



www.bakerfcu.org

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Phillipsburg, NJ 08865-1845

OFFICE

800-992-2365 or
908-859-2340

FAX

908-859-1817

BANK-BY-PHONE

800-332-0479 or
908-859-0384

VISIT US AT

www.bakerfcu.org

HOURS

LOBBY

Monday - Friday
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Saturday

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

DRIVE THRU

Monday - Thursday
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Friday

8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Saturday

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Monday, January 16, 2012
Martin Luther King's Birthday

Monday, February 20, 2012
Presidents' Day

BULLETIN BOARD



THE BANTER

Quarterly Newsletter of Baker Federal Credit Union









December 2011

Credit Unions Make More Cents



Everyone's talking about the cost of banking services these days! Your Credit Union has always been committed to helping you manage your money with the least amount of fees as possible. What you may not know, however, is that you may be able to control your fees even further.

For instance, paying fees for Debit/ATM use and for insufficient funds fees on ACH or share draft transactions can be avoided by following the tips listed below.

-  **Keep Track of Your Balance:** Sign up for our free audio response line which you can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week for live balances. Save paying a fee for ATM balance inquiries by making a simple phone call before you visit the ATM.
-  **Don't Count on "Mail Time" When Sending Checks:** With improved technology, checks clear practically overnight these days. Don't count on having 3-5 days before a check you write will clear your account. The instant you write a check, you should assume those funds are no longer available to you.
-  **Co-Ordinate With Other Account Holders:** If you have a joint account with two ATM/Debit cards, make sure you collect all receipts from all users and record them in your check register. This way you won't have any surprises and you always know your account balance. Also, transactions may take several days to post to your account, so your balance in your check book will always be the most accurate.
-  **Open A Checking Account With a Debit Card:** There is no charge to open a checking account and apply for a Credit Union debit card that gives you more flexibility than a traditional ATM only card.
-  **Use Our ATM's Whenever Possible:** Never pay a fee when you use our on-site ATM or our remote ATM sites.
-  **Always Use A Surcharge-Free Machine:** Machines at other credit unions and select retailers offer "surcharge-free" transactions.
-  **Get Cash At Retail:** To avoid paying excessive withdrawal fees at random ATMs, ask for "cash back" when you make a purchase at a grocery store or retail establishment. It's more convenient and saves you fees.
-  **Fund Your Account:** If you have electronic payments coming out of your account on a monthly basis (for loan payments, insurance, utility bills) make sure you have enough funds in your account to cover those recurring withdrawals. You'll avoid insufficient funds fees with the Credit Union, as well as any other related fees to the payee.

Look for future money-saving tips. That's why Credit Union's make more cents!

Clip'n Win!

Enter our contest to win \$25 just for reading the newsletter!

Name _____

Account Number _____

Entries can be submitted at our office or by mailing to:
501 Baltimore Street,
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865

Please submit by February 18, 2012.





Don't Let Your Gift Cards Go to Waste

Americans love giving gift cards during the holiday season. In fact, gift card sales are expected to reach \$100 billion by 2012, according to TowerGroup, a research and advisory firm.

Many people, however, snooze when it comes to using their gift cards, and thus lose the ability to have all the funds available. Here are a few helpful hints to get the most out of your gift cards!

- **MAKE IT EASY TO REACH** Use your gift card instead of your hard-earned cash. That means you want it with you when you're likely to be shopping, not at home in your sock drawer!
- **KNOW YOUR CARDS** By law, funds on the cards must be good for at least five years. Issuers generally aren't allowed to charge any fees within the first year after a gift card is purchased. You can be charged a fee to purchase the card and to replace a lost or stolen card. After one year, however, issuers are limited to one fee per month, says John Breyault, director of the National Consumer League's Fraud Center.
- **MARK YOUR CALENDAR** Make sure you're aware of any fees associated with the cards you receive. Use gift cards within a year of when they were purchased. One good way to remember just how long you have: If you mark your calendar, you won't lose your gift card's value to fees or forgetfulness.
- **PAIR YOUR GIFT CARD WITH A COUPON** You can combine gift cards and coupons and really leverage your buying power. Search the retailer's site for either coupons or coupon codes. If it doesn't specify "online only," they have to honor it in the store. If you have a Smartphone, you can carry the online coupon there.
- **DON'T BUY JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE A GIFT CARD** It seems contradictory: Yes, you want to use that gift card quickly. However, you don't want to buy just to buy. If you really want to make a smart purchase, wait for something that you actually really need or want. If the card is aging or it's from a store you don't love, think about "re-gifting" the card or buying someone else a present. That will free up money for something you want!
- **GIFT CARD THIEVES** Scammers copy gift card numbers and then use them to spend the money loaded on the card. One way to fight back is to periodically check the balance before you use the card. Some gift card providers allow you to do that through their websites. While you're there, you can also find out what the policies are in cases of loss, theft or fraud. If you see unexpected activity on your card, report it to the store or the gift card issuer. The same laws apply to these cards as with credit card theft.

Source: Bankrate.com

SYMPTOM:
SPRING FEVER

CURE:

New Car!



You've got the fever and you've got it bad! There's only one thing that will really cool you down and prepare you for the warm weather ahead...a NEW CAR! Dealers are ready to prey on fever-struck buyers with special pricing and super financing. But what may seem a good deal now may later turn into a financing headache. That's why you should follow these simple steps as you shop for a vehicle:

- Find the vehicle that meets your requirements; don't just settle for what the dealer is trying to clear from inventory.
- Compare dealer financing rates (expressed as Annual Percentage Rate) and monthly payments to the exact type of loan at the Credit Union (verify that term, amount financed and other insurances are the same for both).
- Apply for a pre-approval on a Credit Union vehicle loan. A pre-approval will save you time once you select the vehicle you want, and may give you the ability to negotiate the lowest possible price.

Remember, insurance and interest charges are a major profit maker for the car dealership. They simply will not offer the lowest price (with rebates) AND their best rate of interest. Your Credit Union exists to serve you, the member, with low cost borrowing power, and doesn't need to maintain a high profit.

See your new vehicle financing specialist to treat your "fever" and be well on your way to a speedy recover!