

Financial

FOCUS

A Publication of Southeast Michigan State Employees Federal Credit Union

Overdraft Privilege Under Attack

Write Your Legislator!

You've heard a lot in the news lately about many changes in the financial industry. Many of the changes are to protect consumers against how many financial institutions have increased customers' credit card rates without warning, or eliminated their credit lines with little or no notice. While these types of practices have not taken place at SMSE Federal Credit Union, there is one proposed change that will affect your account here.



The government proposes eliminating products that provide overdraft protection to members, wherein a fee is charged for that service. At SMSE, this would be our Overdraft Privilege service. Currently, some of our members' accounts are protected by Overdraft Privilege when there are insufficient funds in the account to cover a check. Funds are transferred into the account to cover the check by means of a loan advance. For that service, there is a \$20 fee. Without this service, the check would be returned, a \$20 NSF fee would be charged by SMSE, plus a NSF fee by the business who you wrote the check to...and it can affect your ability to provide check payments to them in the future. Plus, if it's resubmitted, the fees may be assessed twice.

We encourage all of our members to not write checks for more than their balance, as overdraft costs are high. However, if Overdraft Privilege is used sparingly, it is much less expensive than the cost of returned checks.

While we believe that much of the new legislation is beneficial to consumers, this is one change that we feel is not. We encourage you to write your Legislator and tell them how you feel about eliminating this type of service. If you would like additional information, please call or stop by the Credit Union office.

Accel Financial Management Service

SMSE members can take advantage of this free financial management service through Accel. Experienced counselors will work with you to create a budget that you can live with, provide a wide range of financial advice, work with your creditors and more. Take the time and call Accel today at 1-877-33ACCEL (332-2235). You can also link to Accel's web site from SMSE's home page at www.smsefcu.com.



PAYDAY LENDING

If you find that making it from payday to payday is getting harder, don't get caught up with many payday lenders out there. Quick cash may seem tempting, but you'll pay the price. Many of these companies charge high fees or outrageous interest rates, and you'll find that you will never get ahead.



At SMSE, we have Payday Alternative Loans. These loans are available to members who have adequate direct deposit or payroll deduction, and who are not currently involved in a bankruptcy or taken out another Payday Alternative Loan with us in the last six months. These loans are 18% APR*, have terms of up to 12 months, and are a maximum of \$1,000. While not cheap, they are a much better deal than the typical payday loans, some of which have APRs of over 100%! Come to SMSE Federal Credit Union and we'll help you review the options available to you.

*APR = Annual Percentage Rate.

SMSE: A Place To Save Make Saving Your New Year's Resolution!

Many of us start out the New Year with making resolutions of all kinds. In many cases, these resolutions are hard to keep, but at SMSE, we have a New Year's resolution that you can stick with – and that's to save money!

The easy thing about keeping this resolution is that you can save a little or a lot...as long as you continuously save. You may think that you just can't afford to save right now, but you'll be surprised how just a little adds up to big savings over time. The important thing is to start!

Pick an account and make deposits into it through payroll deduction, direct deposit, at the Credit Union office and Service Centers, or make transfers through Home Banking. Even if you save up your coin and deposit it at SMSE, that's a start. As your balance increases, invest in a Certificate of Deposit or an IRA. We can guarantee one thing – years from now you'll say, "I'm so glad I started saving!"

Rates

The following rates, which shall be subject to change and to periodic special approval by the Board of Directors, shall apply to loans at SMSE Federal Credit Union as of January 1, 2010.

