

Member Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2020



IN THIS EDITION...

- 'Debt-Free Life' Continues
- Freedom in the Community - 2019 Recap
- Stay Informed: 2020 Census Scam Information
- Financial Resources for Our Members
- ...and so much more!

Connect With Us on Social Media!



800.440.4120

www.freedomfcu.org

THINGS TO LOVE ABOUT HARFORD COUNTY

1. **The Decoy Museum** – Whether you're checking out the decoys or walking the promenade, Havre de Grace is the perfect blend of now and then
2. **Shopping on Main Street** – Boutiques, bars and restaurants...Downtown Bel Air has everything you need for a weekend of shopping and dining
3. **Community Opportunities** – Harford County is a hub for volunteerism. With great local charities in every town, it's easy to get involved and make a difference
4. **Outdoor Adventures** – Lovers of the great outdoors have plenty of options for entertainment. With places like Kilgore Falls and Gunpowder State Park, you can run a trail and float down a river all in the same day
5. **Freedom!** – Credit Union membership comes with all sorts of benefits. At Freedom, we do our best to ensure you get to take advantage of all of them. Why? Because we love Harford County just as much as you do! Find out more about your Credit Union benefits [HERE](#)

STEP 2 OF 12 TOWARD A DEBT-FREE LIFE

Don't Dig Yourself Deeper



When you've dug yourself deep into a pit, the only way to get out is to stop digging. This month, focus on not racking up more debt. Stop using your credit cards. Skip your weekly trips that usually have you buying too many non-essentials.

Instead, start brown-bagging your work lunch and brewing your own coffee. Get into the habit of spending only on essentials so you can make real progress toward paying down that debt.

Don't forget to make (at least) the minimum payments on every line of credit and loan you have open. Neglecting your debt will only pull you deeper into the pit.

Congratulate yourself for taking concrete steps towards managing your debt! Freedom is here to walk with you in whatever financial-life stage you're in. Stay tuned for next month's tip -- we'll be covering ways to negotiate for a lower APR!

ERIC'S READY FOR A BETTER RATE

Are you?

Debt Consolidation Loans as low as 5.49% APR*. Take back control and turn your pile of bills into one low interest payment.

Click [HERE](#) to Learn More



FREEDOM IN THE COMMUNITY - 2019 RECAP



In addition to monetary donations and branch-wide collections, Freedom employees frequently volunteer in the Community. Pictured here are FFCU employees and their family members organizing gifts with The Empty Stocking Fund at the end of 2019.

Thanks to a successful year of financial growth for Freedom Federal Credit Union, over 76 local charities, nonprofits, and community organizations have benefited from financial support in 2019.

Over \$180,000 was invested back into the Harford County Communities that the Credit Union serves. Freedom Federal Credit Union has been in Harford County since 1956 and has a long history of supporting local non-profits and improving community resources. As a not-for-profit institution, the Credit Union returns all profits back to the membership and to the community at large.

Notable donations include more than \$30,000 to Harford County Public Schools, more than \$25,000 to Upper Chesapeake Health Foundation, and \$15,000 to the MedStar Health Foundation, among many others.

“Freedom is the gold standard of community partners,” says Shawn Kros, CEO of The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region. “We can count on Freedom to be there for us in all capacities- not only through monetary donations, but with volunteerism, program support and strategic planning.”

In addition to monetary support, Freedom Federal Credit Union donates employee time to causes all over the county. In 2019, Freedom employees volunteered more than 400 hours to charitable initiatives. The Credit Union also initiated a Harford County-based social media movement called the *#FreedomToHelpChallenge*. Individuals, businesses, and non-profits participate by posting pictures and stories of their volunteer efforts, in the hopes of winning a \$1,000 charitable donation for their cause. The movement has brought new awareness to dozens of Harford County-based charities and celebrates the volunteers who serve them.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Freedom is proud to offer financial resources for every stage of life. We prioritize our members needs, and want you to feel confident and secure in your knowledge of your financial situation. See the list below for a breakdown of our services that will help you start, stay or get back on track!

FINANCIAL EDUCATION CENTER: Whether you're just starting out with a brand new Credit Union account, looking for information on how a mortgage works, or want to learn the definitions and implications of words like 'APR', 'APY' and 'Dividends', turn to FFCU's Financial Education Center! Each session lasts anywhere from 2-7 minutes, and are completed online via your computer, phone or tablet. Available in English and Spanish.

FINANCIAL PLANNING: Do you need professional, guided financial planning and investment services to help you through some important financial decisions? Freedom is pleased to offer financial planning and wealth management services through our trusted partner, The Kelly Group. TKG's experienced and dedicated Team of professionals provides a variety of financial planning and management services, all with one aim in mind: to help you and your family achieve your financial goals. The Kelly Group can be your trusted, holistic partner in your journey to financial independence.

Freedom Federal Credit Union does not represent either The Kelly Group or the member if the two enter a relationship. Freedom Federal Credit Union is a separate entity from The Kelly Group. Investment Advisory Services offered through Investment Advisor Representatives of Cambridge Investment Research Advisors, Inc., a Registered Investment Adviser, and Securities offered through Registered Representatives of Cambridge Investment Research, Inc. Investment, are not NCUA Insured and may lose value.



