



DCUC

ALERT

ISSUE 2

DCUC.ORG

FEBRUARY 2024

CEO UPDATE

The Future is Now!

Let's Get Started!

REGISTER NOW!

Defense Matters 2024

*March 3, 2024
Washington, D.C.*

CAPITAL CORNER

A Guide to 2024, Capitol Hill Edition

*Here are some issues
that could be on the
Congressional menu for 2024.*

REGISTER NOW!

DCUC 2024 Annual Conference

*August 12-16, 2024
The Vinoy Resort & Golf Club
St. Petersburg, Florida*





DEFENSE

DCUC is the trusted resource for credit unions on all military and veteran matters.

DCUC Latest Accomplishments

- DCUC met with several Congressional offices for House and Senate leaders on both the **Armed Services and Banking/Financial Services committees** regarding needed changes in DoD's Military Banking Program considering recent miscues by the Department in administering its regulatory requirements.
 - Introduced annotated legislative language for the **Military Banking Program Improvement Act** of 2024—well received by congressional staff members
- Successfully conducted an out-of-cycle **Board Planning Session** to outline new opportunities and challenges facing DCUC because of several mergers, leadership changes, and political developments
- Met with new **NCUA Board Member, the Honorable Tanya Otsuka**—introduced DCUC and our history of working with military and veteran communities. Continued finding common ground in working with NCUA and promoting the Defense Credit Union Council difference.
- Sponsored a wreath-laying ceremony and reception for **Military Hearts Matter at Arlington National Cemetery: see page 7.**

DCUC Happening Now

- It is not too late to register for **DCUC's Defense Matters** (Sunday morning, March 3 at the Marriott Marquis in Washington, DC).
 - Enjoy breakfast, professional networking, and political and regulatory insights from our keynote speakers.
- Registration for **DCUC's 61st Annual Conference (August 12-16) is now OPEN!**
 - At the Vinoy Resort and Golf Club in St. Petersburg, Florida; reserve your room early before they sell out! It is going to be another GREAT conference with an outstanding speaker lineup.
- Continued support for the **Veteran Member Business Loan Exemption** on Capitol Hill
- Renewed emphasis in advocating against passage of the **Credit Card Competition Act (CCCA)**
- Selecting recipients of this year's **George E. Meyers (G.E.M.) Scholarship**—DCUC will award four scholarships worth \$3,500 each.
- Nominations for DCUC's 2024 **Hall of Honor** are still being accepted—three candidates will be inducted at DCUC's 61st Annual Conference in August—send your nominee submissions ASAP.

DCUC Upcoming Activities

- Applications for **DCUC's Annual Conference CRASHERS** now open!
- Army and Air Force have sent out the call for **Distinguished Credit Union of the Year Awards**.
 - Work with your base liaison officers to submit a package.
- **DCUC's Hawaiian Sub-Council** meeting and credit union visits will take place the week of March 18-22, Luncheon detail announced separately
- **DCUC's Overseas Sub-Council** in Warsaw, Poland—April 29-May 3, 2024
- **DCUC's Mid-West Sub-Council** will take place on October 8-10, 2024, in Davenport, Iowa.

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE OUR COUNTRY

DEFENSE CREDIT UNION COUNCIL, INC.

*Championing the interests of credit unions
serving our military and veteran communities*

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DCUC 2024 Annual Conference



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CEO UPDATE

The Future is Now!

Relax. This isn't another article on how close science fiction books and movies got things right 30 or 40 years ago. Although many things have changed for the better or worse (as predicted), we are still living in a world where the future has many possibilities. However, securing a successful future is often only made possible for those willing to act now. Windows of opportunity only exist for a moment—and then they are gone, maybe forever.

DCUC is on the move given all the opportunities we are seeing surface during this period of industry change. In last month's *ALERT*, we highlighted how we will be working with Congress in drafting and passing the "Military Banking Program Improvement Act." That process is well underway with several successful meetings and information exchanged with House and Senate leaders via their staff. Plus, we are also in the process of hiring an Advocacy Officer who will conduct our day-to-day advocacy efforts. All this to say, DCUC is creating the changes we and our members need to thrive in the future.

That said, we need to discuss member value and what each of you can expect from your DCUC membership. Apart from our accomplishments in 2023, there is much more beneath the surface with what DCUC does to bring measurable success for our member credit unions. Whether it is important actions like writing letters and/or meeting with federal and state officials on your behalf or smaller perks like hosting a dinner or lunch for your board members at the historic Army Navy Club in Washington, D.C.—there is still more DCUC has to offer.

