



DCUC

ALERT

ISSUE 2

DCUC.ORG

MARCH 2024

CEO UPDATE

Next Steps - The Hard Work Begins

Our new three-year strategy is both ambitious and realistic

CAPITAL CORNER

Pleasant Surprises

Unexpected developments show potential to help credit unions advance our agenda on Capitol Hill

VIEW FROM THE BOARD

ITIN Lending

Provided by Robin Larsen, DCUC Board Member, president/CEO, Cobalt CU

REGISTER NOW!

DCUC 2024 Annual Conference

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





GREAT
DEFENSE
AWARDS

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

DCUC Latest Accomplishments

- Concluded numerous meetings **with both the House and Senate**
 - Championing industry efforts for support of the Veteran Member Business Loan exemption, actively protecting regulations and statutes affecting all credit unions: Overseas Military Banking Program, **32 CFR Part 230.4 "One Bank & One Credit Union"**
- Successfully concluded **DCUC Defense Matters 2024**: see page 11.
 - featured several discussions weighing heavily on advocacy and legislative topics specific to credit unions serving military and veteran communities
- Hosted a **special luncheon for GAC 2024 Crashers** at DCUC Headquarters: see page 8.
- Announced this year's **George E. Meyers (G.E.M.) Scholarship Recipients**
 - DCUC awarded four CU professionals with scholarships worth \$3,500 each: see page 9.
- Released **DCUC's Official Home Buying Guide**: Download a free copy of this newest publication today!
 - Introduced annotated legislative language for the **Military Banking Program Improvement Act of 2024**—well received by congressional staff members

DCUC Happening Now

- Continuing to reject passage of **Credit Card Competition Act (CCCA)** in all "must pay legislation" in both houses of Congress
- **Hall of Honor Nominations** are now open! Submit your nominations today!
 - Three candidates will be inducted at DCUC's 61st Annual Conference in August—send your nominee submissions to nrogers@dcuc.org

DCUC Upcoming Activities

- Save the Date! **DCUC's 2024 Annual Conference**: August 12-16 at the Vinoy Resort & Golf Club in Saint Petersburg, Florida: reserve your room early before they sell out! It is going to be another GREAT conference with an outstanding speaker lineup!
- **DCUC's Annual Conference CRASHers**: Applications are now open! Apply to be a part of the only conference experience in the industry that provides the military and veteran perspective on credit union issues
- 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.
- Continuing to meet with representatives on legislation in coming weeks

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DEFENSE CREDIT UNION COUNCIL, INC.

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

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CONTENTS

5 CEO UPDATE
Next Steps–The Hard Work Begins

6 CAPITAL CORNER
Pleasant Surprises

7 VIEW FROM THE BOARD
ITIN Lending

DCUC NEWS

8 **DCUC Hosts Luncheon for
2024 GAC Crashers**

9 **DCUC Announces 2024
GEM Scholarship Recipients**

11 **DCUC Hosts Defense Matters 2024
Ahead of ACU’s GAC Kickoff**

12 REGISTER NOW!
DCUC 2024 Annual Conference

13 AWARDS & RECOGNITION

16 CREDIT UNION PEOPLE IN THE NEWS
CREDIT UNIONS IN THE NEWS

17 MEMBER NEWS



DCUC

ALERT

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DCUC
DEFENSE CREDIT UNION COUNCIL

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CEO UPDATE

Next Steps—The Hard Work Begins

America's Credit Unions held their first Governmental Affairs Conference (GAC) as a merged entity. It was great to see many friends and industry colleagues who traveled across the globe to attend the conference. My thoughts were challenged and inspired by the many discussions this past week about the future of the credit union industry.

It was also fascinating to watch the emerging power structure created by the merger take its position within the industry, while also witnessing some of the ongoing power struggles as a result. You don't need a master's degree in organizational management to recognize the undercurrent that's taking place. The question is how deep does it go?

This was all against the backdrop of the DCUC Board approving the final design for our new three-year strategy. It is both ambitious and realistic yet timed to seize opportunities and minimize threats. So, now the hard work begins!

In executing our plan, there are three types of tasks we will implement within the next 90 days.

The first task is executing plans already in place.

We have an Overseas Sub-Council Conference in less than two months. This year's agenda will include a couple of exciting "firsts" for our organization. While I'm not able to share many of the details at this time, I can say that this is an incredible opportunity for our overseas member credit unions. For those planning to attend, feel free to give me a call for more information. We are also well underway with preparations for our largest conference less than six months from now in St. Petersburg, Florida. If you have never been to a DCUC conference, we highly encourage you to join us at the Vinoy from August 12th to 16th for our Annual Conference. The week will include an important annual business meeting where we will discuss our strategic plan and how it enhances our value proposition. We need and value your input.

The second task is securing the path to more success.

Part of where DCUC is heading is recognizing the need to hire a Chief Advocacy Officer (CAO). For those who have seen the industry "thrash" over the last six months, I'm sure you understand this need as well. While I do all I can in terms of leading DCUC's advocacy efforts within the DoD and on Capitol Hill, and certainly not without John McKechnie's much-appreciated assistance, there is still so much more DCUC can do to advocate on behalf of our members.

However, I cannot be both CEO and CAO and grow the organization. Thus, the DCUC Board has authorized this position to bolster our advocacy efforts. I am excited about this opportunity and what it will mean for our organization, its members, and the industry. In fact, and we don't say this enough: Over the last three years, DCUC has been the only credit union trade association able to point to actual wins, both in Congress and on the regulatory side.

