

Used Right, Debit Cards Could Save You Money

Growth in the use of debit cards has been a positive development over the years. Each debit card purchase represents a balance that is not being financed on a credit card. With the debt load of many American consumers rising and job losses mounting, the use of debit cards restricts the purchases to those items consumers can pay for right now.

Using a debit card requires some discipline. For starters, the money must actually be in the account prior to the purchase. Second, just as with ATM withdrawals, the consumer must be particularly diligent about noting such purchases in their check registers. Failure to do so will eventually result in a bounced check and trigger the nasty nonsufficient funds (NSF) fee. In addition to avoiding finance charges, the consumer is likely to practice restraint in spending by foregoing the "buy now, pay later" attitude. Further, the majority of institutions do not charge for debit card transactions, making this a no-cost way to practice some financial discipline. Such attributes make using debit instead of credit a sensible, and money-saving, alternative.

Tips for Using your Debit Card Wisely

- ▶ Always protect your ATM card and keep it in a safe place, just as you would cash, credit cards or checks.
- ▶ Never write your PIN on or near your card. Memorize it instead.
- ▶ Don't give out bank account information over the phone or the Internet unless you have initiated the contact or you know the person is who he or she claims to be. For example, beware of deceptive calls or e-mails from crooks claiming to be from your financial institution (FI) asking you to "verify" your account information. A true representative of your FI will never need to ask for your PIN because your FI already has your account information.

- ▶ Take precautions at the checkout counter, ATM and gas pump. Always stand so that no one can see the keypad where you enter your PIN. At retail establishments, it's best to use do-it-yourself scanners. If you give your card to a clerk, be on guard against a dishonest employee who could potentially run your card through two scanners instead of one. The second scanner could be capturing your account information to make a counterfeit card. In general, be alert for suspicious-looking devices that may be used to "skim" information from your card.
- ▶ If you use your debit card to shop online, consider extra precautions with your personal computer. Experts advise installing and periodically updating virus and spyware protection and a "personal firewall" to stop thieves from secretly installing malicious software on your personal computer remotely that can be used to spy on your computer use and obtain account information.
- ▶ Look at your FI statements as soon as they arrive. If possible, it's even better to review your account each week by phone or the Internet. Promptly report any discrepancy, such as a missing payment or an unauthorized transaction, to your FI.
- ▶ Always know how much money you have in your account, and review FI statements carefully. Don't forget that your debit card may allow you to access money that you have set aside to cover a check that has not yet cleared your FI.
- ▶ Hold on to receipts from your debit transactions. It's best to shred receipts instead of throwing them in public trash cans. Crooks have been known to "dumpster-dive" for documents in search of account numbers and other personal information.
- ▶ If your card is lost or stolen, or you suspect it is being used fraudulently, report it immediately to your FI.

Important Note about Card Holds

In certain circumstances, merchants will place a temporary "block" or "hold" on your account. They do this as a protection against fraud, errors or other losses. One common situation involves a hotel putting a hold on a certain amount when you use a debit card (or credit card) to reserve a room. Another example is when you use your debit card at the gas pump. Typically, the gas station will create two transactions - the first to get approval from your bank for an estimated purchase amount (let's say \$50) when you swipe your card before pumping gas, the second for the actual charges when you're done. Until the first (\$50) transaction is cancelled by the bank, usually within 48 hours, you wouldn't have access to that amount in your account.

Article contributors:
www.dfi.wa.gov
www.bankrate.com

Holiday Closings

- ▶ Columbus Day, Oct. 11
- ▶ Veterans Day, Nov. 11
- ▶ Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25
- ▶ Christmas Day, Dec. 25
- ▶ New Year's Day, Jan. 1

Hours and Locations

Macon Offices:
 4810 Mercer University Drive
 Macon, GA 31210
 ATM

2306 Lasseter Place
 Macon, GA 31204
 Closed Saturday

3205 Hartley Bridge Road
 Macon, GA 31216
 ATM

Milledgeville Offices:
 375 Hammock Road, N.W.
 Milledgeville, GA 31061
 ATM

GA College & State University
 Maxwell Student Union Bookstore
 ATM

Warner Robins Offices:
 1869 Watson Boulevard
 Warner Robins, GA 31093
 ATM

302 Russell Parkway
 Warner Robins, GA 31088
 ATM | Closed Saturday

Toll Free 1.800.736.8407
 or Local 478.471.9946



Lobby Hours:
 Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 5:15 pm
 Saturday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Drive-Through Hours:
 Monday - Thursday 8:30 am - 5:15 pm
 Friday 8:30 am - 6:00 pm
 Saturday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

MidSouth Community
 Federal Credit Union

the MidSouth Community Message

October 2010

**Don't be afraid of Online Banking.
 It's FREE, safe & secure!**

Sign-up for Home Banking services* in the month of October & be entered to WIN an iPad or \$100 Shopping Spree!

Ask a MidSouth CFCU associate for details.



*No purchase necessary. Membership requirements apply. Member must sign-up for at least 2 of the following: Home Banking, Bill Pay, eStatements, Direct Deposit, or Mobile Banking, to be entered into prize drawing. Contest ends October 31, 2010.



What's Inside

- ▶ Support United Way
- ▶ Nominating Committee Letter
- ▶ Grand Opening Recap
- ▶ International Credit Union Day
- ▶ Here to Help
- ▶ Used Right, Debit Cards Could Save You Money
- ▶ Holiday Closings

MidSouth Community
 Federal Credit Union

Support United Way

United Way is a local, nonprofit organization "owned" by the contributors and the volunteers that provide its support. United Way conducts an annual fundraising campaign that produces more than \$4 million in donations. They work to advance the common good by focusing on education, income and health. United Way's Community Impact Fund provides services to 38 partner agencies in 14 counties in central Georgia. These local agencies have a proven ability to impact community problems.

