

# Money Matters



Summer 2008

A Quarterly Publication of New Mexico Energy Federal Credit Union

Visit us on the Web at [www.nmenergyfcu.org](http://www.nmenergyfcu.org)

## 10 Quick Steps to Sell Your Home Fast

There are a lot more "house for sale" signs around town these days. People are moving for a variety of reasons and this is the time of year home-selling season begins. Job transfers, needing a larger home, needing a smaller home, moving to a different state or down the street. How does your home stand out from the rest? Here are a few quick and inexpensive strategies.

**1. Scrub till it sparkles.** From the front door to the bathroom mirror, your home should shine with cleanliness.

**2. Declutter.** To help buyers see the features of the home and not be distracted by your possessions, remove any extra furniture, countertop appliances, accessories, etc. that close in spaces. You may also want to rearrange furniture for good traffic flow and create intimate spaces within larger rooms.

**3. Make it neutral.** Pack away any personal items such as razors, toothbrushes, etc. This allows the buyer to picture him or herself living in the house.

**4. Organize closets and cupboards.** Buyers look *everywhere*, so make sure storage areas appear spa-

cious. Consider storing half your clothes and large dishes that look cramped in cupboards.

**5. Fix small problems.** This includes loose doorknobs, worn carpet, stained or chipped walls, burned out light bulbs, leaking faucets, stained grout, etc. It is good to also remove eyesores and hazards, such as extension cords and slippery rugs.

**6. Hide pets.** When showing the house, take animals with you or board them. Put away their dishes and other paraphernalia, and deodorize the home.

**7. Add extra touches.** Color coordinate accessories, add colorful plants and flowers inside and out, set the table with your prettiest dishes, create a reading nook in the living room, and place lamps in dark corners. You can also add a non-offending aroma with potpourri or scented candles.

**8. Provide a clear floor plan** and color photos of special areas on your home information sheet.

**9. Extend the living space outdoors.** Home buyers want outdoor family space, so show a small seating area with a grill on your patio or in your yard.

**10. Create online curb appeal.** Many homebuyers start their searches on the Internet. Add a virtual tour to your online listing and be sure that your photos are well lit so that your home appears cheerful. Include photos of special areas that make your home stand out, such as sitting area in the master bedroom, the garden view, or a build-in sideboard.

Now that your home is ready to sell, it's time to buy your next home. NM Energy FCU offers competitive mortgage rates and a great lending staff to make the purchase quick and easy. Call us at 505-845-4608 or 800-825-5256, for an application or for more information.

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### Is the Price Right?

Often the most important key to selling a home quickly is pricing. When setting your price consider:

- How your home compares to others in the neighborhood
- Recent selling prices of homes in the area
- A range of prices you'll accept
- Incentives for buyers, such as paying their closing costs ■

## Youth Week Winners

We had quite a few young visitors during Youth Week – April 21 through April 25. Thursday, April 24 was a special day. We had cookies for our young members in celebration of "Bring your Daughters and Sons to work" day.

We were pleased to see so many young people come in and deposit money into their accounts. Those depositing into existing accounts or opening new accounts were given the

chance to win one of three \$25 gift cards to Barnes & Noble. On the entry form they listed the amount of their deposit and what they are saving for. We had a variety of motivations listed for saving: college, motorcycles, laptops, and coins.

### The gift card winners are:

- Dayl Gallegos (8 years old) who is saving toward college

- Brianna Felmlee (10) who is saving toward college
- Mikayla Mireles (8) who is saving to adopt a baby someday

Thank you to all of the parents, grandparents, and guardians who brought our younger members in for a visit. We enjoyed it! ■



## Proud of the Credit Union Difference

When you walk into our lobby, or call a loan officer, what makes NM Energy FCU different from a bank isn't immediately apparent. The two financial institutions may offer similar products and services. But there the similarities stop. Crucial differences exist in ownership, in cost of borrowing money, and in use of services. Here are some of the major differences:

You own your credit union. Credit unions are member-owned not-for-profit financial cooperatives dedicated to improving members' lives. More than 80 million members own 10,500 U.S. credit unions with combined assets of \$450 billion. Stockholders own banks (with combined assets of \$6.2 trillion). Banks make money for stockholders, not for customers.

Credit unions are the only democratically controlled financial institutions in the United States. You and

other members elect a volunteer board of directors to oversee NM Energy FCU. The manager or president/chief executive officer reports to this board. Bank Directors, however, are paid and legally bound to make decisions that benefit stockholders, not customers.