Yet, while we absolutely value the success gained from our joint trade efforts, we don't give ourselves enough credit. Part of that stems from my belief that you can get a lot more done when you care less about who takes the credit. And though I still see this as true, if we don't tell our story, people may either miss or fail to see DCUC's value.

As such, we will be taking steps to strengthen our communications and outreach to members. With a CAO assisting me with grassroots efforts, I'll have more time to foster communications with our member credit unions; exactly what you should expect a trade association president to prioritize.

Finally, there are initiatives we will be leading that no one else is focused on.

These tasks may be visible to others, but they are often seen as not plausible courses of action. However, we recognize areas that need to be addressed for DCUC to transform into its full potential.

I won't be disclosing all the details because like I said earlier—there is an emerging power structure coupled with



*Anthony Hernandez,
President and CEO, DCUC*

power struggles felt and seen within the industry. And frankly, there are plenty of antibodies ready to check our tactical movements.

DCUC will be analyzing industry needs and making sure we are well-positioned for where and when you need us. I would like to enlist more of you to join us in this endeavor. So, if you have questions, please give me a call.

As always, DCUC could not have grown in the last 60 years without your support. I am truly thankful for the trust you have placed in our association. Our members do an amazing job in serving those who serve our country and that is something we can all continue to rally behind. ■



Pleasant Surprises

Provided by John McKechnie

In politics, surprises are rarely good news. But now, as 2024 starts to take shape, unexpected developments on a couple of key issues show potential to help credit unions advance our agenda on Capitol Hill.

What does a “game changer” look like on Capitol Hill? When it comes to the Credit Card Competition Act, (“the Durbin Bill”), a huge merger in the credit card space has the potential to reshuffle the political deck on this stalemated bill.

Capital One’s proposed purchase of Discover, if approved, would alter the credit card landscape by adding a third major option for transactions. That, in turn, deprives Senator Durbin (D-IL) and his allies of their major rationale for the legislation by upending the Visa/Mastercard “duopoly.” Capital One/Discover represents a new market-driven option, and that already may be having an impact on the debate—soon after the announced merger Senator Durbin told reporters he is now “open to changes” in CCCA.

There are no details yet on what those “changes” may be. And in an effort to jump start his stalled legislation, Durbin, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, has scheduled a hearing on CCCA April 9, and is promising to summon the CEOs of both Visa and Mastercard to testify. Durbin is expected to also call a small merchant as a counterpoint to the mega-bank CEOs; the rumor on the Committee is that Durbin “is going to find a Mom-and-Pop store owner from Peoria” to sit next to the well-heeled credit card representatives as a way to create a “David and Goliath” image during the hearing. In other words, the fight wears on.

Credit unions and our allies continue to press Congress to keep this bad bill bottled up, and if we do our jobs, and continue our vigilance, the Durbin bill will continue to remain on the shelf where it belongs.

A House Hearing on emergency liquidity may have billed as a look at the Fed and Federal Home Loan Banks and how they functioned during last March’s turmoil in the banking sector, but credit unions and NCUA may have been an unexpected beneficiary of the scrutiny.

At a February 15 House Financial Services hearing, several Committee members raised credit union liquidity and NCUA’s Central Liquidity Facility as Congress assesses the overall state of preparedness in case of strains in the Nation’s financial system. Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL), in his opening remarks pointed to how the CLF “levels the playing field...between the larger and smaller institutions. Government lending programs like those operated by the Home Loan Banks and the NCUA’s Central Liquidity Facility are linchpins in the overall federal backstop.”

In response, Ranking Member Maxine Waters (D-CA) stated that she “hopes we can act on NCUA’s bipartisan request to give small credit unions access to emergency liquidity through the Central Liquidity Facility.” Rep. Scott Fitzgerald (R-WI) further accentuated the importance of credit union liquidity options, “including access to Central Liquidity Facility. It’s essential Congress ensures that the Central Liquidity Facility is up to date and ready to provide efficient and adequate contingent liquidity to the credit union system in the event of liquidity stress.”

DCUC has supported NCUA’s legislative request to revamp CLF and will continue to do so even as the credit union system continues to perform well on the liquidity front. As NCUA Chairman Todd Harper said of the situation, “the best time to fix the roof is when the sun is shining.” ■

VIEW FROM THE BOARD

ITIN Lending

Provided by Robin Larsen, DCUC Board Member, president/CEO, Cobalt CU

ITIN (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number) lending is important to credit union members, especially for those who might not have a Social Security Number but still want access to credit and financial services in the United States.

Having an ITIN lending program allows credit unions to offer financial services to individuals who may otherwise be excluded from traditional banking channels. This often includes immigrants, individuals on dependent visas, or foreign students.

By offering lending products to members with ITINs, we enable them to access credit for various purposes such as buying a home, a car, or starting a business. This can be crucial for them to achieve financial stability.

Establishing credit in the United States can be challenging for people without social security numbers. ITIN lending provides a channel for these members—ultimately helping them qualify for better terms on loans and financial products. Recently, we had a local real estate agent refer a couple with an ITIN to us. They had been renting a home for over nine (9) years. They thought being a homeowner was out of the question for them. One of our Mortgage Loan Officer's helped them through the process, and we were able to finance a new home for them and their one-year-old son. The members are grateful that we were able to help navigate them through the process with great service and obtain a good mortgage loan rate.

