

# CURRENTS

## Announcing the \$500 Just Because Giveaway

Dear Member,

**There are so many reasons** to be a member of a credit union – where do we begin? First, credit unions have lower loan rates and higher savings rates than banks. Second, our credit cards have better rates and lower fees (or no fees) than bank credit cards. Third, it's easier to borrow money at a credit union, especially when a real person who cares about your financial future is helping you.

And of course, credit unions are famous for their truly FREE checking accounts. SRFCU's has always been free and always will be – no kidding!

But we've made it even better. What's better than free, you ask? A free checking account that could pay you \$500 just for having it, that's what!

It's true. Starting this year, we'll draw one lucky SRFCU checking account holder's name and pay him or her \$500.\* And this isn't just for a limited time – it's every 90 days! Every quarter, every SRFCU checking account holder is eligible to win \$500. It doesn't matter when you opened the account, or what your balance is. Every SRFCU checking account with direct deposit and in good standing is eligible – period.

What could you do with an extra \$500? Maybe it could help erase some of your debt. After all,

getting out of debt is one of the most common New Year's resolutions. If it's on your list, make an appointment with an SRFCU Certified Financial Counselor and get started! *See page 2 for details.*

We can't wait to celebrate with you at our 60th Annual Membership Meeting on **Tuesday, March 5, 2013**. Remember to bring your postcard invitation or proof of membership. **It's just another benefit of membership, and proof that life's better at the river!**

Sincerely,



James B. Smith Jr., President/CEO

*SRFCU President/CEO James B. Smith, Jr., left, awards Our Daily Bread board member Frank Spires and director Mary Meldren a \$1,640 donation from our Christmas loan promotion for charity.*



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**drowning**  
in debt in 2013

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**60th Annual  
Membership Meeting  
March 5, 2013  
Pelican Landing  
Conference Center  
Bring your postcard!**

\*Any active SRFCU checking account with direct deposit in good standing, with at least three debit card transactions each month is eligible to win. Terms subject to change without notice.

# Make 2013 the year you stop drowning in debt

Are you ready to stop drowning in debt? Make 2013 the year you do it! SRFCU has more than just great products to help you – we've also got **Certified Financial Counselors** who are trained to get your finances flowing in the right direction.

Our Certified Financial Counselors will help you face current financial challenges, improve your financial habits, and teach you how to build your financial future. They can help with home budgeting, debt management, credit rebuilding, and more. **And best of all, the service is free for SRFCU members!**



Call **228-475-9531** or your local SRFCU branch and make an appointment with a Certified Financial Counselor. Your counselor will review your credit report with you thoroughly.

It's completely free and confidential, and only takes about 30 minutes. Your appointment will include:

- Reviewing and assessing your financial condition and current challenges
- Developing a financial strategies plan
- Setting goals
- Providing tools and resources
- Providing guidance and direction



A great place to start saving money is to **refinance any loans** at other financial institutions with SRFCU. Our rates are highly competitive and we save members hundreds of dollars on their auto, boat and home loans every day.

**We've also got the best VISA® credit card you'll ever find.** Now is the best time to transfer your balances and enjoy:

- Introductory rates as low as 3.99% on purchases, cash advances & balance transfers\*
- Continuing rates as low as 10.99%\*
- No annual fees, hidden fees or rate hikes
- One bonus point for every dollar you spend



Who's got several years and several thousand dollars to waste? **Pay off all your debt in record time, while still making the same payment!** Your

Certified Financial Counselor can help you apply for the perfect SRFCU loan to help you reach your goals. **So stop drowning and start saving – make your appointment today.**

\*Membership required. APR: Annual Percentage Rate. Loan approval, interest rate, and term will be determined by credit worthiness, and factors collected from your credit report. Chart is for example only. Other great rates and terms available. Minimum loan amount is \$500.00. Terms subject to change without notice.

	Rate	Balance	Payment	Months to Pay Off	Interest Paid
Credit Card #1	17.99%	\$4,000	\$160	32	\$1,120
Credit Card #2	17.99%	\$1,600	\$ 64	32	\$ 448
Loan #1	19.99%	\$3,200	\$124	34	\$1,016
Loan #2	16.99%	\$ 800	\$ 32	31	\$ 192
Total		<b>\$9,600</b>	<b>\$380</b>		<b>\$2,776</b>
<b>SRFCU Loan</b>	<b>9.99%*</b>	<b>\$9,600</b>	<b>\$380</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>\$1,040</b>

If you're ready to stop drowning in debt, come talk to one of Singing River Federal's **Certified Financial Counselors**. We'll help you get – and keep – your head above water.

**You save  
\$1,736!**



## NEW TEAM MEMBER

We welcome **Gina Ladut** as Vice President of Operations.

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES

**CaSaundra Davis** is now AVP of Branch Operations at the Moss Point branch. **Kelsey Cowart** is now a Member Service Representative at the Pascagoula branch.

## MILESTONES

Congratulations to **Angie Abston**, **Misti Copeland**, **CaSaundra Davis**, **Jessie Watson**, who celebrate one year of service. Congratulations to **Sharon Douglas**, who celebrates two years of service. Congratulations to **Jeanine Austin** and **Kelsey Cowart**, who celebrate three years of service. Congratulations to **Lindsay Cox**, who celebrates four years of service.

