

CURRENTS

HURRICANE SEASON

Dear Member,

It's that time of year again. Are you prepared? We are! Singing River Federal has comprehensive plans in place to keep serving you in the event of a storm. Our website and online services will still be available even if there are power outages, and we're establishing a special Public Information Hotline you can call for the most up-to-date information. Plus, we'll be here to help you with special financing and payment options if you experience damage or loss. Of course, our hope is that we never need these precautions, but rest assured we've got you covered just in case.

You might have noticed that our branches recently got a facelift. **Don't our new signs look great?** Below you can see the installation at our Moss Point branch, and you can check out more photos on our facebook page.

Student loans have been in the news a lot lately. If you're sending a student off to college this fall and need more information, we've got plenty of answers. *Read more about it on page 2.*

If your student isn't quite college age yet, we've got answers for him or her, too. We know back-to-school can be expensive, so we're bringing back our famous school loan offer to make it easier on your mind and your wallet. *Read more about it on page 3.*

We need your help! Some bankers and their trade associations are asking legislators to tax credit unions. This would actually be a tax hike on all American consumers, whether they're credit union members or not! Join us today and tell Congress, **"Don't Tax My CU!"** *Read more about it on page 4.*

We're so grateful you're part of the River family, and we look forward to many years of helping you weather life's storms and celebrate life's sunny days. **Summer is cooler at the river!**

Sincerely,



James B. Smith Jr., President/CEO



Questions about
**student
loans?**

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Refer a friend
and win
colossal cash

page 3

Tell Congress:
**Don't tax
my CU**

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*Life's better
at the river.*



college fund

Student loans:

Think before you borrow

We have never had the combination of stubborn unemployment, underemployment and high student loan debt that we have today.

The total amount of outstanding student loan debt in the United States now tops \$1 trillion. To make matters worse, recent graduates have been emerging from colleges and universities, with diplomas in hand, into one of the worst job markets in living memory.

College costs have been outpacing incomes for a generation, fueled in no small part by the easy access to credit for college costs. The federal government has sought for years to make college more accessible for middle and working-class families. It routinely provides generous guarantees against default for student loans. However, the more money that's available for any commodity, the higher consumers will bid up the prices for it, and education is no different.

Many of today's students are having difficulty in making the payments on their student loans once they've graduated or left college. This is particularly true of humanities and arts graduates, who could wind up working low-skill service jobs that pay wages that are not designed to support a hefty student loan payment and the raising of a family.

As a result, the rates of default on student loans are soaring. An October 2012 report from the U.S. Department of Education notes that 13.1 percent of student loan borrowers have defaulted within three years of graduating. The Bureau of Labor Statistics is reporting that over 14 percent of Americans aged 20 to 24 are unemployed. That

figure drops to 7.9 percent for 25-34 year-olds – but a large number of them are underemployed.

Most people who get into debt over their heads can seek refuge in America's generous bankruptcy laws. But federally-guaranteed student loan debt is not normally dischargeable through bankruptcy. The courts only discharge federally-guaranteed student loan debt in the event of extreme hardship.

Consider your employability after graduating. Some fields, such as psychology for example, tend not to pay well until you have a master's degree. Here are a few additional tips to consider:

- **Students, lean towards STEM majors** – science, technology, engineering and math. These fields provide hard skills that are more marketable to employers.
- **Parents, don't co-sign student loans** for your children if you cannot afford the risk of default – especially if they won't be obtaining a marketable degree, or one that is not from a recognized, accredited institution.
- **Make maximum use of scholarships** and the Post 9/11 GI Bill. **Tip:** Some veterans with the Post 9/11 GI Bill are able to transfer unused GI Bill benefits to family members.

Considering the options to finance your higher education? Come to Singing River Federal to see how we can help you!



Congratulations to the Olivers, the latest winners of our **\$500 Just Because Giveaway**. Randolph and Mildred Oliver love taking motorcycle trips and are looking forward to their upcoming vacation.

We'll do drawings every 90 days from now on, and you could win, too! Just keep your SRFCU checking account with direct deposit in good standing and use your SRFCU debit card at least three times a month, and you're eligible to win. It doesn't matter when you opened your SRFCU checking account, what your balance is, or how cute you are. **Who will win next?**



TEAM MEMBER MILESTONES

Congratulations to **Sasha Watts** and **Amber Barlow**, celebrating one year of service; **Melaine Presley** and **Donna Young**, celebrating two years of service; **Esther Ray** and **Georgette Goleman**, celebrating three years of service; **Cheryl Kirkwood**, **Peggy Brewer**, **Jenni Collins**, and **Amy Roberts**, celebrating four years of service; **Mandie Lucas**, celebrating seven years of service; **Scelina Singleton**, celebrating eight years of service; **Susan Powell** and **LeeAnn Fix**, celebrating ten years of service; **Sharon Dement**, celebrating 11 years of service; **Ricky Browning**, celebrating 16 years of service; and **Pat Cotten**, celebrating 24 years of service!

Refer a friend to SRFCU and you both could win Colossal Cash!