Another example of helping a member with an ITIN came recently when a non-member who had his automobile loan with a major bank came to us for help after learning we had an ITIN program. His bank was charging him 27.75% on his auto loan resulting in a \$775 payment each month. Digging deeper with this individual, we learned he also had a personal loan elsewhere with a 25% rate. After he worked with our Branch Manager, we gained a new member who now has his auto loan with us with a 12.24% rate and \$277 monthly payment. We refinanced his personal loan to a lower interest rate, dropping his monthly payment from \$415 to \$103. This member is now saving \$810 a month with the lower payments and able to deposit the savings into his credit union share account. The member told us we have made his life better by saving him money and allowing him to steer away from predatory lenders he had been using. We are now working with him on his goal to purchase his first home and financing it with the credit union.

In the first ten (10) months of implementing our ITIN program, we have helped nineteen (19) families buy a home and over fifty (50) members with personal and/or automobile loans. ITIN lending aligns with our mission to serve our community. In providing financial services to a diverse range of members, including those with ITINs, we are contributing to economic development and empowering the underserved. And we are proud to be a part of it! ■



DCUC Hosts Luncheon for 2024 GAC Crashers

On Tuesday, March 5, 2024, the Defense Credit Union Council (DCUC) hosted the GAC Crashers for lunch at DCUC Headquarters located in the beautiful Army Navy Building. This unique gathering offered the young professionals crashing this year's GAC the opportunity to connect and network with current industry leaders in an informal setting.

DCUC President/CEO Anthony Hernandez welcomed the crashers by explaining a bit about DCUC and its history with the Crash program. He noted that the leadership of several DCUC member credit unions and other industry partners, such as Plexicity and Filene, were also in attendance. Hernandez recommended the young professionals take time during the casual lunch to ask questions and learn from those who have years of experience in the industry.

Hernandez also acknowledged how busy the GAC week is and encouraged Crashers to take the time to relax a bit before going back to their afternoon sessions.

"The young professionals crashing this year's GAC are the future of our industry. We must engage with them and show how their impact within their local communities also carries over to the National level," said Hernandez. "I love to see their energy as they move through the GAC and hope they keep that momentum as they head home and throughout their careers."

DCUC hosts its own Crashers program every year during its Annual Conference. Applications are now open for those interested in crashing DCUC's Annual Conference, the only conference in the industry that brings the DoD/Military perspective to credit union issues. This year's Annual Conference will be hosted at the Vinoy from August 12–16 in beautiful St. Petersburg, Florida. For more information on DCUC's Annual Conference and Crashers program, please visit dcucannual.org. ■



THE **2024** *George E. Myers* SCHOLARSHIP

Charles Adler

LAKEHURST NAVAL FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Elario Escalante

CREDIT UNION WEST

Chelsi Haught

AMERICAN SOUTHWEST CREDIT UNION

Diana Salinas

BORDER FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

RECIPIENTS



DCUC Announces 2024 GEM Scholarship Recipients

DCUC officially announced the George E. Myers (GEM) Scholarship recipients during its 2024 Defense Matters on March 3, 2024, at the Marriott Marquis in Washington, D.C.

This year's scholarship recipients are Diana Salinas, Border FCU; Chelsi Haught, American Southwest CU; Elario Escalante, Credit Union West; and Charles Adler, Lakehurst Naval FCU.

The GEM Scholarship's purpose is to provide funds for volunteers, management, and/or staff of DCUC member credit unions interested in furthering their credit union education, knowledge, and leadership skills. Scholarship recipients are able to use their funds to attend educational forums and classes (either at the State or National level) at virtually little or no cost to their credit union.

"The George E. Myers Scholarship has always been a rewarding way for DCUC to give back to the credit union professionals and volunteers who make this industry so great," said Anthony Hernandez, DCUC president/CEO. "We're very excited to continue this tradition and look forward to seeing each of the recipients grow in both their skills and professional development."

The George E. Myers Scholarship Fund began in 1996 in honor of COL George E. Myers, USA (Ret.). COL Myers was an Executive Secretary of the Council from 1973 to 1986 and again from 1989 and 1990 and later inducted into DCUC's Hall of Honor in August of 2000.

Since 1997, DCUC has awarded 73 scholarships totaling over \$218,000, and all scholarship funds are supported by DCUC's annual Official White House Christmas Ornament Fundraiser. This year's Ornament sales will run from August to December.

For more information on DCUC's GEM Scholarship or the Official White House Christmas Ornament Fundraiser, please contact DCUC Executive Assistant, Natalie Rogers at nrogers@dcuc.org.

Send your news to alert@dcuc.org



2024 DEFENSE MATTERS



DCUC Hosts Defense Matters 2024 Ahead of ACU's GAC Kickoff

DCUC concluded its Defense Matters 2024 morning advocacy session on Sunday, March 3, at the Marriott Marquis in Washington, D.C. This year's forum featured several discussions weighing heavily on advocacy and legislative topics specific to credit unions serving military and veteran communities.

The conversations began with DCUC's President/CEO Anthony Hernandez and DCUC's strategic partner and lobbyist, John McKechnie, where both provided attendees with updates on current and emerging advocacy issues. Hernandez and McKechnie also discussed how DCUC members can join in securing impactful wins for the credit union industry as a whole.

"Credit unions will be facing some complex, and frankly, volatile issues in Washington, maybe more this year than any other in recent memory," said McKechnie. "Given some difficult headlines in the media, it will be especially important for credit union advocates to step forward and paint a fuller picture of how credit unions serve America's consumers."

