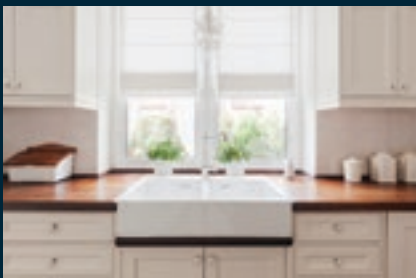




Our refreshed newsletter that connects you with relevant information

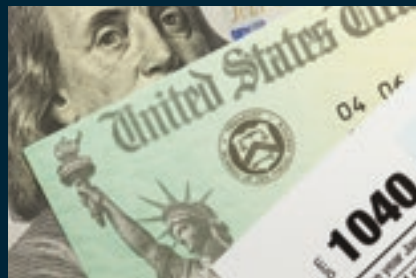
A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FROM HERITAGE FINANCIAL CREDIT UNION | SPRING 2021

THE HERITAGE CONNECTION



**LEARN ABOUT HOME
EQUITY LOANS**

Page 3



WISE TAX REFUND USES

Page 4



WATCH OUT FOR SMISHING

Page 7



President's Message

As the cold and snowy winter months subside and we move steadily into spring, we are excited to share some new promotions as well as new services we have implemented over the past few months. First, we would like to extend our gratitude and thanks for

your patience as we continuously adjust the way we serve you in this COVID-19 environment. Although this pandemic brought on unexpected challenges, we continue to focus on enhancements so we can offer new, value-added products and services to assist you on your financial journey.

Service Enhancement and Resources: We understand the need to meet in person when discussing confidential financial information. Recently we implemented our new online appointment scheduling system, Calendly. You no longer have to call or ask to schedule an appointment, but can pick a date and time that is convenient for you to meet with one of our financial service representatives at any one of our branch locations. For information on how to schedule an appointment utilizing Calendly, please refer to the back cover page of this newsletter. If you have financial questions, but are unsure if you need to meet with one of our representatives, view our informative blog located under the resources tab on our website at www.heritagefcu.com. Our blog serves as a financial resource that is updated monthly with important and up-to-date topics such as Retirement, IRAs, Home Ownership and Improvement, Budgeting, Career, Security and Technology. These articles can aid in answering your financial questions as well as provide some of the necessary tools and resources to help increase your knowledge.

Community Involvement: As much as we value providing consistent financial assistance to our members, we also continue to give back and support the communities we serve in this socially distanced environment. This past February, you may have seen us supporting American Heart Health Awareness Month by conducting a fundraiser and wearing red on February 5th, National Wear Red Day. A great big thank you goes out to all who came in to one of our 12 branch locations and selflessly donated to this initiative. All of the proceeds for this fundraising event went to the Hudson Valley American Heart Association, who are "working to create a world free of heart disease and stroke – a world where everyone can achieve the best possible health." Additionally, we are looking forward to once again holding a fundraising event and virtual walk for March of Dimes during the month of April.

Exciting New Promotions: We are excited to announce our new Home Equity Line of Credit and Mortgage promotions. If you are in the market for a new home, consider contacting us for more information about our new mortgage promotion that provides you with a credit towards your appraisal fee. For those who want to update your current home, our new Home Equity Line of Credit promotion allows you to pick one of our two low rate options based on your needs. Visit our website at www.heritagefcu.com and click on the "promotions" quick link (shown in the image below) to view more information on these two promotions as well as existing offers we have available for you.

These exciting updates and offers are one of the many benefits of banking with Heritage Financial. Our promotions, resources and updates are consistently changing to meet the current needs of our members and prospective members. As always, please contact us at 845-561-5607 with any thoughts or suggestions on ways we might better serve you. Through the transitions life has to offer, know that you can always count on HFCU to provide opportunities towards financial success and stability.

We wish you a happy, healthy and safe start into the spring season!

Michael Ciriello

Michael J. Ciriello
President/CEO, Heritage Financial Credit Union

2021 Virtual Annual Meeting

Due to the continued COVID-19 environment and to ensure the safety of our members as well as employees and Board Members, we will be hosting our 81st Annual Meeting virtually on May 27, 2021, at 6:00 P.M.

Similar to last year's virtual annual meeting, this allows our organization to provide you with an overview of the financial state of the credit union from the comfort of your own home on your mobile device or computer.

In order to attend, you must register at Heritagefcu.com/annual-meeting by 5:00 p.m. on May 20, 2021. Registration is required to attend, and limited virtual spots are available.

Those who are registered will receive an email on May 25, 2021, from Heritage Financial Credit Union with instructions and details about attending the meeting.

Interested in becoming a Heritage Financial Volunteer?

