



First Choice
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The New Direction - July 2020

A Letter from our CEO - We All Have This In Common

“Are we safe? Are we always going to have to wear a mask? When will we be able to go on vacation? When do you think things are going to get back to normal?”

These are just some of the very common questions that I have had to field from my nine year old recently. For him and his little brother, I have had to answer a lot of questions for which I have not had great answers.

We have a lot in common. We all want to keep our family’s safe. We all want to get back to normal. We all want things to go back to what they were before all of this craziness started. However, we have had to adapt to the best of our abilities and continue to make the best of this situation.

Many people have asked when we will be opening our doors to the public. I know for many this is a sign of progress. We desperately want to move on, but we want to do it in the safest and best manner possible. As I stated in a previous newsletter, *“we are in an industry where we CAN serve our membership through a drive through setting. Thus, if we are able to reduce your daily interaction by at least one person, we SHOULD.”*

We are still open to appointments. If you need to talk to us, if you have questions or need more attention to a particular matter, we are here to serve. However, if we can take care of your transactional businesses through the drive through; over the phone; or by utilizing technology, we are encouraging our members to so.

Our delay in opening our lobbies is not born out of a reluctance to serve or wanting to keep our members away, it is our desire to keep everyone safe.

While we adjust to new shopping patterns and practices, may we encourage you to use a First Choice Credit Card for online purchases to provide you an extra layer of protection against fraudsters. It can



“Common Sense is genius dressed in its working clothes.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

What are we doing to help?

- Limiting Exposure
- Offering Better Payment Options
- Keeping Travel / Gift Card Costs Free
- Lowering Rates - Extending Terms

also be a great way to be rewarded for your purchases. Your Debit Card is also a great way to make purchases for convenience, but in the event that the card number is compromised, this can potentially lead to a temporary delay in access to funds in your account. Anyone who has had this happen to them at First Choice can attest that we stand behind our members and will work to make things right quickly. However, any delay of access can be stressful. If a Credit Card number is compromised (which is a rarer occurrence), the card limit is simply frozen, legitimate charges are transferred to a new credit line, and your funds are not impaired.

We are still offering no fee purchase or load Gift and Travel Cards to members and all in the Community as an alternative for their purchases.

As rates are falling we are announcing in this newsletter our new lower rates. We have also broken with tradition and are now offering non-conventional terms. As you can see we are introducing more term categories so that you can take advantage of greater savings and lower your payments. We know this may appear to be a little bit more complicated as there are more categories than ever before, but the goal is to save you more money and really deliver where you need it. It is our hope that you can take advantage of these newer low rates in order to save you and your family some money

Continued

Board of Directors

Pamela Miller *President*
 Brian DeVivo *Vice-President*
 Russ Carley *Treasurer*
 Marilyn Wehr *Secretary*
 George Fiacco
 Josephine Sedwick
 Michael Vatter

Meet Our Staff

Michael Vatter
CEO/Manager
 Allyson Allwine
 Maureen Dierfield
 Erica Holian
 Susan Canary
 Kathy Lorello
 Mary Lou McPheron
 Connie Million
 Michelle Shepler
 William Wehr
 Bonnie Williams
 Lillian Charles
 Sherry Hammond
 Christopher Litrenta Jr.

Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday (All Offices)
 9:00AM - 4:30PM
 Drive-Thrus open at 8:30AM
Saturday (Neshannock Office)
 9:00AM - 12:00PM

Proud Member of



Accounts Federally insured

We Should All Have this In Common (Continued)

on your purchases.

We are proud to be your credit union. Even through this pandemic and despite our doors being closed, we have continued to grow our membership and add new families. We feel that is a testament to what we have to offer is compelling.

We are as committed to you as we always have been, maybe more so. It is too cliché to say “we are in this together.” Each one of you has a unique financial situation that requires a fair and consistent response.

We know that some of our members have recently gone through difficult times, and we have attempted to meet them in real ways where they are. If you experience financial difficulty now or in the future, PLEASE CALL US. We will do all that we can to meet your

needs in a meaningful way. Finances are private. Financial struggles are stressful. We know that if you are in a less than desirable situation you may feel embarrassed. There is no need. We deal with finances all of the time. Sometimes things are good, and other times they may not be. We CAN help. If you give us the time and LET US. We cannot help, if we do not know.

We are part of this Community. We are proud of it; we rejoice when you rejoice and we hurt when you do. We will continue to listen to real needs and do our very best to respond in real time in real ways.

It is our desire to put this behind us, but the most important thing to do is move forward. We are here to help you accomplish this.