Automobile Loans

Current model year – up to (\$25,000 or more) 72 months.....	6.25% APR
2007–2010 - up to 60 months	
2003–2006 up to 48 months	6.75% APR
2002 and earlier up to 36 months	11.00% APR
Classic and antiques up to 48 months	8.00% APR

Recreational Vehicle/ Motorcycle Loans

Current model year – up to (\$25,000 or more) 72 months.....	6.25% APR
2007–2010 - up to 60 months	
2003–2006 up to 48 months	6.75% APR
2002 and earlier up to 36 months	11.00% APR

Boat Loans

2009–2010 - up to 84 months	6.25% APR
2007–2008 - up to 60 months	
2003–2006 up to 36 months	6.75% APR
2002 and earlier up to 36 months	11.00% APR

Share/Share Certificate Secured Loans

3% over dividend rate up to 60 months	5.00% APR min.
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Unsecured

One-Year, Low-Rate Loan	8.00% APR
12 months – maximum \$3,000	
Closed-end up to 36 months	11.00% APR
37-60 months.....	13.00% APR
Home Improvement up to 60 months	8.50% APR
Home Equity Line-of-Credit.....	Prime
Overdraft Line-of-Credit.....	15.00% APR
VISA Platinum.....	8.9% APR
VISA..... (25-day grace period)	13.92% APR

First Mortgage Loans

Rates set by Mortgage Center, Inc.
888-562-6865

www.mortgagecuso.com

*APR = Annual Percentage Rate. Rates are subject to change without prior notice.

Rates may be lower or higher based on your individual credit history, use of credit union services, and down payment on vehicle loans.

Not Just For Vehicles Anymore!

Many members have enjoyed the discounts available through the Invest in America program for vehicles, and now this program has expanded to include so much more! You can obtain discounts at:

Invest in
America 



- GM & Chrysler – Auto, Trucks, Vans, SUVs
- Thor – 60 Brands of RVs From Top Manufacturers
- FTD – 20% Off Flowers & Gifts
- Sprint – 15% on Mobile Services, Equipment & Accessories
- Allied – Discounts on Moving & Storage
- CU Benefits Express – 5%-60% on Medical & Lifestyle Products & Services

It's important to save money when you can. Through the Invest in America program available through SMSE, you can now save on all of these services. For details, visit: lovemycreditunion.org

Enjoy an evening of great food and entertainment at the **58th Annual Meeting & Dinner/Dance**. There will be a short business meeting at which time an election for open positions on the Board of Directors will be held.

Reserve your seat today by purchasing your tickets at the Credit Union office. Tickets are \$35.00 per adult and \$25.00 per child, and include dinner and entertainment. Many door prizes will also be given away throughout the evening.

Nominating Committee Report

The terms for Ina Grant and Elliott Purty on the Board of Directors will expire at the Annual Meeting. No other nominations were received. Karen Wilson's term on the Credit Committee also expires.

58th Annual Meeting & Dinner Dance
Saturday, April 24, 2010
Location: American Polish Century Club Sterling Heights
Tickets: \$35.00 Adults
\$25.00 Children
Live Entertainment



When You Need A Loan Come To SMSE!

Apply Today!

When you need a loan for any reason, come to SMSE. We offer loan programs for many reasons with low rates, flexible terms, fast approval, and convenient ways to repay your loan. Visit our web site for current rates, and you can apply for most SMSE loans online at www.smsefcu.com.

- New & Used Vehicles
- Motorcycles & Snowmobiles
- RVs & Boats
- Home Mortgages
- Home Equity Loans
- Personal Loans

VISA Credit Card

NO GAMES...JUST GREAT SERVICE!

Call or stop by the Credit Union office to apply for your VISA credit card today and switch your current balances to SMSE!

At SMSE, we don't increase your credit card rate or cut off your credit limit without warning. We've provided the same great rates and service for years, and you can count on us to continue to do just that!

- 8.9% APR* VISA Platinum – limits from \$5,000 to \$10,000
- 13.92% APR* VISA Classic – limits starting at \$500
- No annual card fee
- No default APR
- 25-day grace period on purchases
- ATM access worldwide

*APR = Annual Percentage Rate

Protect Your Credit Score

Get Your FREE Annual Credit Report

You're entitled to receive a free annual credit report. It's important to review your credit report each year to be sure the information that is being reported about you is correct. Cleaning up your credit report can result in an improved credit score. Your credit score is used by financial institutions in determining whether they will give you a loan and what rate they will charge you. It's also used by employers when you are applying for a job, and when you are trying to rent an apartment.