Credit union profits are returned to member-owners in better loan rates and interest on deposits, and low or no fees on high quality services. Banks price products and services to make higher profits for shareholders.

You earn more on your savings – in some cases up to one percentage point – at the credit union.

Credit union loan rates also are better. The average credit card interest rate is four percentage points better at

credit unions vs. banks. And credit union auto loans average almost one and one-half percentage points less than banks' auto loan rates. Credit unions make consumer loans and some member business loans. Banks offer consumer loans, but really emphasize business loans.

Credit unions educate members about money matters. They provide publications such as this newsletter to keep you advised of rates, loan sales, and financial trends that affect you. NM Energy FCU stresses education, providing materials and holding seminars on financial planning, car, and home buying to help you make informed buying decisions. Many banks simply advertise their rates and sell their services.

Because you're an owner of NM Energy FCU, you have a say in how we do business. Let us know how you think we're doing, and what services you want at your Credit Union. ■

### Protect Your Identity and Money!

Please visit our Web site, [www.nmenergyfcu.org](http://www.nmenergyfcu.org), and click on the ID Theft Resources icon to learn more about protecting yourself and your family. You may also call 800-332-0317 (select option 4 twice) to request a copy of *Safeguard your personal information: Publication 280*, December 2007 / PSN 7610-05-000-0653.

**There are many ways of stealing your personal information. Here are just a few examples:**

- The low-tech way of simply stealing your wallet or items from your home, mail, and or trash.
- Files taken from an office where you are a customer, employee, or patient.
- Credit or debit card numbers taken through the use of a "skimming" device used while processing your transaction out of your sight. Typically used in restaurants and gas stations.
- Information obtained through "phishing". This is an online spam email or pop up message appearing to be from your financial institution or other company you do business with.
- Information obtained over the phone where criminals convince you they are legitimate representatives. This is known as "vishing".
- The newest form of theft is "smishing" which involves text messaging over mobile phones where consumers are directed to fraudulent Web sites and are prompted to download programs capable of capturing personal information. ■



## DebitCard Debate: Check-Out Line Dilemma Reveals Real Differences

When you use a debit card, some features are the same whether you pick credit or debit. Both are withdrawn from your checking account, contain fraud protections, and can be tracked using online banking or your monthly statement.

But there are important differences. The first difference is how you verify your identity at the time of the transaction. Choosing the “debit” option means you plan to prove your identity by submitting a four-number password, commonly known as a personal identification number, or PIN. Some experts regard this as the most secure form of debit transaction.

Choosing the “credit” option means you plan to forego the PIN in favor of signing a receipt. You get a copy of the signed receipt. This route protects you from potential fraud if you forget to shield your PIN from a person standing near you.

### **Merchant pressure**

Merchants often encourage consumers to pay with a PIN. Card readers may be programmed to always request a

PIN, for example, forcing consumers to take a few seconds longer to push a “credit” button or ask the clerk to enable a signature-based transaction.

Some merchants only accept debit cards if they’re used with a PIN. That’s because using a PIN lowers the merchant’s costs for handling the purchase. Some merchants also may encourage consumers to use a PIN by charging a fee for signature-based purchases. Policies vary, so check the rules before buying.

While merchants tend to prefer PINs, credit unions and other card issuers usually prefer signature-based purchases. That’s because credit unions are paid a small amount known as an “interchange fee” when members choose the “credit” option for debit card purchases. This helps lower the Credit Union’s costs for offering debit cards to members.

Account holds may affect your purchasing power. A “hold” is the amount set aside in your account at the merchant’s request to cover a pending debit purchase. Signature-based trans-

actions can be held for hours or even days before they are withdrawn from your account, so some gas stations will put a hold of \$50 to \$75 on your account to make sure they will be paid. That means you have less money available for other debit card purchases until the hold is removed, which may take hours or even days.

### **Choosing “debit” gives you:**

- A debit card purchase authorized by entering a PIN
- The quickest way to check out, in most cases

- The ability to get cash back

### **Choosing “credit” gives you:**

- A debit card purchase authorized with your signature
- Access to more stores, since three times as many stores accept signature-based debit purchases as accept PIN purchases
- “Chargeback” protections that allow you to get your money back if there is a dispute with the merchant
- More “points” when consumers are enrolled in reward programs that encourage debit card usage ■

## Your Financial Records - The Gift of Getting Organized

Organizing your financial records is one of the best gifts you can give your family. Unfortunately, many people don’t set up a workable system or communicate with persons who have to pick up the pieces in case of a crisis or death. Getting organized doesn’t mean finding a place for everything. It means:

- knowing what to keep and for how long;
- where to store documents; and
- when to shred outdated statements.