Following McKechnie and Hernandez' updates, Ari Fleischer, former White House Press Secretary, joined the stage to share his take on the latest news coming out of Washington.

Hernandez asked Fleischer several questions related to the climate within the country during the ensuing polarized political campaign. One of those questions was whether Fleischer believed the country would ever get back to a unified stance.

"Our country is going through a phase. Eventually, we'll get so tired of the inaction, that it'll push us to come together," said Fleischer. "And it takes a leader willing to push past the polarization and take action to bring unification, not just promise it."

Attendees and guests were very responsive and engaged in the session, especially when questions were opened to the audience during Fleischer's discussion. Questions centered around political candidates' current campaigns as well as the top policy priorities Fleischer believes each party may run on. Fleischer also shared his predictions on potential ticket outcomes later in the year and future years' potential candidates.

Hernandez then welcomed Elizabeth Eurgubian, NCUA Director of External Affairs and Communications and Policy Advisor, to the stage. Eurgubian appeared on behalf of NCUA Chairman the Honorable Todd Harper who was unable to attend.

Eurgubian spoke about several top priorities the NCUA is focusing on amid industry changes. Some of the priorities mentioned topics such as the credit union industry becoming more innovative, fair lending compliance, redlining issues (particularly with community-based charters), auto lending and direct auto lending, overdraft protection (how programs are being marketed and if they misleading to a consumer), and third-party vendor authority.

Hernandez asked Eurgubian what it would mean for credit unions if the NCUA potentially institutes third-party vendor authority.

Eurgubian answered "Right now, the NCUA explicitly does not have authority in the statute to examine credit unions' third-party vendors. If the NCUA is granted the authority in the future, you can expect there to be a focus on examining concerns such as cybersecurity, as well as safety and soundness with consumer protection."

Eurgubian continued by sharing "one of the criticisms or concerns we hear on this topic is related to redundancy; if bank regulators have the authority to examine third-party vendors, the question often is why do credit unions need it," said Eurgubian. "The NCUA is concerned with the fact that bank regulators don't do well in sharing their information with the NCUA related to regulating third-party vendors or what trending issues and concerns they are seeing."

The discussion concluded with Eurgubian explaining what credit unions can expect for the road ahead as the industry approaches the 90th Anniversary of the Federal Credit Union Act.

Hernandez ended this year's Defense Matters by sharing why this special event is so important to DCUC and ahead of this week's meetings on the Hill.

"It was really great to see our members here in Washington, D.C. Our Defense Matters continues to serve as an important part of this week's meetings. We always look forward to this session every year where we can join together in advocating for all credit union industry issues."

DCUC's 2024 Defense Matters was made possible thanks to its generous sponsors: AFFN, ALM First, LendKey, Parc Street Partners, Omnicommander, Risk Strategies (IZALE), and TruStage. Learn more about how DCUC advocates for all credit unions serving our Nation's military and veterans at dcuc.org/Advocacy. ■

EARLY BIRD
DISCOUNT ENDS
MARCH 15TH!

2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AUGUST 12 - 16 , 2024



The Vinoy
RESORT & GOLF CLUB

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

REGISTER NOW & SAVE!

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AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Glassdoor Names South Carolina Federal a Best Place to Work in 2024

Provided by South Carolina FCU

South Carolina FCU has been named one of the Best Places to Work by Glassdoor, ranking No.13 out of 50 among organizations with fewer than 1,000 employees.

The 2024 Best Places to Work were determined by reviews employees posted on Glassdoor over the past year, where they provided anonymous feedback about their job, work environment, and employer. Employees who choose to share a review are also asked to rate their employer on its compensation and benefits, leadership team, and diversity and inclusion practices, all of which Glassdoor analyzes to determine the top workplaces.

“Earning this recognition for the sixth year in a row reinforces our belief that a thriving workplace culture is one built on trust, respect, and opportunities for personal and professional advancement, and this is the cornerstone of our success,” said Leslie Norris, Chief Human Resources Officer at South Carolina Federal. “We’re elated that our employees love where they work and refer others who share the same passion and excitement!” ■



Keesler Federal Recognized as Regional Standout by Community Members

Provided by Keesler FCU

Keesler FCU has received two regional accolades from local media outlets in southern Mississippi and Louisiana. WXXV viewers voted Keesler Federal as “Best Bank/Credit Union” in their recent Viewer’s Choice Awards, while *Edge of the Lake* magazine readers selected the credit union as their favorite.

With over 75 years of service in Mississippi and the surrounding region, Keesler Federal is not only the largest Mississippi-

based credit union but also one of the largest credit unions in the Southeast.

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

“It is an honor to be recognized as a regional financial leader,” said Swoger. “Our team members go above and beyond each and every day to provide outstanding service to our members, and it’s great to see their effort recognized in this way.”

Members obviously agree as the credit union’s American Consumer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) has held at 91 from 2016 until today. The same average measurement for banks is 78 and for credit unions is 77. Keesler Federal continues to be a leader in member service. ■



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

AWARDS & RECOGNITION



Eglin FCU's senior management team proudly displays the 2023 Large Business of the Year Award from the Walton Area Chamber of Commerce. Left: EVP/Chief Strategy Officer Cathie Staton proudly accepts the award along with VP Membership of Community Development Neko Stubblefield (right). Center: VP Branch Operations Bron Ringstad helps at the Habitat for Humanity Rock the Block cleanup in DeFuniak Springs this past summer.