# It's the law:

## Switch your federal benefit checks to direct deposit today

Source: U.S. Dept. of the Treasury, Financial Management Service

If you still receive a paper check for your Social Security or other federal benefit payments, you are required by law to switch by **March 1, 2013**. Act now and make the switch before time runs out. You can sign up:

- At any SRFCU branch
- Online at the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Go Direct® website, [www.GoDirect.org](http://www.GoDirect.org)
- By calling the U.S. Treasury Electronic Payment Solution Center at (800) 333-1795 Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST.

It's fast, free and easy to sign up. Wait times are usually minimal. Call now to avoid delays near the deadline and start enjoying the safety, ease and reliability of direct deposit right away.

If you do not choose direct deposit by the deadline, you may be issued a Direct Express® Debit MasterCard® card.

Have the following information on hand when you make the switch:

- 12-digit federal benefit check number
- Amount of most recent federal benefit check
- SRFCU's routing transit number\*
- Account number\* and type – checking or savings

*\*This information is often on personal checks.*



Direct deposit is safer than paper checks. In fact, you are 125 times more likely to have a problem with a paper check than with an electronic payment. Even though direct deposit is safer, it's important that you take steps to keep your money safe. The Treasury Department urges you to follow these three tips:

- Be careful of anyone who calls, texts or emails you asking for personal information.
- Do not give out your Social Security number or account information to anyone unless you are the one who has contacted them.
- Watch your checking or savings account often to make sure that all account activity is yours.

Remember, you are required by law to switch to an electronic payment option by **March 1, 2013**. Make the switch today by talking to an SRFCU Member Service Representative at **228-475-9531**.

## Great news! Our new VISA credit cards come with even more perks:

- You will receive "UChoose" rewards which can be redeemed for gifts.
- You can use this card in-person, over the phone or online anywhere that accepts VISA throughout the world – take a vacation, pay for a car repair or thousands of other ways.
- You can manage your VISA card account online at any time, just like your other SRFCU accounts. Just log in to Virtual Branch, click the credit card account detail link. You can check your balance, make a payment, redeem reward points or contact an account representative.
- You can get help or report a lost or stolen card by calling **877-537-7959**.

Not a VISA card holder yet? A Member Service Representative can help you apply quickly and easily. Visit any SRFCU branch or call **228-475-9531** today.

**60th Annual Membership Meeting • Tuesday, March 5, 2013 • Pelican Landing Conference Center**

Doors open at 6:30 pm • Meeting at 7:00 pm • **Bring your postcard or proof of membership!**





# Financial self defense

## Identity theft – technology and social media

A recent study put together by The Javelin Group has some disturbing findings: The incidence of identity theft

was up 13 percent, compared to the previous

year. The total amount stolen was about the same, but the thieves successfully scammed more people.

The study found that there were specific factors that put social media users at elevated risk of getting scammed:

- 68 percent of social media users publicly shared their birthday.
- 63 percent shared the name of their high school.
- 18 percent shared their phone number.
- 12 percent shared their pet's name.

All of the above information represents the kinds of things a company would use to verify your identity, according to the study's authors. In some cases, scammers have been known to bluff their way through customer service representatives to get access to other important information - and even wipe out entire accounts. When young or vulnerable people share this information, it could make them more susceptible to predators.

The study also found that smartphone users were a third more likely to be victims of identity theft than non-smartphone users. This doesn't mean, necessarily, that smartphones are to blame. But it does seem to indicate that the people who use smartphones are doing something to make them more vulnerable or attractive to scammers. What can you do to avoid being a victim?

- Password protect your phone.
- Don't use credit cards for Internet transactions over public networks.
- Don't store credit card numbers or bank account information on your laptop.
- Use different passwords for mobile banking apps on your phone than passwords you do for your phone and email.
- Promptly report any suspicion that your sensitive personal information has been compromised.
- Keep documents that list Social Security numbers off of your laptop, or encrypt that data if you do store there.
- Keep private information private. If any company uses specific information about you to verify your identity – your mother's maiden name, pet names, birthdays, etc. – keep it off Facebook and any other social media site.



## Help when you need it most

SRFCU provides services that make your life easier, especially in tough times, including credit life and disability insurance, and Gap insurance.

- **Credit life and disability insurance** helps if you become ill or disabled and are unable to make your vehicle payments. With this insurance program, we would be able to step in and make your payments for you, ensuring the possession and title of the vehicle remains with you.
- Our **Gap insurance program** guarantees complete auto protection in case you purchase a vehicle and get in an accident shortly afterward. The Gap auto insurance policy would cover the gap between the loan amount on your damaged vehicle, and actual market value of the car.

SRFCU is here to help when you need it most. Call **228-475-9531** today and talk to a Member Service Representative about these insurance programs.



### Board of Directors

Stuart White, *Chairman*  
Dederia Demouey,  
*Vice Chairman*

Bettie Concannon, *Secretary*

Pete Fairley, *Treasurer*

Walter Greene

Michael Harvey

Brian Hughey

Jimmy Massey

Edwina Williams

### Moss Point Branch

P.O. Box 8685

Moss Point, MS 39562

6006 Highway 63

Moss Point, MS 39563

Office: 228-475-9531

Fax: 228-475-5919

Toll Free: 888-474-0080

### Lucedale Branch

201 Scott Road

Lucedale, MS 39452

Office: 601-947-4578

Fax: 601-947-9401

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](http://www.srfcu.org)