On the more visible side of what DCUC offers are our yearly conferences and events, both regional and abroad. If you have never been to a DCUC conference you (and your board) are missing out! I can say that with confidence given the feedback from our last three conferences. DCUC has made many changes based on both member and strategic partners' feedback. You can preview our upcoming events at <https://www.d cuc.org/events.html>.

Our first event of 2024 happens early next month when we will host Defense Matters on Sunday morning, March 3, at the Marriott Marquis in downtown Washington, D.C. We have made many enhancements to our program by bringing our attendees and guests nationally acclaimed speakers along with insights on the latest industry trends and regulatory initiatives. We still have room for more attendees, and I promise you will not be disappointed!

We are also very excited to release another free publication available for download in time for this event (details will be provided at Defense Matters). If you haven't already registered, you can learn more about this unique advocacy session and secure your spot here! I hope to you to see you there!

Finally, registration for our 2024 Annual Conference in St. Petersburg, FL (August 12-16) will open in the next few days. Last year, we sold out early and we expect the same numbers for this year's conference. I am excited about the speakers we have lined up as we bring you another outstanding experience that is very different from the usual credit union conference. Our gatherings have always fostered a family-friendly atmosphere and offer a great guest agenda for attendees' family members. Information on speakers and our annual conference program will be released shortly.

Our credibility as an organization has been enhanced not only because of our advocacy efforts and conference experience but also several strategic choices made during the latter part of 2023. If you plan to be at the GAC, I would be happy to share more details over coffee or a beverage of your choice.

As you look at DCUC and all we have to offer, our hope is you share the difference and value we've brought to your credit union with others. For years, we've helped many credit unions looking to better connect and serve their military and veteran communities, whether or not they are serving on military installations.

We also recognize the very present



*Anthony Hernandez,
President and CEO, DCUC*

need for advocating for our nation's 18 million+ veterans. I am sure every credit union in the United States has a veteran within their field of membership, and DCUC is well-positioned to help you best serve this important segment of the population. A great example is our free *Veterans Guide: Understanding Your Benefits*. We were very intentional about creating this publication and having it reviewed by the Veterans Benefits Administration to make sure our members have the best resources available! We also have several other free training and financial education resources on our website!

In summary, this is an exciting time to be a member of DCUC! We see great things in our next decade of service and want you by our side as we move forward. The future is now. In ten years, it will be a proud moment to look back and say, "Wow, look how much we got right!" Let's get started! ■

REGISTER NOW!

**DEFENSE
MATTERS**



SPEAKERS



**THE HONORABLE
TODD HARPER**

Chairman, NCUA



ARI FLEISCHER

Former White House
Press Secretary

MARCH 3, 2024 | WASHINGTON, D.C.



A Guide to 2024, Capitol Hill Edition

Provided by John McKechnie

Last month I looked ahead at 2024 from a regulator's perspective—what can defense credit unions expect from NCUA and CFPB? This month I am going to lay out (guess) what Capitol Hill is going to do on credit unions, and what that will mean for your credit union.

Here are some issues that could be on the Congressional menu in 2024:

Credit Card Competition Act: the so-called “Durbin Amendment” would create price controls on credit card transactions by allowing retailers to use cheaper, less reliable, and less-secure payment rails. It would build on the unworkable Durbin debit caps from 2010, and Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Roger Marshall (R-KS) have introduced legislation to achieve that dubious goal.

That's the bad news. The good news is that this bad bill appears to have stalled, at least in part because credit unions have told Congress in no uncertain terms that the Durbin bill is NOT pro-consumer, it would degrade data security and privacy.

Merchants continue to press their case—Senator Durbin says he'll hold a hearing on the issue as a way to inject new life into the moribund bill—but for now the CCCA appears stalled. Continuing vigilance by credit unions will keep things going in the right direction here.

Tax bill: The House Ways and Means Committee passed a tax reform package in January that would extend expiring business tax breaks for business and expand a child tax credit. To the surprise of almost everyone, House Ways and Means Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO) and his Democratic Senate counterpart Ron Wyden (D-OR) agreed on the package before it was introduced. And according to Committee staff involved in the drafting, the credit union tax exemption was never once been discussed by the tax writers during this process.

The House passed the bill 357-70, and the Senate may take it up later this spring. Bottom line: the credit union tax exemption is not part of the conversation—continued vigilance will keep it that way.

Cannabis banking: For the 7th consecutive Congress, a bill allowing credit unions to serve marijuana businesses is in limbo. The Senate Banking Committee approved a bill modeled after a House-passed version... and it promptly ran into trouble when a group of Senators insisted on cannabis decriminalization and other changes.

