

Bluestem Community Credit Union

December 2011

Quarterly Newsletter

Your Credit Union Participates in “Adopt-a-Class”



El Dorado Adopt-a-Class is a school-based team of volunteers who spend one hour per week in a classroom. Bluestem staff started at the beginning of the 2011 school year with a classroom of kindergartners, every Friday. As the class progresses, the credit union stays with them through high school. This community service continues for years to come!

BCCU Staff & Members Raise \$200.00 For Thanksgiving Donation!

Thank you to all of our members for their generous donations and purchases of t-shirts! Together we raised \$200.00 and donated the funds to a local church to purchase food items for families in need for Thanksgiving! Bluestem will continue to find ways to contribute to the community. Once again, thank you for all of your support.

Reduce Credit Card Debt By Paying Bi-Weekly...

The sooner you make a payment to a credit card company, the less interest you will pay.

If you only can afford the minimum payment each month, there is still a way to accelerate your pay-off. Stop charging on the card and make payments every other week.

For example. Take a credit card with a \$5000 balance, a minimum monthly payments of \$100 and an interest rate of 14%. By paying \$100 each month, you would pay the card off in 6 years and 4 months. By sending \$50 payments bi-weekly, you would pay off the card almost 10 months earlier and save \$339 in interest!



How to Calculate Your Debt-to-Income Ratio

Figure Your Debts

- Monthly mortgage or rent
- Minimum monthly credit card payments
- Monthly car loan payment
- Other loan obligations

Figure Your Income

- Monthly gross salary
- Other monthly income

Debt divided by income = Debt-to-Income Ratio %

36% or less- This is an ideal debt load to carry for most people.

37% to 42% - Your debts still may seem manageable, but start paying them down before they begin to spiral out of control.

43% to 49% - Your debt ratio is high and financial difficulties may be looming unless you take immediate action.

50% or more- You may need to seek professional help to reduce your debt.

SAVINGS TIPS TO LIVE BELOW YOUR MEANS (BECAUSE MONEY DOESN'T GROW ON TREES)

We all know there are millions of diets out there, but the key to losing weight is to burn more calories than you consume. The same could be said about saving money. Spend less money than you make..and watch your fortune grow.

Here are a few tips to help you out.

- Pay off credit cards or move balances to cards with lower interest rates.
- Avoid using credit cards. Leave credit cards for emergencies!
- Get that emergency fund started. That way you will not have to pay credit card interest when the washing machine dies or the car breaks down.
- When you get a raise, put 10, 25 or 50% aside for paying off bills.
- Shop around for the best deals and the best prices. Use the internet to do this and you'll cover a lot of territory in a short time.
- Don't tie up too much money in your mortgage, not more than 28% of your gross monthly income.
- Don't worry about keeping up with your neighbors. The only reason you should buy something is because you want it, not to impress someone else.
- Clip coupons! Eat out a little less and pack a lunch for work a couple times a week.

Visit BCCU to find the best rates on car loans and personal loans!

Tips written by Laura Bruce at bankrate.com

We Will Be Closed

New Years- Monday, January 2nd, 2012

Martin Luther King Jr- Monday, January 16th, 2012

President's Day- Monday, February 20th, 2012