Through October 31st, refer a new member to the credit union and both you and the new member will be entered into a monthly drawing to win \$2,500 each. At the end of the promotion, a Grand Prize drawing will be held from the referral cards submitted for a Colossal Cash Give-Away of \$20,000. **The referring member and new member will each win \$10,000!**

Pick up a referral card at any credit union branch office and invite a friend or relative to open a credit union account. PLUS, if the new member opens a share draft or loan account, a second referral card is entered on your behalf.

There is no limit on the number of times you can refer a friend and enter to win. Ask for your referral card at any SRFCU branch today!



One day, she'll buy her own school supplies.



But until then, come to Singing River Federal from **July 8 through August 9** and make back-to-school easy on your wallet. **Her future is bright at the river.**

- Up to **\$1,000***
- **9.99%** APR
- **12-month term**

*Membership and proof of income required. Loan subject to credit approval. APR: Annual Percentage Rate. Loan may not be refinanced or extended. Offer valid only from July 8-August 9, 2013. Terms subject to change without notice.

DO IT TODAY: Protect online accounts

Online account management saves time and money, but it requires occasional safety maintenance. It's a good idea to change the internet passwords for your accounts every few months. Changing all of your passwords can be a time-consuming task, but it's a sure way to guarantee some level of safety for all of your online accounts.

Want to manage your accounts on your smart phone? It's easy!
Log on to Virtual Branch, click the Self Service tab,
and sign up for Mobile Money™!



Tell legislators: "Don't Tax My CU"

Some bankers and their trade associations are asking legislators to tax credit unions. The truth is, a tax hike on credit unions is a tax hike on all American consumers. You may not realize this, but your credit union doesn't pay federal (corporate) income tax. **Here's why:**

Credit unions are different. Credit unions were created to provide financial services in a democratic, not-for-profit, cooperative manner — that is, with member ownership and control. Those characteristics are the foundation of the tax exemption.

Credit unions' boards of directors serve as unpaid volunteers, elected by members. Credit unions return all excess income to members, in the form of higher deposit rates, lower loan rates, and lower fees. Credit unions don't need to create profits to pay stockholders, as do banks.

The amounts banks pay stockholders dwarf their tax bills: Over the past five years, banks have paid 47% more in dividends to stockholders than they have paid in income taxes.

All taxpayers benefit from the presence of credit unions in the marketplace. Credit union competition helps keep bank and savings and loan prices lower. For example, credit unions offering credit cards charge an average one to two percentage points lower interest than other lenders. Imagine how expensive other lenders would make credit cards, or auto loans, if they didn't have to compete with credit union rates.

The American Bankers Association says the tax exemption gives credit unions an unfair and unwarranted privilege that puts banks at a competitive disadvantage. Yet in 2008 alone, bank assets grew more (\$1.14 trillion) than credit unions have grown since they began operating in the U.S. more than 100 years ago.

If credit unions paid income tax, the contribution to state and federal treasuries would make not one penny difference in the taxes you pay as an individual. But the effect such taxes would have on how much you pay for credit union loans for cars, education, and houses,

or the dividends you earn on credit union savings, would be significant.

Just as banks pass along their tax payments in fees and interest rates, credit unions would have to pass along that expense to members, also in the form of higher fees, higher loan rates, and lower savings dividends.

Credit unions, if taxed, also would have to take the money from funds otherwise dedicated to reserves—the cushion protecting all members and the credit union from economic shifts. Again, not-for-profit credit unions aren't like banks, which have profits aplenty.

Credit unions contribute now. All taxpayers have legitimate concerns about the federal budget deficit, and state deficits as well. Credit unions and members already participate in reducing those shortfalls. You pay taxes on dividends your credit union accounts earn. Credit unions are not-for-profit, democratic, financial cooperatives that serve members. As long as that's true, they're earning their tax status.



A tax hike on credit unions is a tax hike on all American consumers.

"Don't Tax My Credit Union" is a national campaign dedicated to ensuring Congress doesn't raise taxes on 96 million credit union members nationwide and preserves financial choice for American consumers. Join us today!

Call **877-642-4223** toll free to contact your Congressman, or visit **www.donttaxmycreditunion.org**



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Moss Point, MS 39563
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Toll Free: 888-474-0080

Lucedale Branch

201 Scott Road
Lucedale, MS 39452
Office: 601-947-4578
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Toll Free: 888-947-7732

Pascagoula Branch

3210 Market Street
Pascagoula, MS 39567
Office: 228-762-7878
Fax: 228-762-8325

Mobile, AL Branch

6151 Airport Boulevard
Mobile, AL 36608
Office: 251-544-5600
Fax: 251-544-5620

Hours of Operation

(All Branches)

Mon., Tues., Thurs. & Fri.
9 am - 5 pm
Wednesday: 10 am - 5 pm

After Hours Loan Center

866-564-0875

VISA® Debit Card

Lost or Stolen
800-262-2024

VISA® Credit Card

Lost or Stolen
877-537-7959



www.srfcu.org

Singing River Federal Upcoming Holiday Closings
July 4 & 5: Independence Day • September 2: Labor Day
November 28 & 29: Thanksgiving