Eglin FCU Named the 2023 Large Business of the Year by the Walton Area Chamber of Commerce

Provided by Eglin FCU

Eglin FCU was named the 2023 Large Business of the Year by the Walton Area Chamber of Commerce at their Annual Chamber Awards Gala hosted this year by the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa on Feb. 9, 2024.

“We are extremely honored to be named the 2023 Large Business of the Year by the Walton Area Chamber of Commerce,” said EFCU President/CEO Jerry Williams. “Last year, our senior management team were Difference Makers by working closely with Habitat for Humanity to Rock the Block in DeFuniak Springs and at their Restore location in Santa Rosa Beach. We are looking forward to opening up the new Freeport branch soon. Our DeFuniak Springs ATM/Video Teller location that opened in 2023 offers convenient account access to our growing family of member-owners.” ■

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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."

All In CU Chairman of the Board, Charlie Mingus, stated, "The Credit Union Movement is about People Helping People and All In Credit Union is proud to be a living example of that motto. We are honored to be recognized for the value All In provides as we seek to enrich the live of our members and communities."

Bobby Michael, president/CEO of All In CU, echoed those thoughts: "Whether we're educating members about finances or lending a helping hand at a community event, we work hard to integrate the credit union philosophy into all our daily operations. We're particularly proud of the personal volunteer hours provided



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

by our employees as they sacrifice time away from families after hours to make a difference in our communities."

All In CU has also been recently cited as one of America's Best Regional Banks and Credit Unions in the recently published 2024 *Newsweek* ranking.

Michael also stated, "We are honored to be recognized by *Newsweek* as one of America's Best Credit Unions. We take great pride in our commitment to the community and the members we serve. Receiving this recognition is an indication that our values and culture are evident throughout the delivery of service and care our employees provide each day." ■

PenAir CU Earns High Honors at the AAF Pensacola American Advertising Awards

Provided by PenAir CU

PenAir CU (PenAir) proudly earned five Gold and 16 Silver awards at the 2024 American Advertising Federation (AAF) Pensacola American Advertising Awards on February 16, 2024, at the Hilton Pensacola Beach Hotel.

"Our memorable evening at the American Advertising Awards is a testament to the marketing teams' hard work, exceptional creativity, collaboration, and commitment to members," said Lee Morgan, president/CEO at PenAir. "Congratulations to our talented team and I'm looking forward to seeing continued excellence in how this outstanding team represents the PenAir brand and our guiding principles of respect, service, and Communerosity®."

PenAir's Gold award wins include Consumer Website – PenAir Website; Integrated Advertising Campaign (Local–Consumer)—Get To The Points Campaign; Local Television Commercial (15 Seconds or Less)—You'll Fit Right In Brand; Local Television Commercial (15 Seconds or Less)—Get To The Points; and Local Radio Commercial (30 Seconds or Less) – Get To The Points. ■

CREDIT UNION PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

BILOXI, MI—Keesler FCU has named **Jerrica Griffin** as Director of Operations – Northern Region. Griffin will support branch operations for all Keesler Federal members from Wiggins to Jackson.

SAN ANTONIO, TX—AFFCU is pleased to announce the appointment of **Ricardo “Ric” Ledezma** as its SVP and CFO. “I am honored to step into this expanded leadership role at AFFCU,” said Ledezma. “It has been a rewarding experience to work with a brilliant team and affect real positive growth and change. I look forward to building on our successes in the coming years.”

CREDIT UNIONS IN THE NEWS

CHEYENNE, WY—**Aventa CU**, based in Colorado Springs, has fully merged with **Blue FCU**, based in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The merger was approved by Aventa members on February 26, 2024, and officially went into effect on March 1.

There will be minimal changes for both Aventa members and employees in the coming months. Aventa CU will retain its current name until later this year. After this transition, Aventa will continue its operations as Blue FCU. The merger of both credit unions will boast assets exceeding \$2.25 billion and a membership base of over 150,000.

With the merger of the two credit unions, six new locations will be added to Blue’s existing twenty-one. These additional new branches will be located in Colorado, specifically in Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Salida, Center, and Crestone.

INDIANAPOLIS, IN—**Financial Center** is thrilled to announce its recent recognition as one of the 2024 Best Places to Work in Indiana. This accolade, awarded by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, displays the Credit Union’s commitment to not only being an exceptional place to bank, but also an exceptional place to work.

IRMO, SC—**SAFE FCU** formally marked the opening of its 19th branch location in Irmo, SC with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on February 26.

“On behalf of the Town of Irmo, we extend our warmest welcome to SAFE Federal Credit Union. This establishment will enrich the lives of our residents by giving them quality banking solutions,” said Town of Irmo Mayor, Bill Danielson.

“SAFE is thrilled to announce the opening of our newest branch and thanks the Town of Irmo and the Ballentine community for welcoming our SAFE Family to the area,” said President/CEO, Michael Baker. “This addition allows more members in the Columbia region access to SAFE’s innovative financial products and excellent in-branch service.”

Located at 10600 Broad River Road, the Irmo branch joins six other SAFE branches that currently serve residents in both Lexington and Richland Counties.

N. CHARLESTON, SC—**South Carolina FCU** has opened its fourth financial center in the Greenville area at 2536 Woodruff Road in Simpsonville.

“We have served the Lowcountry for over 85 years, and continue to grow our presence in the Upstate, especially in Greenville,” said Stacy Lomonaco, Five Forks Financial Center manager. “As we welcome new members to the South Carolina Federal family, we look forward to building long-lasting relationships and delivering exceptional service to the Simpsonville community.”