What breaks the logjam? A legislative solution may not be possible (even though decriminalization advocates signaled they MAY be open to dropping some demands). But it's rumored that the Biden Adminis-

tration could re-classify cannabis as a less-dangerous drug, opening the door to more lenient legal treatment. Maybe shortly before the November election?

Credit union modernization: A bill was re-introduced to give NCUA authority to examine CUSOs and other credit union vendors. This promises to be controversial—credit unions have never been comfortable with giving the regulator such broad new powers.

Sweeteners may be added to gain support, such as tweaks to the Federal Credit Union Act to modernize board meeting requirements, extend loan maturities and upgrade the Central Liquidity Facility (which would give credit unions improved access in case of a crisis).

These ideas, whether taken individually or as a package, could be something credit unions can get to work on as the year develops.

On the horizon?: Watch for possible hearings in both the House and Senate financial committees on alleged lending discrimination (made in a CNN televised report in December) regarding Navy Federal Credit Union. ■

DCUC Joins in Sponsoring Military Hearts Matter Third Annual Wreath Ceremony

Provided by Military Hearts Matter

On Sunday, February 4, our Third Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery honored two phenomenal women veterans who are heart survivors. This year's honorees were Kelsey Danner, a Navy veteran and Tosombra "Tai" Kimes, an Army veteran. Through the generosity of our donors Mr. and Mrs. Travis Carter, Jennifer Hernandez Real Estate, Trish Alegre-Smith Photography, Mr. and Mrs. Todd Mains and the sponsors, Defense Credit Union Council (DCUC), GEICO Military, and Blue Shield Blue Cross FEP Dental and Blue Cross Blue Shield FEP Vision. Following the wreath laying, we celebrated with a reception hosted by Military Hearts Matter at the Military Women's Memorial. Thank you to all those who attended this special event and to our donors that made it possible.

"Military Hearts Matter is a great organization focused on military personnel and families dealing with heart-related issues. Life in the military is high-stress! You would be surprised how many military members and veterans suffer from heart health issues as a result of their service," said Anthony Hernandez, DCUC president/CEO. "However, it is not talked about much. So, DCUC is proud to support Military Hearts Matter in serving the military and veteran community with information and support for all families."



Photography by Trish Alegre-Smith, 2024

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Andrews Federal Recognizes Innovation, Support, and Service During Annual Awards Event for Overseas Team

Credit Union Board Chair, Chief Operating Officer Honor Overseas Employees' Accomplishments

Provided by Andrews FCU

Andrews FCU recently honored its overseas employees during the credit union's annual awards celebration. Credit union leaders, including Board Chair Kenneth McKinney and COO Damita Robinson led the honors as part of their visit to connect with the credit union's overseas team and visit all the Andrews Federal overseas credit union locations.

During the awards event, several key employees were recognized for their commitment to supporting the Andrews Federal mission: delivering innovative products and world-class service to help its global membership realize their financial aspirations.

Cecil Tonguet (Human Resources and Training) received the Chairman's Award for his work in training and developing staff, as well as for his efforts in streamlining processes to increase credit union staffing efficiency.

Cheesha Gayden (Branch Manager) received the President's Award for her work in building morale and motivating her team members, as well as for her efforts in generating awareness and excitement for the credit union's 75 years of service celebration.

Daniel Alvarez (Financial Services Representative) received the Exceptional Military Service for his work supporting the military community. Alvarez was recognized both for his work in the branches and for his willingness to volunteer and work at military support events.

Desiree Torres-Colon (Financial Services Representative) received the Key Contributor award for her support of fellow credit union team members and her ability to seamlessly step in and support colleagues throughout the overseas branch network.

Moria Adams (Branch Manager) received the Innovator award for her work on branch digitalization efforts, for her efforts in developing community partnerships and for taking on the role marketing liaison between the corporate marketing team and the overseas branch network.

Debbie Velazquez (Assistant Branch Manager) received the Andrews Choice Award. The credit union awards this recognition based on peer voting; team members selected Velazquez based on her consistent support and responsiveness to team members.

According to credit union leadership, the awards gala provides an opportunity for team members to see and celebrate the impact they are making for the credit union and its members on a daily basis. "Our overseas team plays a vital role in supporting our members and ensuring they have seamless access to financial products and services," said Damita Robinson, COO at Andrews FCU. "Through this annual recognition program, we have the opportunity to highlight the ways their hard work, innovation and commitment are making a difference for their communities and for the military service members and families we serve."