In addition to reviewing your credit report, here are just a few ways you can help improve your credit score:

- Pay your bills on time. Paying even a few days late can affect your score.
- Keep credit card balances low and don't close out all of your cards.
- Don't keep applying for multiple credit cards, even if they are offering you a discount when making your purchase.

Enterprise Car Sales

**12,000 Mile,
12-Month Warranty**

Enterprise is a national rental car company with an outstanding reputation. As a member of SMSE, you can enjoy the benefit of purchasing a vehicle through the Enterprise Car Sale program.

Visit Enterprise Car Sales lot at 29301 Grand River Avenue, Farmington Hills and choose from a wide selection of vehicles that include a 12,000 mile, 12-month warranty.

For details on the benefits of purchasing a vehicle through Enterprise, visit www.enterprisecarsales.com.

Tell the Enterprise representative that you are a member of SMSE Federal Credit Union. Plus, apply for your SMSE loan before visiting the lot and your loan will be ready when you make your selection.



What's Phishing?

This type of phishing does not involve a pole! This is an attempt by crooks to steal your account information. Previously, phishing was primarily attempted through e-mail. You'd receive an e-mail from what looked like a legitimate business telling you that there was something wrong with your account and asking for personal information like a Social Security Number or account numbers.

Now this has expanded to text messaging through cell phones.

NEVER respond to any of these types of contacts. Please know that any financial institution where you have an account would never ask you for this type of information by e-mail, cell phone, or by home telephone. At SMSE, we would never contact you in this manner and ask you to provide personal information.

Protect yourself! Do not respond and delete these messages right away.

Schedule of Fees

Share Savings Accounts

Less than \$100	
average daily balance	\$3.00 per quarter
Automatic Payment (ACH) NSF	\$20.00
Returned Item/Check Fee.....	\$20.00

Share Draft Checking Account

Less than \$100	
average daily balance	\$3.00 per mo.
Stop payment request	\$23.00
NSF (Non-Sufficient Funds)	\$20.00
Overdraft Privilege.....	\$20.00
Automatic Payment (ACH) NSF	\$20.00
Returned Item/Check Fee.....	\$20.00
Overdraft Transfer Fee.....	\$1.00
Draft Certification	\$5.00
Check Copy.....	\$2.00
Staff Assistance/ Reconciliation.....	\$20.00 per hour

Loan Account

Payments 15 or more days late, a fee of 5% of the overdue payment (\$10.00 minimum, \$100 maximum) will be charged.

ATM/Debit Card Transactions

Free Transactions	6 per month
Deposits	Free
<i>After the first six ATM transactions each month these fees apply:</i>	
Withdrawals	\$1.00
Balance Inquiries	\$0.50
Transfers	\$0.50
POS Transaction	Free
Incomplete Transaction	\$0.50
Card Replacement	\$5.00
PIN Replacement	\$5.00
Returned Item/Check Fee.....	\$20.00
ATM Overdraft	\$20.00

VISA Credit Card

Replacement Card	\$25.00
Late Payment Fee.....	\$10.00

Other Fees

Non-Member Check Cashing Fee	\$2.00
Service Center Withdrawals/Transfers	\$2.00
	(3 Free/month)
Stop Payment	
Automatic Debit (ACH)	\$23.00
Statement Copies.....	\$2.00 per page
Account History Printout.....	\$2.00
Hold for Member Pick-up.....	\$5.00
IRA Closed Account (Without Direct Transfer)	\$25.00
Escheats Fee	\$10.00
Telephone Account Inquiries and Transactions other than SmartTeller	\$1.00
Excess Withdrawal Super Saver.....	\$10.00
Excess Withdrawal Xmas/Vacation Club	\$10.00
2-Party Corporate Check Fee	\$2.00
Closing Account Opened Less Than 6 Months	\$10.00

Dividend Rates Reduced

The following dividend rates were changed, due to market conditions, effective January 1, 2010.