Since 1922, United Way of Central Georgia has brought people together to help one another during times of crisis. MidSouth CFCU is a credit union committed to supporting the community, and each year we launch a campaign to support the United Way of Central Georgia. Since 2005, MidSouth has raised over \$53,000 for United Way through numerous fundraisers and corporate donations.

During the month of October, if you come across a United Way collection canister or a candy bar for sale inside one of our branches, remember that these are just a few of the ways that you can contribute to the neediest citizens right here in central Georgia.

Together, we can inspire hope and create opportunities for a better tomorrow. That's what it means to LIVE UNITED.



Federal Credit Union www.midsouthfcu.org

Nominating Committee Letter



October 1, 2010

Mr. Harry Trawick
Board of Directors
MidSouth Community Federal Credit Union
4810 Mercer University Drive
Macon, GA 31210

The Nominating Committee of MidSouth Community Federal Credit Union would like to present the following slate to serve a three-year term as directors of MidSouth CFCU:

James Caldwell
Grady Gafford
Junyth Meeks

All have been contacted and have agreed to serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Nominating Committee
Lisa Garrett, Joann Bass, and
Bruce Giroux

Nominations may also be made by petitions submitted by members. Members who desire to name a nominee or nominees for a vacancy should prepare and submit a petition in accordance with the following procedures:

- Petition must be signed by 332 primary members of MidSouth CFCU.
- Petition must be accompanied by a completed

Volunteer Application as indication that the person is agreeable to nomination and will serve if elected to office.

- The nominee must state his/her willingness to attend Board meetings and devote such time as is needed to fulfill this obligation.
- Petition must be filed with the Board Secretary of MidSouth CFCU by November 11, 2010.
- Petitions may be left at the credit union and will be forwarded to the Secretary.
- Only members 18 years of age or older can be nominated for the Board and are eligible to vote.

Grand Opening Recap

This summer has certainly been an exciting one for MidSouth CFCU as we expanded our accessibility to the members of Houston County by opening 2 locations in Warner Robins. With the purchase of two branch locations from the FDIC, the N. Houston Road office was relocated to a newly renovated building around the corner on Watson Boulevard, and doors were opened at another office on Russell Parkway, near the Robins Air Force Base Russell Gate.

To celebrate the openings of these new offices, MidSouth held 2 Grand Openings. Members of all ages came out to enjoy free hotdogs and ice cream. Kids were given the opportunity to sit on a real Houston County Fire Department fire truck and learn fire safety tips from Sparky the Safety Dog. Chick-fil-A offered visitors a chance to win coupons at the prize wheel, while adults were taken back to the "good ole days" with antique cars provided by the Antique Automobile Club of America – Middle Georgia Region.

MidSouth gave away grocery totes and koozies to each visitor, while kids won toys, candy and temporary tattoos. Those who stopped by the stores during the opening week had the opportunity to register for the grand prize giveaway which included Visa gift cards, an Atlanta Braves Family Game Pack and a \$500 CD from MidSouth CFCU.



Watson Blvd. \$500 CD winner, Michelle Simanu

Watson Blvd. Atlanta Braves Family Pack winner, Amanda Belcher, with Jacob and Dylan



Russell Pkwy. \$500 CD winner, Tracie Collins

Russell Pkwy. Atlanta Braves Family Pack winner, Connie Mitchell



International Credit Union Day

Why do 186 million people worldwide choose credit unions?



no surprise that credit unions are the popular choice.

Community commitment and trustworthy member service are among the many reasons. Combine that with the credit union philosophy of people before profits and it's no surprise that credit unions are the popular choice.

On October 21, join us and credit union members around the world to celebrate International Credit Union Day. We have planned activities so that members can experience the credit union difference.

The first 100 members at each office will receive a special gift.

Members can also take with them educational financial literature, enjoy refreshments and enter for a chance to win door prizes.

Youth aged 12 and younger can complete a unique ICU Day coloring sheet, and be entered to win \$25 deposited into their MidSouth savings account. Completed entries will be showcased in our Macon, Milledgeville and Warner Robins offices. The coloring sheet can be downloaded from our website at midsouthfcu.org, or picked up at any of our 7 locations.

Members are invited to attend a FREE ID Theft: Protect Yourself Against Fraud seminar on this day. The seminar will be held at our 1869 Watson Blvd. office, in Warner Robins. The seminar starts at 6:00pm, and dinner will be provided. If you plan to attend this seminar, please RSVP by October 14 to Melissa Topping at 478.475.7813.

Here to Help

Let ING Financial Partners help you with life's tough decisions and life changing events.

Whether you are leaving a job, approaching retirement, or already in retirement, ING Financial Partners is here to walk you through it comfortably. ING Financial Partners is located inside MidSouth's branch at 2306 Lasseter Place. Please call Mark Trawick at 478.361.1363, or 478.471.9946 ext. 1609 to set up a complimentary consultation regarding your financial situation.

- ▶ Retirement Planning
- ▶ Estate Planning
- ▶ Insurance Planning
- ▶ *Investment Options
- ▶ College Funding

*Securities and investment advisory services offered by ING Financial Partners, Inc., Member SIPC.

MidSouth Community Federal Credit Union is not a subsidiary of, nor controlled by ING Financial Partners.

Investments are not deposits; are not insured by an agency or instrumentality of the United States such as NCUSIC; are not obligations of, or guaranteed by the Credit Union or any affiliate of the Credit Union; and are not insured by SIPC as to loss of principal.