The credit union will also recognize stateside employees for their achievements during a celebratory event in early 2024. ■



Andrews Federal Gala 2023 award winners

Keesler Federal Named to *Newsweek's* America's Best Regional Banks and Credit Unions 2024

Provided by Keesler FCU

Keesler FCU has been named among the top 500 regional banks and credit unions in the United States. The ranking emerges from a study conducted by *Newsweek* and Plant-A Insights Group which examined 9,440 banks and credit unions across the United States.

Andy Swoger, Keesler Federal's president/CEO, said the ranking affirms the credit union's commitment to excellence and extraordinary member service.

"To be ranked among the top credit unions nationwide is a testament to the outstanding service provided by our team every day," Swoger said. "We are committed to remaining a strong and stable institution, but most importantly we are proud to go the extra mile in serving our members." ■

PenAir CU Recognized by *Newsweek* as one of America's Best Regional Banks and Credit Unions for 2024

Provided by PenAir CU

PenAir CU proudly announces its recognition by *Newsweek* as one of America's Best Regional Banks and Credit Unions for 2024.

Lee Morgan, PenAir president/CEO, shared, "Earning recognition from *Newsweek* is a testament to the commitment of our exceptional staff and volunteers. Their unwavering dedication has been instrumental in our mission to enhance lives and strengthen communities for the past 88 years. We understand that when our community thrives financially, we all reap the benefits. This accolade is a shared success, and we express our gratitude to our staff, members, communities, and partners for their integral role in this achievement." ■



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All In CU Receives Congressional Certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Community Service

Provided by All In CU

All In CU was presented with a Congressional Certificate of Recognition for outstanding and invaluable service to the community by U.S. Representative Barry Moore, (R-AL). The certificate presented by Congressman Moore specifically cites the Credit Union's giving and financial literacy education. All In CU is the only credit union in the state of Alabama to ever receive this citation which is reserved for people, places, or events of public distinction that positively contribute to the economic, social, and cultural fabric of the community.

Representative Moore remarked, "I am pleased to present this award today to All In Credit Union. You're making a difference in the communities you serve. Best of all, you ensure that members in rural areas have access to the affordable financial services they need." ■

U. S. Representative Barry Moore R-AL (center) presents All In CU Board Chairman, Charlie Mingus (L) and All In CU president/CEO, Bobby Michael (R) with a Congressional Certificate of Recognition for the Credit Union's outstanding support to the community and service through financial literacy education and giving. Photo provided by All In CU.

CREDIT UNION PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

GLENDALE, AZ — Credit Union West is pleased to announce the promotion of **Kelly Poldoski** to the position of CFO. As CFO, Poldoski will be responsible for guiding the organization's financial initiatives, fostering innovation, and ensuring the continued financial health of the credit union.

Credit Union West also announced the appointment of **Ben Christensen** as its new Chief Information Officer. Christensen is poised to lead the credit union into a new era of digital innovation and elevated experiences.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK — Tinker FCU (TFCU) recently named **Neil Lloyd** as AVP of Information Technology (IT), applications development. Lloyd will play a pivotal role in advancing Tinker FCU's mobile application development, working to streamline data across the organization. TFCU members will benefit from his expertise as he works with TFCU teams to enhance the credit union's online banking and mobile applications, develop new accounts and services, and improve the technology for existing ones.

PORTSMOUTH, NH — Service CU is excited to announce that **Jaime Yates** has been promoted to AVP of Community Development. Yates will be responsible for leading the credit union's community development and financial wellness strategy, including fostering relationships with community leaders, and overseeing major sponsorships and marketing initiatives. Stepping into the role of Community Relations Manager is **Sean Hladick**, who was most recently community relations specialist.

ROME, NY — AmeriCU CU proudly announces the addition of three accomplished professionals to its Chief Leadership Team. Demonstrating a commitment to a culture of leadership development, AmeriCU promoted two internal candidates **Jason Lewin** as CIO and **Stephanie McGuire** as CLO. Joining the credit union's team is **Steve Ramirez** as CMO.

SAN ANTONIO, TX — Air Force FCU (AFFCU) is pleased to announce the appointment of **Eric Sanchez** as its VP of Sales & Service. Sanchez spearheads the sales and growth strategy for AFFCU, overseeing multiple teams, including a network of Financial Centers, a call center, virtual banking center, and e-banking.

SUITLAND, MD — Andrews FCU recently announced that **Christopher Burgess** will take on the role of vice president of marketing. Burgess will be responsible for leading strategic marketing and communications efforts for the \$2.5 billion international financial institution.

