



APRIL 2025

NEWSLETTER

Helping amazing people like you create financial freedom since 1985.

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SEA YOUR SAVINGS GROW!

AN UNDERWATER EXPERIENCE TO PROMOTE YOUTH SAVINGS

April is Youth Month! Celebrate the spirit of the credit union movement with younger members during National Credit Union Youth Month. During this industry-wide celebration, you can help youth members "Sea their Savings Grow" by participating in the fun, ocean-themed activities we have planned for them!

Follow our youth Facebook page for activities, giveaways, and more during this celebration: Penny Program by Community First Federal Credit Union.

NEW FRAUD SYSTEM UPGRADES

Text and Email Alerts:

- Our fraud system now includes text and email alerts.
 - Falcon Fraud Manager Calling Hours: 8 AM - 9 PM, local time.
 - Falcon Fraud Manager Text/Email Hours: 24 hours per day.

Verify Contact Information:

- Ensure your contact information is up to date and that you've opted to receive text messages.

Travel Notifications:

- Domestic Travel Notifications are no longer required.
- International Travel Notifications are still required and valid for 30 days at a time.

Travel Recommendations:

- When traveling, we recommend carrying multiple forms of payment, including cash, credit cards, and debit cards, to ensure you have a backup in case one fails.

2025 MCUL OUTSTANDING CREDIT UNION OF THE YEAR AWARD

We are honored to announce that Community First Federal Credit Union received the MCUL's 2025 Outstanding Medium-Asset-Size Credit Union of the Year Award! This award recognizes an affiliated, individual credit union that has been exceptionally supportive of the industry on a local, chapter and statewide level over the past year.

This state recognition reflects our mission: Amazing People Creating Financial Freedom. It's a testament to the dedication and support of our amazing membership, our exceptional team members, and the guidance from our outstanding board. We could not have achieved this without all of you.

As we celebrate this milestone, we remain committed to continuous growth, innovation, and finding new ways to better serve our communities and members. True to our name, Community First, we put our community at the forefront of everything we do and strive to create a lasting, positive impact. We will press on to live our vision; to be the best place where our members bank, our team works, and our communities thrive. Together, we will continue to reach greater heights and work to create financial freedom for all.

Thank you for being a part of this amazing journey!

Together, the MCUL and MCUF Awards recognize credit unions, professionals and volunteers for outstanding efforts in individual and organizational leadership, operational effectiveness, community service and financial education.

Community First and all MCUL and MCUF award winners will be formally honored at MCUL's 2025 Annual Convention & Exposition this June in Grand Rapids.

4TH ANNUAL YP GOLF OUTING

The Young Professionals Group (YP Group) at Community First Federal Credit Union is hosting its 4th Annual Golf Outing at Brookside Golf Course on **Saturday, August 16th**. This fun-filled event will feature an 18-hole scramble, lunch, prizes, and more!

Last year, the YP Group raised over \$11,400 for our membership grant, Community Cares, and our financial educational outreach to local high schools. This year's event will continue to raise money to help sustain Community Cares and help make a positive impact on our youth and communities.

Visit our website or social media platforms for more information regarding this event!

CEO COMMENTS

BY: TIMOTHY RASMUSSEN

As we begin the first quarter of 2025, the economy remains in a constant state of uncertainty. On the plus side, inflation is better (they tell us), gas prices are generally stable, and unemployment numbers are good. However, our cost of living is still significantly high, and we hope to see it go down soon.

We have made changes at the credit union to improve your experience at Community First. We have utilized Digital Drive-Thrus (DDT) at most of our locations and have one scheduled for our Trufant branch later this year. I encourage all of you to try this new option of accessing one of our tellers at our DDT where you can do most of your transactions with a real teller on the screen. We are committed to having in-person options available but realize technology can be more convenient and available at all hours of the day.

In March, I was able to travel to Washington, D.C., to meet with our lawmakers to stress the importance of credit unions in our communities and highlight all the good things that happen at our credit union. A lot of changes are happening on the political front, and we want to make sure our politicians are aware of our need to keep valuing credit unions and our members.

Lastly, on a personal note, our youngest son will be getting married this summer. We are looking forward to having a new daughter-in-law and are excited about traveling to Colorado for their wedding. The Rocky Mountains will be a beautiful backdrop, and we can't wait to see our family. I hope you all have a great start to summer!

CFO COMMENTS

BY: MICHELLE ARCHIBALD

We at Community First are working to deliver new and improved products to serve each of our members' needs. Our Card Services Department has been working on many new projects to bring you enhanced services. Coming this year, Community First will begin offering Wallet Pay (digital debit and credit cards on your phone) and Contactless cards (tap-to-pay debit and credit cards). During this process, we will also be updating the design of our current cards. Watch for these improvements later this year.

A little financial update: At the end of February, our assets hit an all-time high of \$141 million. We have also distributed over \$375,000 in dividends back to our members this year. Thank you for allowing us to help create your financial freedom.

SPECIALTY BUSINESS HOURS/EVENTS

- **Tuesday, April 22** - Annual Meeting (information attached)
- **Monday, May 26** - CLOSED (Memorial Day)
- **Wednesday, May 28** - Wednesday Summer Drive Thru Hours Start (Lakeview Branch Only: 9 AM - 6:30 PM)
- **Tuesday, June 24** - CLOSING AT 12 PM (All Staff Training)*
- **Friday, June 27** - Community First's 40th Anniversary Celebration (All Branches - information to come)

*Tentative Date

COO COMMENTS

BY: DAWN BARTELL

Some of you may wonder what the staff at Community First does beyond their specific job responsibilities. Here are some highlights: Each year, our staff completes online training on topics such as money laundering, elder financial abuse prevention, identity theft, and more. Several team members also attend training sessions with America's Credit Union and Michigan Credit Union League, covering subjects like marketing, lending, IRAs, compliance, and leadership. Internally, our corporate trainer leads training sessions to enhance soft skills such as active listening, conflict resolution, and effective questioning.

Our scholarship application period is now closed, and our scholarship committee is reviewing applications to select the winners, who will be announced this spring. We offer six scholarships: Lakeview, Tri-County, Chippewa Hills, Morley Stanwood, All-Area High School, or Vocational School, and an Undergraduate or Graduate School Scholarship.

Another exciting event happening is the opening of our Remus Branch. We anticipate welcoming the Remus community in the summer of 2025. We also look forward to seeing many of you at local town festivals this summer.

I hope you have fantastic summer months filled with joy and an adventurous time with your family and friends.

ESCROW ANALYSIS

Escrow Analysis

- **Who:** Mortgage accounts with an Escrow (Fannie Mae & Portfolio)
- **What:** Review of previous year property taxes & homeowner's insurance invoices paid, to ensure monthly payment is covering those liabilities.
- **Where:** Members will receive mailed notice of Escrow status.
- **When:** Review takes place annually, in March.

Members with shortages have 3 options:

- **Pay shortage in full** (will result in smallest payment change).
- **Partial payment of shortage** (remaining shortage after partial payment will be divided over next 12 months and added to regular monthly payment)
- **Pay nothing** (full shortage will be divided over next 12 months and added to regular monthly payment)

Members with a surplus:

- **Over \$50** (will be returned to members savings in mid-April)
- **Less than \$50** (divided by 12 months and subtracted from regular monthly payment)

TIP:

To avoid surprises at escrow analysis time, member should follow along with escrow activity & compare to previous year to monitor large changes in taxes and/or insurance.

For additional information, please contact our Mortgage Department.

RESOURCES

Scan the code to view multiple forms of educational videos, blog posts, listen to our podcast, or donate or apply for our Community Cares membership grant!