You Make Us So Proud

So there was this thing that ended up happening, I don’t know if any of you heard about it. It turns out, students were not able to complete their normal school year. It was particularly difficult for Seniors who may have missed out on things like, prom, graduation, and a chance to apply and compete for scholarships. In fact, many opportunities for scholarships actually became more scarce as those businesses and organizations that were responsible for funding them had to make difficult decisions to cut back or postpone this year’s awards.

After careful consideration the Shenango Valley Chapter of Credit Union’s and the Edward J Cialella Memorial Scholarship were



not among those postponed this year. Once again your credit union was very well represented by some exceptional students. The judges had a difficult time picking the winners of these awards based upon their essays and displayed leadership.

All told 13 scholarships were given out to students from applications received over seven different credit unions.

Your 2020 First Choice Winners of the Shenango Valley Chapter Scholarships are **Allayna Allwine, Alliya Allwine, Stephanie Johnson, Nicole Canary, and Christopher Litrenta Jr.**

The 2020 Edward J Cialella Memorial Scholarship, named after our long-time President, winners were **Rachel Lyden and Jensen Miller.**

Congratulations to our winners and to all who applied. Have a great upcoming year!

They're Back... eeeekkkkk

Just when you thought it was safe... The kids have returned. This year many of the colleges around the Country are going to operate on an altered schedule. Many students are going to forego extended breaks and engage in a more rigorous academic schedule in order to finish their semester before Thanksgiving. Instead of a typical 3 week break in between semesters, there could be a 7 or 8 week break.

You know what that means? More laundry, "Do you sleep this late at school? How do you make it to class?" ... and you realize why you pay so much money for a meal plan... because they EAT SOOOO MUCH!

Many of us have had to shelve our vacation plans due to circumstances outside of our control. Maybe with the kids home, and hopefully things returning to "normal", it may be a time to get away.

We always have a Board Special or a Personal Loan to help out if you need to borrow a little



extra, but maybe this year you could use that Christmas Club as a Vacation Club.

Christmas Club accounts pay out on October 1st, which I know is just 3 months away from the printing of this newsletter, but that is three months of savings that can help quite a bit. It is a great way to set that money aside so you don't use it, and a great thing to look forward to.

If you ultimately can't use the saved money to go on vacation, maybe it can help you to offset some of those extra grocery bills.

(Seriously, where do they put it all?)



Loan & Savings Rates

Loan Rates in APR*, Savings APY**
Effective 7/1/20

Rates start as low as...

Personal: 9.99%

Board Specials:

\$2,000 for 20 Mo. 4.24%
\$4,000 for 30 Mo. 6.24%

Share Secured: 2.99%

Untitled Autos:

Up to 40 Mo. 1.74%
41-52 Mo. 1.87%
53-64 Mo. 1.99%
65-76 Mo. 2.49%
77-88 Mo. 3.24%

Used Autos: 2020-2018

Up to 40 Mo. 1.99%
41-52 Mo. 2.12%
53-64 Mo. 2.24%
65-76 Mo. 2.74%
77-88 Mo. 3.49%

Used Autos: 2017-2016

Up to 52 Mo. 2.24%
53-64 Mo. 2.49%
65-76 Mo. 2.99%

Used Autos: 2015-2014

Up to 52 Mo. 2.49%
53-64 Mo. 2.74%
65-76 Mo. 3.24%

2013 & older

Up to 48 Mo. 5.24%
Up to 60 Mo. 5.99%

Home Equity: (1st Position)

5 years 2.99% Fixed
7 Years 3.24% Fixed
10 Years 3.49% Fixed
15 years 3.99% Fixed

(2nd Position)

5 years 3.49% Fixed
7 Years 3.74% Fixed
10 Years 3.99% Fixed
15 years 4.49% Fixed

Members pay costs

** Rates impacted by credit score.

ALL RATES REFLECT A 0.25% DISCOUNT FOR AUTO PAY



VISA Cards - No Annual Fees
Platinum - 12.90% Fixed
Rewards - 15.90% Fixed

Share Accounts 0.100%
Loan Collateral 0.100%
IRA Accounts 0.750%
Unless tied to a CD

Club Accounts
Christmas Club 0.200%
Vacation Club 0.200%

Escrow Accounts 0.100%

Interest paid on share accounts
with a balance > \$100.

Inquire about rates for Motorcycles, ATVs,
RVs, Watercraft, and Other Titled Vehicles.

Anyone who lives, works, volunteers, or attends church or school in Lawrence County is eligible to become a member and take full advantage of belonging.