CREDIT UNIONS IN THE NEWS

PAPILLION, NE — **Cobalt CU** is pleased to announce the opening of a new branch at Plattsmouth High School. This expansion aims to provide convenient banking services to the school community and foster financial education among students. The branch at Plattsmouth High School will be open every Tuesday and Thursday from 7:30 AM to 8:00 AM. By actively participating in the operation of the branch, students will enhance their financial knowledge, skills, and confidence, preparing them for a successful future.

Robin Larsen, president/CEO of Cobalt CU, expressed enthusiasm about the expansion, stating, "We are thrilled to bring our services to Plattsmouth High School and contribute to the financial education of the students. This initiative reflects our commitment to community empowerment and supporting the next generation in their journey towards financial success."



ANCHORAGE, AL — **Global CU** is excited to announce the grand opening of its newest branch, located inside the Eielson Exchange Shopping Center on Eielson Air Force Base.

"Global has a long history of providing credit union services to members of our military," said Geoff Lundfelt, president/CEO of Global CU. "In fact, the credit union was founded at the Alaska Air Depot in 1948. We could not be more excited to continue the tradition of serving those who serve this country."

A grand opening ceremony took place on Jan. 25 at the Eielson Air Force Base Exchange.

PENSACOLA, FL — **PenAir CU** proudly hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on Wednesday, January 17, for its upcoming Crestview location. Construction on PenAir's new Crestview location is slated to begin in Spring 2024.



Frontwave Foundation Donates \$5,000 to Support the Fight Against Domestic Violence

Provided by Frontwave CU

The Frontwave Foundation has donated \$5,000 to Women’s Resource Center (WRC), a non-profit organization that offers comprehensive services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in North San Diego County.

The donation is a testament to Frontwave Foundation’s vision to empower and improve the lives of the community. Domestic violence is a pervasive and devastating problem that affects millions of people worldwide. According to the World Health Organization, one in three women globally have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.

“We are honored to support the courageous survivors of domestic violence and the organizations that provide them with essential services and resources,” said Sarai Rodgers, Chairperson of the Frontwave Foundation. “By taking proactive measures, Frontwave Foundation seeks to pave the way for change and stand together with our communities.”

The donation aligns with the foundation’s pillar of providing emergency assistance to those who face life-threatening situations and need immediate support. Through this donation, Frontwave Foundation aims to help victims of domestic violence reclaim their lives and rebuild their futures. This \$5,000 contribution will directly support programs and services that empower survivors and create a safe environment for healing and growth.

“We could not be more grateful to Frontwave Foundation for its continued commitment to uphold the efforts of agencies like WRC and others that rely on the support and encouragement of our local communities,” said Lauren Jane Stephenson, COO of WRC.

Service CU Pledges to Donate \$200,000 to First Responders

Provided by Service CU

Service CU teamed up with Charlie McAvoy, star Boston defender, to highlight 73 reasons to give back to first responders. Service CU is donating \$100 for every Boston blocked shot, and \$1,000 for every Boston shutout to cover heart disease and cancer screenings for first responders, which are often not covered by insurance.

While the campaign kicked off in October 2023 with an initial monetary commitment of \$100,000, Service CU has just announced up to an additional \$100,000 for a total of \$200,000 during the duration of the “73 Reasons” campaign.

“I’m really excited about this program. This really gives them the opportunity to get in front of it because with early detection and early screening, you can save lives,” said McAvoy.

“New England’s first responders put their lives on the line to protect our communities every day. Service CU is committed to providing the support they need to serve for years to come,” said Jaime Yates, AVP of Community Development at Service CU.

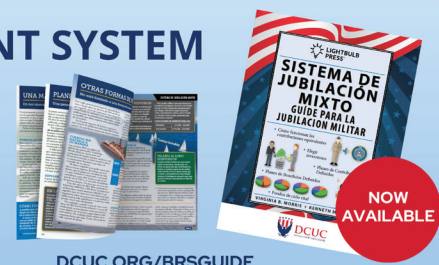
“Our biggest asset is our people, and it’s becoming more and more prevalent that we’re exposed to more and more toxins every day, so early detection of any type of cancer is huge towards survival,” said Waltham Fire Chief Randy Mullin.

“This initiative is incredibly important, and we are excited to see the impact this effort will make for first responders in New England. We are grateful to Service Credit Union for their dedication to the health and safety of firefighters,” said Brian Ryll, president of the Professional Firefighters of NH.

GUIDE TO THE MILITARY'S BLENDED RETIREMENT SYSTEM SPANISH VERSION

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Air Force FCU Rebranding for the Future

Provided by AFFCU

The Board of Directors of Air Force FCU (AFFCU) has voted to change the name of the financial cooperative from AFFCU, to a name that better expresses their unwavering dedication and steadfast commitment to their members.