PENSACOLA, FL—**PenAir CU** celebrated the grand opening of its new Beulah location on February 24 at 5855 W. Nine Mile Road, Pensacola, Florida. The new location features interactive kiosks and user-friendly digital interfaces, as well as two drive-thru Live Interactive Video Experience (LIVE) machines that double as ATMs.



Financial Center Reimagines Financial Wellness with Brand Refresh

Provided by Financial Center First CU

Financial Center has launched their refreshed brand and an ambitious new approach to financial wellness. After an internal rollout earlier in the week, the refreshed messaging and creative is now live in the Credit Union's markets.

The refreshed brand is centered around the slogan "Life Starts Here"—a nod to all of the unique first-time events Financial Center's members and prospects experience over their lifetimes. From graduating college, to purchasing a home, to buying an engagement ring, the Credit Union highlights these 'starts' in their vibrant new brand messaging and imagery. Financial Center's commitment to being available with advice and direction is at the forefront of its brand positioning, calling themselves "Your Credit Union for What's Next" as a bold new tagline.

The nearly one-year long refresh project, led primarily by the internal Marketing & Creative Team with support from a local agency, is the first step in the Credit Union's bid to reframe their nearly 70,000 members' perspective of financial wellness.

Dusty Simmons, EVP of Strategic Operations, explains, "We've found that our members often think to come to their credit union when they have a problem. But, with our refreshed approach, we're working to position ourselves not only as a player in the crowded financial services industry, but as a key resource in the proactive wellness space."

With bright and colorful creative, drawing inspiration from the company's vibrant logo, popular fresh-focused grocery chains and boutique fitness and wellness studios, the brand's design and imagery aligns with its new strategic messaging.

"We're aiming to be seen in the same light as a proactive visit to the yoga studio to get some mental clarity or a visit to the dentist for a bi-annual check-up. We're inviting members to come in any time to simply chat with our financial coaches to get advice before they even need it," said Simmons.

The Credit Union's focus on financial wellness isn't new, being an 8-time national recipient of the Desjardins Adult Financial Literacy Award through the Credit Union National Association (CUNA). Yet, the refreshed branding seeks to bring a greater awareness of how financial wellness can be proactively integrated into members' daily lives.

The launch involves new messaging and modernized creative through all of the brand's channels including retail, website, social media, sponsorships, and event activations. In 2024, Financial Center plans to enter two new markets in northern Indianapolis with state-of-the-art banking centers and interactive teller machines. "As we quickly approach becoming a \$1 billion credit union and expand our markets, it's time to tell our story in a new and different way," explained Simmons. "Our refreshed brand pays homage to where we've been and paves the way for what's next."

Global CU Honors Alaska's Military

Provided by Global CU

Global CU held its 29th Annual Alaska Military Appreciation Breakfast on February 16, 2024, to honor 13 Service Members of the Year honorees, the Spouse of the Year, and the Armed Services YMCA Bobby Alexander Civic Leader of the Year.

The service members represent each of the active-duty branches of the armed forces as well as the Guard and Reserves. Every nominee undergoes a panel interview after being nominated by their supervisors and, if selected, are recognized and awarded for their outstanding achievements.

The Bobby Alexander Civic Leader of the Year is awarded to an individual who has demonstrated a strong commitment to the Armed Forces through their dedication to the support and betterment of our troops. This year's awardee was Global CU's very own President/CEO, Geoff Lundfelt.

Guests included the command teams of the honorees, as well as representatives from Senator Murkowski's and Senator Sullivan's offices. Global Credit Union Board members and other members of Global's senior leadership team were also in attendance.

"The annual breakfast is our way of celebrating the accomplishments of Alaska's military, and to let them know how proud we are to have them as part of our community," said Lundfelt. "While we can never do enough to say thanks, we hope that this event shows just how deeply grateful we are for their service."



DISTINGUISHED CREDIT UNION OF THE YEAR

Army and Air Force Call for Nominations

 

dcuc.org/CUoftheYear

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MILITARY ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING

March 28, 2024

2:30 PM ET

NEW DATE!

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ABNB Regional Branch Manager Deon McGill, Director of Development and Marketing, Mallory Recking, and Community Engagement Manager Madelyn Cottrell from the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore

ABNB Awards \$3,000 to the Foodbank of Southeastern VA & Eastern Shore

Provided by ABNB FCU

ABNB FCU recently donated \$3,000 to the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore. The donation was part of ABNB's grand opening celebration at its new Wards Corner branch located at 129 W. Little Creek Road in Norfolk. The credit union's Regional Branch Manager, Deon McGill, officially presented this funding award to support the vital work of the Foodbank in our community.

"ABNB Federal Credit Union has a long history of charitable giving and community involvement since the credit union's founding in 1960. We provide significant monetary and volunteer support to non-profit organizations in the communities we serve each year, and we're very pleased to provide much-needed funding to the Foodbank who does great work in our area," stated Charles A. Mallon Jr., president/CEO of ABNB.

"The Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore plays a vital role in the fight against hunger by collecting, storing, and distributing food to our neighbors, while also working to address the root causes of hunger and food insecurity," stated Madelyn Cottrell, Community Engagement Manager. "ABNB's generous contribution will help provide over 6,000 meals to families and children in need," concluded Cottrell. Visit Foodbankonline.org for more information.