As a member-owned financial cooperative, Heritage Financial Credit Union relies on the talents of volunteers from our membership to serve on our Board of Directors and Supervisory Committee.

Heritage Financial volunteers come together to represent the best interests of fellow Heritage Financial members in the following capacities:

Supervisory Committee: Appointed by Heritage Financial Credit Union Board of Directors. This Committee typically meets 6-8 times per year to oversee and verify credit union records, monitors financial controls and work with HFCU's internal auditing staff and external audit firms.

Associate Board Member: Appointed by Heritage Financial Credit Union Board of Directors. The Board of Directors meets at least 12 times per year. A member may be selected to a non-voting position to learn the duties, responsibilities and functions of the Board in its role in overseeing HFCU.

To apply, please send a letter or email of interest and a resume to:
Attn: Governance Committee
Heritage Financial Credit Union
25 Rykowski Lane
Middletown, NY 10941
OR
search@contactthf.com



Home Equity Loan *vs.* Home Equity Line of Credit

What's the difference?



With the equity you've built up in your home over the years, you could be sitting on a lot of money! When you're ready to put your home's equity to work, you may be wondering which option is best for you – a home equity loan or a home equity line of credit (HELOC).

One of the most common misconceptions is that home equity loans and HELOCs can only be used for home improvements. These loans can be used for a variety of needs, including consolidating high-interest debt, financing a college education, buying a new car or taking a dream vacation.

Choosing the loan option that's right for you starts with an understanding of equity. Equity is the difference between the value of your home and the remaining unpaid principal balance of your mortgage. For example, a home worth \$250,000 with a principal balance of \$100,000 remaining has \$150,000 in equity.

So what's the difference between a home equity loan and a HELOC? **A home equity loan is a one-time loan for a fixed dollar amount, at a fixed interest rate, with a fixed term of repayment.** This type of loan has a pre-determined monthly repayment amount and an amortization schedule for up to 15 years. Home equity loans are great for specific, one-time purchases like a new car or a home remodeling project.

A HELOC is a variable-rate loan that can be drawn down, either all at once or at different times. You can borrow up to the credit line maximum, but you'll only pay interest on the funds you use. For example, if you're approved for a \$50,000 equity line but only borrow \$15,000 right now, you are only charged interest on the \$15,000. Once you have repaid the amount borrowed, your credit line is fully renewed and available for borrowing again. Most HELOCs feature a 10-year draw period followed by a 15-year repayment period. HELOCs are a smart way to pay for recurring expenses like college tuition.

Pick the Home Equity Line of Credit that works for you!

1.99%^{*APR}
for 6 months

2.49%^{*APR}
for 12 months

Inquire with an associate today!

Federally Insured by NCUA

HERITAGE
Financial Credit Union

Banking that provides opportunities to choose your way

*APR = Annual Percentage Rate. All extensions of credit are subject to credit approval. Rates shown are the lowest offered for product advertised. Applicants not approved for these rates or terms may be offered credit at a higher rate and/or different term. This is a limited offer and may be withdrawn at any time. All rates subject to change. There are certain draw down, balance requirements and loan-to-value restrictions which may apply. Minimum loan amount and new money requirement of \$25,000 required to qualify for these rates and terms. May not be combined with any other offer. Home Equity Lines of Credit closed out prior to their four-year anniversary will be subject to the addition of all waived closing costs to the loan balance. Appraisals required for all LTVs. Full appraisals required for 80% LTV or higher. All appraisal costs are paid by the borrower and will be reimbursed when the loan is funded. Maximum rate is 18% APR. For variable-rate loans, the rate may increase after consummation.

Make the Most of Your TAX REFUND



If you're like most people, when tax season rolls around, you file and then wait impatiently for your refund ... which you've spent before the money is even in your account. How did you spend your last refund? A new TV? That great vacation you had been wanting to take?

This year, think about doing something different with the money you get back from the government. The average tax refund last year was nearly \$3,000, which is more than just a little extra spending money. Financial advisors suggest five possibilities for how to make the most out of your tax refund. Check it out:

- 1. Pay down high-interest debt.** With more Americans getting further into debt, many financial advisors believe it is prudent to use your tax refund to pay off as much of your high-interest debt as possible. They advise making a list of all loans, balances and corresponding interest rates. Start by paying off the highest interest rates first, and work your way from there!
- 2. Start an emergency cash fund.** The majority of financial advisors recommend setting up a separate account with

three to six months of living expenses saved in the event of a layoff or unforeseen health problems that aren't covered by insurance. Keep this emergency account separate from your checking and savings accounts, so as not to drain this fund for non-emergencies.

