone steals your credit card you're only responsible to pay the first \$50 of unauthorized charges. And, says FTC lawyer Carol Reynolds, if you notify the issuer before the thief makes any charges, you may not be out anything. You're also free from liability if unauthorized purchases occur when the card is not physically present, say in an Internet purchase, she says. Zero-liability policies, like those offered by Visa and MasterCard, add a second layer of protection. Under these programs you won't pay anything if someone fraudulently uses your credit card online or off.
- **Debit cards.** The rules are similar for debit cards, but there are a few restrictions. For example, your liability under federal law is limited to \$50, but only if you notify the issuer within two business days of discovering the card's loss or theft. Your liability could jump to \$500 if you put it off. And even this cap is lifted if you wait more than 60 calendar days from the time your bank statement is mailed. Federal protections are a bit more generous if a thief just steals your debit card number (and not the actual card), but you still have 60 days after receiving your statement to report any unauthorized transactions.

The Visa and MasterCard zero-liability policies also apply to debit cards, but only to non-PIN transactions. If a thief steals your card and your PIN, the federal rules are your only defense.

For additional protection check your homeowners or renter's insurance policy. Most cover up to \$500 for losses from unauthorized card use. And no matter which card is stolen, always follow up with a certified letter to your issuer -- return receipt requested.

One difference between using your PIN and signing your debit card receipt is the speed at which the funds are removed from your checking account. PIN transactions usually clear within 24 hours; signature transactions can take 2-3 days on average.

COMPLIANCE NOTICE !!!

The credit union may report information about your accounts to credit bureaus. Late payments, missed payments or other defaults on your account may be reflected in your credit report.

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