Share Drafts remain at 0.15% APY on average monthly balances from \$500 to \$999.99, but are lowered from 0.60% to 0.35% APY on balances of \$1,000 or more.

Super Saver Rates remain at 1.00% APY on balances from \$500 to \$4,999.00, but are lowered from 1.25% to 1.16% APY on balances of \$5,000 to \$19,999.99, lowered from 1.50% to 1.31% APY on balances from \$20,000 to \$49,999.99, and lowered from 1.75% to 1.51% APY on balances of \$50,000 and over.

CD Rates are also lowered; six and twelve-month CD's are now 1.25% APY, but if you deposit \$50,000 or more, they can earn 1.50% APY. Twenty-four month CD's are now 1.76% APY. Thirty-six month CD's earn 2.02% APY, but deposits of \$50,000 or more will earn 2.27% APY. Forty-eight month CD's remain at 3.54% APY, and sixty-month CD's remain at 4.06% APY.

APY = Annual Percentage Yield

Deposit Your Tax Refund Checks Electronically

Whether you are filing your income tax return by mail, or you are filing electronically, it is much faster to have your refund deposited electronically, and you don't have to worry about your check getting lost or stolen in the mail. Be sure to provide your tax provider with the following information:

Your account number as it appears on the top of your statement, or use a voided check as reference for your account number.

The Credit Union's routing and transit number: 272478350.



Christmas Club Accounts

Be prepared for the next holiday season when you save separately in the Christmas Club Account. Make up to two free withdrawals from your Christmas Club Account per year. There is a \$10.00 fee for each additional withdrawal.

If you would like to increase your automatic deposit or if you would like to open a new Christmas Club Account, it's never too early. Complete and mail the sign-up form below and we'll process your request right away.

2010 Christmas Club Sign-Up Form

Yes... I would like to do the following:

- Start a new Christmas Club Account for the year 2010.
- I have included an initial deposit of \$_____ to start my Christmas Club Account.
- Please transfer \$_____ from my Regular Share or Checking Account into my 2010 Christmas Club Account.
- Use payroll deduction or direct deposit as the means to make deposits into my 2010 Christmas Club Account. I would like to deposit an amount of \$_____ to my Christmas Club Account (deposited bi-weekly).
- I would like to increase the automatic deposits to my existing Christmas Club Account for the 2010 holiday season. Deposit an amount of \$_____ to my Christmas Club Account.

Name _____ Account # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone Number (_____) _____

Work Phone Number (_____) _____

Signature X _____

Complete and return this form to the Credit Union office.

Happy New Year

All of us at SMSE Federal Credit Union join in wishing you and your family a very Happy New Year. We look forward to meeting your financial needs throughout 2010 and for many years to come.

Holiday Closings & Hours

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, January 18, 2010

Presidents' Day

Monday, February 15, 2010



Main Office

17135 W. 10 Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48075

Business Hours

Mon., Tues., Wed. & Fri.: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Thurs. 9:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Telephone Numbers

Member Services & Info: 248-557-2266
Loans: 248-557-2678
SMART: 248-557-7994 • 877-833-3233

Web Site: www.smsefcu.com

E-Mail – Mhansen@smsefcu.com

Board of Directors

John H. Mills.....President
Robert Andrews.....Vice-President
Richard Lowe.....Treasurer
W. Kingston Fryer.....Secretary
Ellen Corey.....Director
Ina Grant.....Director
Elliot Purty.....Director

Mission Statement

The mission of SMSE Federal Credit Union is to provide, through sound financial management, services that are personalized, convenient, economical and meet the changing needs of our members.