EMPOWER CHECKING

Earn 3.00% APY* on your average monthly balance up to \$10,000, with no minimum balance requirements or monthly account fees. Power up your earnings!

[Learn More](#)

Annual Percentage Yield (APY) as of November 1, 2019. If your account meets the criteria described below, you will earn 3.00% Annual Percentage Yield (APY) on balances up to \$10,000 and 0.25% APY on balances of \$10,000.01 and higher. Balances that do not meet the account requirements for a given month will earn 0.05% APY. No minimum balance requirements. No minimum to open account. No monthly maintenance fees or penalties. Fees may reduce earnings on accounts. To earn the higher rate, you must opt-in to electronic statements, and complete a minimum of 15 qualifying Point-Of-Sale (POS) purchase transactions per month using your Freedom Federal Credit Union debit card. To qualify, debit card transactions must process, post, and clear within the calendar month. Debit card transactions may take one or more business days from the transaction date to post to an account from the date the transaction is made. Both PIN and signature POS transactions qualify. ATM transactions do not qualify. Product and rates subject to change. Membership eligibility applies.



FROZEN ACCOUNT: WHEN A CHECKING ACCOUNT FORGETS TO PAY THE HEATING BILL OR IS STUCK OUTSIDE IN WINTER.

BEWARE THE 2020 CENSUS SCAM

Every 10 years, the Census Bureau counts every person living in the U.S. The process won't start until mid-March 2020, but the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is already warning of scammers trying to con you out of your sensitive information.

HOW WILL THE 2020 CENSUS INVITE PEOPLE TO RESPOND?

A total of 95 percent of households will receive their census invitation in the mail. The remaining 5 percent will receive an invitation to respond via personal delivery, or will be personally counted by a census taker. Households that do not respond to the mailed invitation will receive reminder letters, postcards and questionnaires until they do respond. If they still have not participated in the census by May 2020, a census taker will visit the household to count them in person. If no one answers the door, the census taker will continue trying to reach them in person, or by phone, up to six times.

WHAT KIND OF QUESTIONS WILL I FIND ON THE CENSUS FORM?

The census questionnaire will focus on the amount of people living in the household at the time the form is completed. You will also need to note each household member's sex, age, race, ethnicity, relationships to the other residents, phone number and whether you own or rent the home. There will not be a citizenship question on the 2020 census.

HOW CAN I DETERMINE IF A CENSUS TAKER IS REALLY A SCAMMER?

You can verify a census taker's legitimacy by asking to see their required photo ID. Authentic ID will include a U.S. Department of Commerce seal and an expiration date. You can also ask for their supervisor's contact information and/or call the census regional office phone number to verify your census taker's authenticity. The most suspicious behavior a scammer will exhibit is asking intrusive and inappropriate questions.

A census taker will never ask you if you are a U.S. citizen, for your full Social Security number, for credit card numbers or account information, for a donation, to pledge your support for a political party or for personal information, like your mother's maiden name.

A scammer might also try to reach you by phone. Remember, a census taker will not reach out to you by phone unless you have failed to respond to previous invitations and reminders and you have not answered the door when a census taker visited you personally. If you have reason to believe you are speaking with a scammer over the phone, hang up.

If you suspect fraud, call 800-923-8282 to report the incident to a local Census Bureau representative and file a report with the FTC.

WEBSITE REFRESH



This spring, freedomfcu.org is getting an updated look and feel. We are constantly striving to ensure that our systems go above and beyond when it comes to meeting our members needs. These updates will not impact the current website's functionality. Stay tuned for our new look!

REMINDER: All Freedom branches will be closed on Monday, February 17th in honor of President's Day

WANT TO WIN \$25.00?

Of course you do. Find the Green Dollar Sign (\$), hidden on a page in this newsletter. Click [HERE](#) to tell us which article it was in and you will be entered to win a \$25.00 Visa® Gift Card* -- Good luck!

CONGRATULATIONS to January's winner
MARY M.!

*Must be 18 or older to enter. Employees and Members of the Board of Directors of FFCU are not eligible to win. Drawing runs from 2/12/2020 until 2/29/2020



Happy with your Freedom experience? Consider writing us a review on our **Facebook** page.



P.O. Box 1545 Bel Air, MD
21014 | 800-440-4120
freedomfcu.org

BRANCHES

For hours and ATM info, visit [freedomfcu.org](#)

Park Avenue

2019 Emmorton Rd
Bel Air, MD 21015

Forest Lakes

1990 Rock Spring Rd
Forest Hill, MD 21050

Swan Creek

1830-C Pulaski Hwy
Havre de Grace, MD
21078

Fountain Green

1304 Churchville Rd
Bel Air, MD 21014

Edgewood*

8213 Hoadley Rd,
Building E 5002
Gunpowder, MD
21010

**Access restricted to APG
Base personnel and visitors.*