Since 1952, AFFCU has served San Antonio, Lackland Air Force Base and the Air Force with the mission to promote financial wellness to their members and the community. With a dedicated member base of over 54,000, they have been able to provide exceptional products and financial guidance.

"After extensive discussions, market research and strategic deliberation, it became clear that the acronym AFFCU and our overall brand do not align with our aspirations for growth and impact," commented Ryan Ross, president/CEO of AFFCU. "We've made the decision to rebrand AFFCU, by honoring our renewed purpose and core values, embracing a positive transformation, and continuing to support the financial aspirations of our community, all while paying tribute to our proud heritage of serving the Air Force community."

Membership at AFFCU is open to anyone who lives, works, worships, or attends school in qualified areas of San Antonio, Del Rio and surrounding counties, and Mississippi Counties of Clay, Lowndes, and Oktibbeha. AFFCU holds an underserved charter designation for a five-state region including Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

The Board of Directors and Management of AFFCU plan to share the new name and logo with the membership of the credit union and with the public in March 2024. The name change will take effect April 2, 2024.

More information regarding the name change, and other ways in which the Credit Union is working to continually enhance member experiences and their financial wellness, can be found on the Credit Union's website, at www.goaffcu.com.

NCUA Approves Merger of Blue FCU and Aventa CU

Provided by Blue FCU

The National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) has approved the proposed merger of Blue FCU and Aventa CU. The credit unions, when merged, will do business as Blue FC, with combined assets of more than \$2.1 billion and over 153,000 members. The next step in the process is approval of the merger by members of Aventa CU. A special membership meeting will be held on Monday, February 26, 2024, at 3:00 pm to finalize the process. This meeting will be held at Aventa's headquarters, located at 2734 Dublin Blvd., Colorado Springs, Colorado.

"Blue Federal Credit Union warmly welcomes Aventa's members and employees as we join forces," said Stephanie Teubner, Blue FCU's President/CEO. "Our shared commitment to the well-being of our members, employees, and communities, combined with our expanded presence and robust financial standing, makes this union a seamless alignment for both institutions."

"This partnership represents a significant milestone for Aventa's members, associates, and communities," said Greg Mills, Aventa's President/CEO. "We embrace Blue's commitment to being your lifelong financial champion."

This alliance, rooted in shared values and a commitment to member service, is set to be finalized by April 2024. By bringing the two credit unions together, all members will have access to expanded products and services, the latest digital banking technology, and best-in-class member service at 27 branch locations throughout Colorado and Wyoming, a Contact Center, and a nationwide ATM/VTM network. For more information about Blue and the merger with Aventa, please visit blueaventa.com.

SAFE FCU Members Get Over \$1 Million from Giveback Program

Provided by SAFE FCU

Thousands of SAFE FCU members got an end-of-year financial boost as the credit union shared annual bonus dividends and interest rebates totaling over \$1.02 million. The December 31 bonus marked the 27th anniversary of SAFE's Member Giveback Program. Since the program's inception, the credit union has paid its members more than \$38 million in bonus dividends and interest rebates.

"SAFE's success is a shared accomplishment," said president/CEO Michael Baker. "This year's million-dollar giveback is a tangible way for us show our appreciation by sharing a large portion of our earnings directly with our members."

Payments were calculated based on members' account usage. Deposit accounts were given a 0.70% bonus based on dividends earned in 2023. Loan accounts received a 1.25% rebate based on total interest paid in 2023.

Like last year, members also were paid an additional \$25 for using their debit card on average, more than 30 times per month.

"On behalf of SAFE's Board of Directors, we'd like to thank our members for another successful year," said Board Chair, Kay Oldhouser Davis. "It's our privilege to continue SAFE's Member Giveback Program and share that success with our greatest asset—our members."

Send your news to alert@dcuc.org

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The PenFed Foundation Partners With Canine Companions to Help More Veterans Get Life-changing Service Dogs

National campaign addresses urgent need for more volunteer puppy raisers

The PenFed Foundation announces a groundbreaking partnership with Canine Companions to help provide more service dogs to veterans and others with a disability. The nationwide campaign is focused on recruiting more volunteer puppy raisers and encouraging more corporations to allow their employees to raise service dogs in the workplace. Canine Companions' Pilot, a 10-week-old yellow Labrador/Golden Retriever cross, is the face of the new initiative. He's being raised by PenFed Foundation President Andrea McCarren, her sixth future service dog in training.

"I've witnessed firsthand the extraordinary healing power of service dogs," said McCarren. "Service dogs save lives and there's never been a greater demand. The PenFed Foundation felt compelled to partner with Canine Companions to address the urgent need for more volunteers to raise puppies and help shorten the wait time for those in need. We also want to highlight the transformative, positive impact on a workplace when an employee raises a service dog."