### **Consider these tips to get started:**

**1. Eliminate waste.** Toss items you don’t need, such as receipts for small

purchases or groceries, or records on autos you no longer need. To prevent identity theft, shred documents with Social Security numbers or account numbers. Consider software organization tools, or going paperless. Sign up for online Credit Union and brokerage statements and burn them onto a CD for future reference.

**2. Set up a simple file system** that anyone can follow with an active and an inactive file.

**3. Reserve your safe deposit box** for anything that would be difficult to replace if destroyed, such as birth and mar-

riage certificates, titles, household inventory, investment certificates, and military records.

**4. Establish a routine.** Open and sort mail daily. Arrange bills so you can pay them about the same time each month. Every year or so, weed your files. ■



# How to Recognize and Handle Mutilated Currency

**What is mutilated currency?** Currency notes which are:

- **clearly more** than one-half of the original note and/or,
- in such condition that the value is questionable and special examination is required to determine its value.

Currency can become mutilated in any number of ways. The most common causes are: fire, water, chemicals, explosives; animal, insect or rodent damage; and petrification or deterioration by burying. Under regulations issued by the Department of the Treasury, mutilated United States currency may be exchanged at face value if:

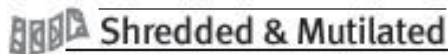
- more than 50% of a note identifiable as United States currency is present; or,
- 50% or less of a note identifiable as United States currency is present, and the method of mutilation and supporting evidence demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Treasury that the missing portions have been totally destroyed.

· **clearly more** than one-half of the original note, and does not require special examination to determine its value. These notes can be exchanged through NM Energy FCU and processed by the Federal Reserve Bank.

**What is not mutilated currency?** Any badly soiled, dirty, defaced, disintegrated, limp, torn, worn out currency note that is *clearly more* than one-half of the original note, and does not require special examination to determine its value. These notes can be exchanged through NM Energy FCU and processed by the Federal Reserve Bank.

**What to do if you have mutilated currency?** If the currency is mutilated, the member should send the currency directly to the Bureau, following its instruction for special handling.

For more information, visit [www.moneyfactory.gov/section.cfm/8/39](http://www.moneyfactory.gov/section.cfm/8/39), the Bureau's Web site. ■



## Announcing the Retirement of Phyllis Hendrix

August 10, 1987 – can it really have been 21 years since Phyllis began her career with NM Energy FCU (ALO Employees FCU back then)? Phyllis started out as a receptionist and when she retired, on April 25, 2008, she was an Operations Assistant (back office operations and customer service). What an amazing time! She has seen many changes in the Credit Union: location, personnel, CU name change, and technology. Her ever-present, bright smile and enthusiastic personality brightened up NM Energy FCU for its employees and members.

She is anxious to have time to devote to her quilting hobby and said it's time to get some of the quilts finished she started long ago! Quilting conventions are definitely on her retirement agenda. Her three children and two grandchildren promise to keep her busy as well.

The Board of Directors, staff, and members came out in force to wish her well. She will be missed. All of our best wishes go out to Phyllis for a grand retirement! ■

### Holiday Closings

- **Independence Day**  
Thursday, July 3 – Close at 2:30  
Friday, July 4 – Closed

- **Labor Day**  
Friday, Aug. 29 – Close at 2:30  
Monday, Sept. 1 – Closed



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**Main:** (505) 845-6939 or  
(800) 825-5256, then dial  
845-6939

**Fax:** (505) 845-4855  
**Smartline:** (505) 845-4122  
or (800) 837-6065

#### Lobby Hours

##### Monday

8:00 AM to 3:00 PM

##### Tuesday through Thursday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

##### Friday

9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

*Closed on Federal Holidays*

#### Board of Director Listing

**Raymond Baca**  
*Chair of the Board*

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*First Vice Chair*

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*Second Vice Chair*

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**Patricia Padilla, Chair**  
**Leonard Raab Jr.**

**Jay Pape**



*All Individual Retirement Accounts are insured separately to an additional \$250,000.*