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VETERANS HOME BUYING GUIDE

VIRGINIA B. MORRIS

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DCUC
DEFENSE CREDIT UNION COUNCIL

Dover FCU Partners with GreenPath Financial Wellness

Provided by Dover FCU

Dover FCU announces a collaboration with GreenPath Financial Wellness, a trusted national non-profit organization, both with over 60 years of experience in empowering individuals towards positive financial health.

Understanding the importance of financial well-being, Dover Federal has joined forces with GreenPath to provide its members with free individualized counseling, guidance, and educational resources. This strategic partnership aims to equip members with the tools and knowledge necessary to achieve their financial goals and enhance their overall financial health. Key services offered to Dover Federal Members include: Financial Counseling, Debt Management Services, Housing Services, Credit Report Review, and Student Loan Counseling.

“We are excited to introduce this valuable resource to our members, reinforcing our commitment to their financial well-being. The partnership with GreenPath aligns with our mission to provide not only financial services but also essential education and support to empower our members on their financial journey,” said Todd Wilson, VP of Retail at Dover FCU.

Andrews Federal Helps to Provide 8,000 Sweet Treats for Airmen Through the Great Cookie Caper

Provided by Andrews FCU

Andrews FCU recently worked with local business and community partners to support the Joint Base Andrews Spouses Cookie Caper. This program was spearheaded by Penny Randolph, spouse of 316th Commander Col. Todd Randolph, and provided 8,000 cookies to airmen and their families as a holiday season treat.

The event was designed to provide military service members an extra reminder of home as they enjoy homemade cookies and treats during the holidays.

According to Andrews Federal Community Engagement Director Rosalind Bishop, participating in the Cookie Caper allowed the credit union team to connect with the local JB Andrews community. “The holidays can be a hard time for military service members—especially those who might be away from home for the first time,” Bishop said. “Through the Cookie Caper, we were able to show support both to the Joint Base Andrews Spouses group and to the service members who received the treats. We want them to know Andrews Federal is here to support them through all stages of their life and to provide resources that enhance their lives, whether it’s through a financial education program or through the simple, heartfelt gift of freshly baked cookies.”

The cookies were distributed to airmen throughout the area and even made their way to the Pentagon, and Andrews Federal also provided meals for the volunteers supporting the Cookie Caper event.



SAC Foundation Extends Support to Deploying Airmen with Deployment Bags

Provided by Cobalt CU

Cobalt CU’s charitable arm The SAC Foundation is proud to announce the initiation of a program to provide Deployment Bags to deploying airmen stationed at Offutt Air Force Base. These bags are specially curated to offer comfort, convenience, and essential items to our service members as they embark on their deployment missions, ensuring they have the resources they need for their journey.

GUIDE TO THE MILITARY'S BLENDED RETIREMENT SYSTEM SPANISH VERSION

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ABNB Community Foundation Awards \$10,000 to YMCA South Hampton Roads

Provided by ABNB FCU

ABNB Community Foundation announced it has awarded a Grant in the amount of \$10,000 to the YWCA of South Hampton Roads.

“ABNB Federal Credit Union has a long and storied history of charitable giving and community involvement dating back to the credit union’s founding in 1960,” stated Wesley Parker, Foundation Board Chairman. “We are extremely pleased to be able to award this grant to the YWCA who does great work serving families, women, and children in the Hampton Roads region. This unique organization delivers much-needed services to these groups and is a shining example of how our community comes together to help those in need,” concluded Parker.

Michelle Ellis Young, YWCA Chief Executive Officer stated, “YWCA South Hampton Roads is grateful for the partnership with the ABNB Community Foundation to help us provide support services and tackle crucial issues that help better the lives of women, children, and men as they escape violence, regain self-sufficiency, and access the tools to rebuild their lives to shape communities where justice, peace, and equity prevail.”



2024
Hall of Honor

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

DCUC.ORG/HOH

Credit Union West to Expand Team With 36 New Hires in 2024

Provided by Credit Union West

Credit Union West, an Arizona-based financial cooperative, announces a significant expansion of 36 positions to its dynamic team. The executive leadership team worked collaboratively and intentionally to prioritize staffing needs to support the credit union's growth. In January, Credit Union West's growth hit a milestone, adding its 90,000th member. The strategic move to add 36 positions supports the credit union's commitment to its mission and reinforces its position as a top company to work for in Arizona.

"Amidst challenges and lay-offs in the industry, Credit Union West remains steadfast in our commitment to our team, our members, and the communities we serve," said Karen Roch, president/CEO. "While others are tightening their belts, we are proud of our financial stability and our robust plan to increase staffing by 20%."

The 36 new positions will span across various departments including administration, branch operations, business services, compliance, financial resolutions, IT, marketing and communications, member contact center, operations support, and project management. In response to the credit union's rapid growth over the past few years, most of these positions will be strategically allocated to strengthen and enhance the retail delivery channels.

"As we chart our strategic course for the next five years, these positions will play a pivotal role in aligning with and advancing our key priorities," said Ning Duong, COO. "By strategically investing in talent to support our evolving vision, we are laying the foundation for sustained success, innovation, and impactful growth, positioning Credit Union West to be at the forefront of our industry."

Credit Union West takes pride in being more than just a workplace; it is a community of dedicated professionals who share a passion for the credit union movement. Credit Union West has been named a Top Company to Work for in Arizona for the eleventh year in a row (2013-2023)! This prestigious award, announced by BestCompaniesAZ, is earned by achieving stellar marks in a comprehensive workplace survey, where employees are asked to rate and share feedback on topics like culture, communication, leadership, and overall satisfaction.