Canine Companions is the nation's premier service dog organization. Founded in 1975, it has already placed more than 8,000 dogs. The organization provides these highly trained service dogs free of charge, but the current wait time to receive one of these dogs can be up to two years.

"Canine Companions is grateful to The PenFed Foundation for this important initiative to increase awareness regarding the need for volunteers across the country to raise future service dogs," said Canine Companions CEO Paige Mazzoni. "Our expertly trained service dogs begin their journey with volunteers before attending professional training at one of our seven locations. This initiative will help expand our community of support and ultimately help us achieve our goals to create more independence for our injured military veterans, other adults and children with disabilities."



Canine Companions' Pilot is being raised at The PenFed Foundation. Photo provided by the PenFed Foundation.

PenFed CU President/CEO James Schenck introduced the Canine Companions puppy raising program to his employees in 2018. Since then, he's supported his employees raising nine service dogs at PenFed financial centers across the country.

"Having puppies with such a life changing mission in the workplace builds a culture of kindness and respect. It increases morale, lowers blood pressure and encourages employees to work from the office," said Schenck. "It's a wonderful way to give back to those who served and have employees work together to accomplish a meaningful goal."

Service dogs can only be raised and trained one at a time, and their journey begins with dedicated volunteer puppy raisers. These volunteers play a crucial role socializing the pups from eight weeks of age until 18 months, when they return to Canine Companions for professional training. No formal dog training experience is required to become a puppy raiser. To learn more, go to www.canine.org/penfedfoundation. Follow Pilot's journey on The PenFed Foundation's social media channels.



PenAir's 2024 Scholarship Applications Now Open for High School Seniors

Provided by PenAir CU

PenAir CU is pleased to announce its 2024 PenAir Scholarship Program, inviting local graduating high school seniors to apply. Applications will be accepted through March 24.

“We understand the importance of investing in our community’s next generation,” said Lee Morgan, PenAir president/CEO. “By offering these post-secondary education scholarships, we are helping local high school graduates achieve their dreams and become equipped to go out into the community and make an impact.”

The PenAir Scholarship Program is designed to identify and support individuals who exemplify a true spirit for Communerosity® — a PenAir guiding principle fusing community and generosity. Scholarship money made be used toward an associate degree, undergraduate degree, or a trade certification.

Applicants for the 2024 program must meet the following criteria:

- Be a local graduating high school senior
- Be a primary member of PenAir Credit Union
- Have been accepted into an accredited college, university, community college, or technical school as a full-time student for each qualifying semester

Recipients of the PenAir Scholarship are eligible to receive up to \$10,000 over a four-year period, depending on the degree pursued. The funding will be applied toward the fall and spring semesters only, and the scholarship amount will be paid directly to the educational institution by PenAir.

To apply or learn more about the PenAir Scholarship Program, interested candidates are encouraged to visit penair.org/Scholarships.



DCUC

For the latest credit union news, visit www.d cuc.org/news

Global CU Foundation Golf Tournament Raises \$100,000 for Non-profits

Provided by Global CU

Drivers and putters were in full swing for the annual Global CU Foundation Fairway Friends Golf Tournament on Nov. 6, 2023. Foundation partners and golfers of every skill level descended on the Phoenix Country Club on a mission to have fun and raise money for two of Arizona’s most respected nonprofits, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona and the Arizona Housing Coalition.

“Every year the Foundation golf tournament gets better and better,” said Geoff Lundfelt, president of the Global CU Foundation. “In large part because of the wonderful, welcoming people of Arizona and our amazing business partners. We are incredibly grateful to them for helping us sustain the critical work Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona and the Arizona Housing Coalition are doing.”

\$50,000 was distributed to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona, which uses a volunteer mentoring network to develop positive relationships that have a direct and lasting effect on the lives of young people. Another \$50,000 went to the Arizona Housing Coalition, for their StandDown Alliance, which helps veterans and their families who are experiencing housing instability and homelessness to get—and stay connected to—supportive services.

The Global CU Foundation Fairway Friends Golf Tournament is an annual event that invites business partners, credit union leaders and volunteers, and the community to support nonprofit partners of the Foundation.



SAFE FCU to Gives Over \$27,000 in Scholarships to South Carolina Students

Provided by SAFE FCU

South Carolina high school seniors are being invited to apply for eleven \$2,500 college scholarships introduced by SAFE FCU.

The initiative is part of the credit union's newly expanded scholarship program aimed at helping young adults faced with the rising cost of post-secondary education.

"A key area of focus for SAFE is to help our members meet their life goals—that includes higher education," said president/CEO, Michael Baker. "We hope our scholarship awards will ease the burden of college expenses for these deserving students."

Scholarship applications and awards are managed through the Carolinas Credit Union Foundation and will be formally announced in March prior to SAFE's Annual Membership Meeting scheduled for March 18, 2024.

For more detailed information about SAFE's scholarship program, visit www.SAFEd.org/scholarships.



Credit Union West Employees Donate Over \$50000 to Arizona Small Dog Rescue

Provided by Credit Union West

In their fourth donation of 2023, Credit Union West employees gifted \$5,742.34 to Arizona Small Dog Rescue, a nonprofit, no-kill dog rescue shelter in Phoenix.

As a no-kill dog rescue shelter, Arizona Small Dog Rescue (AZSDR) takes in dogs from overcrowded kill shelters and cares for them until they find their forever homes. The organization facilitates adoptions, foster families, and handles many different veterinarian services for the dogs in their care.

"When a dog comes into our care, we not only spay and neuter, but we also perform vaccinations, medical exams, microchipping, and find foster homes, when needed, to ensure they are in loving care while waiting for a forever family," said Paula Joseph, Executive Director at AZSDR. "This amazing donation is greatly appreciated and will save a lot of dogs' lives."

To help continue their important work, Credit Union West leaders presented Arizona Small Dog Rescue with the donation check at their corporate office in Glendale on January 19, 2024.

This donation was made possible by the EmployeesCARE Program, which is completely funded by Credit Union West employees. The program raises money for a nonprofit organization selected by employees each quarter. In addition, President and CEO, Karen Roch, challenged Credit Union West employees to increase donations by matching the donation with her own personal funds.

"I am so proud of our employees for raising so much money for local nonprofits in 2023," said Roch. "We have a lot of dog people at Credit Union West, so it's wonderful to support smaller, no-kill shelters like Arizona Small Dog Rescue."

This is the fourth and final charitable donation that Credit Union West employees made through the EmployeesCARE Program in 2023. In total, Credit Union West employees donated \$24,362.13 to local nonprofit organizations for the year. To learn more about Arizona Small Dog Rescue or to adopt a dog, visit their website at azsmalldog.org.

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Scott CU Community Foundation Awards \$100,000 to Local Schools

Provided by Scott CU

The Scott CU Community Foundation recently awarded \$100,000 With You education grants to support various educational initiatives in 34 schools. Since 2020, the Foundation has allocated over \$205,000 to a variety of school projects. The With You grant program has become a cornerstone of the Foundation's commitment to fostering innovation and growth in local educational environments.

The Scott CU Community Foundation raises money to support these efforts through their annual golf scramble and by donating a percentage of annual purchases made by members with their SCU debit cards.

Frank Padak, president/CEO of Scott CU, expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative, stating, "At Scott Credit Union, we believe in the power of education to transform lives. The With You program reflects our commitment to supporting schools and nurturing the potential of students. We are proud to invest in these innovative educational projects that will have a lasting impact on the young people in the communities where we live and work."

In 2023, nearly 100 With You grant applications were submitted. The With You grants were selected by a volunteer committee, and all submissions remained anonymous until after the winners were selected. Winners were chosen based on need, the percentage of student enrollment impacted by the project, and the direct benefit the project will offer to students.

The With You grant program continues to be a testament to the SCU Community Foundation's dedication to enhancing educational experiences for students in the communities they serve. The Community Foundation looks forward to witnessing the positive impact of these grants on the growth and development of local schools and their students.



A vertical poster with a dark blue background. At the top is a circular logo for the Military Advocacy Committee (MAC) with the text "MILITARY ADVOCACY COMMITTEE" and "ESTABLISHED 2018" around a central emblem. Below the logo, the text "GET INVOLVED!" is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Underneath, "MILITARY ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING" is written in smaller white capital letters. The date and time "March 14, 2024 2:30 PM ET" are listed below. At the bottom, the website "dcuc.org/MAC" is displayed in white.



A graphic with a dark blue background and a large, stylized gold eagle emblem on the left. The eagle's wings are spread, and it is surrounded by a gold circular border. In the center, the DCUC logo (a shield with three vertical bars) is positioned above the text "DCUC" in white. To the right, the year "2024" is written in white, followed by "Hall of Honor" in a large, elegant white script font. Below this, a gold banner contains the text "CALL FOR NOMINATIONS" in white capital letters. At the bottom right, the website "DCUC.ORG/HOH" is written in white capital letters.