Credit Union West continuously looks for ways to improve employee satisfaction and experience. In 2023, the organization partnered with a well-respected firm to complete an analysis of their employee's total compensation package and made several changes to be a top of market employer. In addition to paying competitive wages starting at \$20 per hour, Credit Union West also offers the following benefits and perks:

- 100% paid health, dental and vision insurance for full-time employees
- Earn incentives up to 15%, depending on position
- 401K plan with employer matching funds up to 5%
- Profit share up to 5% annually
- Tuition reimbursement
- Gym membership reimbursement
- Gym onsite at corporate headquarters
- Paid time off for holidays, vacation, and sick days
- Paid anniversary day off
- Paid time off to volunteer
- Remote and hybrid positions
- Diverse and inclusive workplace
- Credit Union West membership and discounts

Be part of our award-winning team! Visit [cuwest.org/careers](https://www.cuwest.org/careers) to learn more about our open positions.

Giving Back: PenAir CU Names 2024 Jeans for Communerosity® Charities

Provided by PenAir CU

PenAir CU (PenAir) proudly announces the selection of its 2024 Jeans For Communerosity® charities.

Jeans for Communerosity® (J4C) is an inspiring, employee-led initiative, dedicated to supporting those in need within the communities served by PenAir. Since its inception in 2013, J4C has been a beacon of generosity, with PenAir employees contributing more than \$450,000 in support of local nonprofits.

"Communerosity® is not just a word, but a deeply ingrained value at PenAir that our employees exemplify each day," remarked PenAir President/CEO, Lee Morgan. "We take great pride in our collective efforts to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our neighbors."

Every year, PenAir employees nominate deserving, local non-profit organizations to be considered for support through this philanthropic program. Funds are raised through payroll deductions and designated J4C days. PenAir CU matches the funds raised by employees and the annual total collected, approximately \$50,000 per year, is equally distributed among the selected charities for the year.

The 2024 J4C charities are: Penelope House, Gulf Coast Kid's House, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northwest Florida, Studer Family Children's Hospital Autism Center, NWFL Guardian Ad Litem Foundation, End Of Watch Foundation, Buckaroo Foundation, and The Haven of Our Lady of Peace Nursing Home.

These selected charities reflect PenAir's commitment to fostering stronger communities through initiatives focusing on financial literacy, health, human services, local chambers, and community building.

Andrews Federal Helps to Provide 8,000 Sweet Treats for Airmen Through the Great Cookie Caper

Provided by Andrews FCU

Andrews FCU recently worked with local business and community partners to support the Joint Base Andrews Spouses Cookie Caper.

This program was spearheaded by Penny Randolph, spouse of 316th Commander Col. Todd Randolph, and provided 8,000 cookies to airmen and their families as a holiday season treat.

The event was designed to provide military service members an extra reminder of home around the holidays, as they have the opportunity to enjoy homemade cookies and treats—and a taste of home—during the holidays.

According to Andrews Federal Community Engagement Director Rosalind Bishop, participating in the Cookie Caper allowed the credit union team to connect with the local JB Andrews community. “The holidays can be a hard time for military service members—especially those who might be away from home for the first time,” Bishop said. “Through the Cookie Caper, we were able to show support both to the Joint Base Andrews Spouses group and to the service members who received the treats. We want them to know Andrews Federal is here to support them through all stages of their life and to provide resources that enhance their lives, whether it’s through a financial education program or through the simple, heartfelt gift of freshly baked cookies.”

The cookies were distributed to airmen throughout the area and even made their way to the Pentagon, and Andrews Federal also provided meals for the volunteers supporting the Cookie Caper event.



SAFE FCU Invests Over \$100,000 in Financial Education for High School Students

Provided by SAFE FCU

South Carolina high schools are receiving over \$100,000 in aid from SAFE FCU to address financial literacy. SAFE FCU committed the funds to underwrite a state-of-the-art personal finance program for high schools throughout the South Carolina Midlands. So far, 47 public and private high schools have opted for the program, which will benefit as many as 37,100 students. Additional schools are being encouraged to participate as well.

The initiative aligns with the recent provision in South Carolina’s state budget requiring high school seniors to earn a one-half credit in financial literacy before receiving a high school diploma. The new requirement takes effect for the graduating class of 2027.

“In so many things in life, education is the answer. And, for personal money management, education cannot start early enough,” said president/CEO, Michael Baker. “As word of our no-cost solution spreads, we look forward to welcoming many more schools and putting many more students on a positive path with lifelong benefits.”

Developed by education technology provider, Stukent, the personal finance course provides effective, real-life learning experiences through finance simulations. Once successfully completed, the course provides students with a full credit unit.

“Today, we recognized the importance of financial literacy for the students of South Carolina and celebrated SAFE Federal Credit Union’s impact in bringing personal financial curriculum into our classrooms,” said Lieutenant Governor Pamela S. Evette. “This initiative will make a real-life difference in our student’s lives by ensuring they are prepared to have a successful financial future.”

“This free, financial literacy course is just one of many investments SAFE has made to help support the staff and students of Richland Two during our decade long partnership,” added Richland School District Two Superintendent Kim D. Moore. “We’re looking forward to the profound, positive impact this will have for our graduates for many years to come.”

SAFE is making the financial literacy program available at no cost to all public and private high schools in Sumter, Lee, Kershaw, Clarendon, Florence, Richland and Lexington Counties. The schools currently enrolled began personal finance instruction with the spring semester in January.