- 3. Invest for your retirement.** If you decide to put away your refund for long-term savings, advisors recommend putting it toward your retirement by adding more to your employer's retirement program or a Traditional or Roth Individual Retirement Account (IRA) if you are unable to contribute more to your employer's program.
- 4. Invest for your child's college education.** After you've built up your own retirement account, you can turn your attention toward building your children's or grandchildren's college savings plans. Talk to your financial advisor about which manner best suits your situation.
- 5. Add to your regular mutual fund investment account.** If you are already contributing the maximum amount to your retirement account, advisors recommend investing in a regular taxable mutual fund to help your money grow.



Spring Clean Your Finances

After a year of spending, saving, paying off bills and racking up rewards points, your financial life can get a little messy. Once your taxes are out of the way, it is a great time to regain control of your finances. When you de-clutter your accounts, paperwork and budget, you'll find it's a lot easier to make the most of your money.

Roll up your sleeves, dust off your statements and follow these tips for finances that sparkle:

- **Streamline your banking.** Close up old accounts, switch to online bill pay and sign up for e-statements to reduce paper waste. Shred year-old bank statements, expired warranties, old Social Security statements and tax documents more than seven years old.
- **Consolidate your debt.** Consider rolling all of your high-interest payments into one low-rate personal loan. Close credit cards you don't need and create a payment strategy to lower your debt. Plan to pay off credit cards with the highest interest rates first.
- **Organize your savings.** Many households have multiple savings accounts, including IRAs, CDs and 401(k)s. Consider moving all your savings plans to one bank and consolidating all IRAs to one account. Talk to your employer about moving old 401(k) accounts into the one at your current job or rolling them to a self-directed IRA. Finally, increase your 401(k) savings so, at a minimum, you are saving enough to earn a full match from your employer.
- **Plan your estate.** Update or create your will. It's a fairly easy and inexpensive process people often put off for obvious reasons. If you have any property (car, house, land, flat-screen TV, etc.), a will prevents lengthy legal battles and guarantees the right people receive your belongings upon your passing.



» Need help tidying up?

Stop by your nearest Heritage Financial branch or give us a call. We'd be more than happy to help you clean up your finances!



HERITAGE INVESTMENT & RETIREMENT SERVICES

**A personalized
approach to building
a financial plan.**

Contact us **TODAY** at
845.561.5607 for a no cost,
no-obligation financial review.

6 QUESTIONS First-Time Homebuyers Should Ask Themselves

1. Are you ready to settle down?

Consider the longevity of your job, your personal life and the responsibilities involved in home ownership. Evaluate your current life stage before undertaking the financial and emotional move into your own home.

2. Is your credit history good?

This is key to getting a good mortgage. Get your free annual credit report by stopping into any one of our 12 branch locations, scheduling an appointment online, or calling 845-561-5607.

3. Do you have all your documents ready?

Reduce stress later by collecting your paperwork now, including pay stubs, financial statements, W-2s, tax returns for the past two years and names and addresses of your landlords for the past two years.

4. Are you preapproved?

Getting preapproved not only saves you time in your house hunting process, but it also makes you a “preferred buyer” in the eyes of a seller since you already have your financing locked in.

5. Have you looked at the houses that are available?

Do your research and talk to reputable REALTORS® in your area about the real estate climate. Of course, there are commissions that real estate agents earn, but their insight can be a huge advantage.

6. Do you know how a mortgage will impact your budget?

Use a mortgage calculator or speak to one of our loan officers and crunch the numbers. Consider what your total monthly payments will be, including taxes and insurance, but don't forget about closing costs and home maintenance expenses.

MORTGAGES

Competitive Rates, Fast Processing,
and We'll Pay for Your Appraisal!

Receive up to
\$1,000*
towards your
appraisal fee!
Inquire with an
associate today!



Federally Insured by NCUA

Banking that provides opportunities to say goodbye to fees

For the year of 2020, Heritage Financial Credit Union became a mortgage lender to 528 members with over \$119,779,357 in funded mortgages. Call us today at 845-561-5607 so we can also help you find your dream home.

Mortgage Process

Member Testimonial – Hunter D.

“Being a first-time homebuyer, the mortgage process was very nerve-wracking to me. Heritage Financial Credit Union took the time to answer any and all of my questions, while offering more insight and knowledge that really helped me understand the entire mortgage process. I'm very happy I chose HFCU not only as my mortgage lender, but as my financial partner.”

Smishing – the Latest Texting Scam

First, there was phishing – a fraudulent solicitation of your personal information via websites and online shopping. Now, consumers need to be aware of “smishing” – scammers latest way to attempt to steal your private information.

Also known as SMS phishing, smishing is a way for fraudsters to get your personal information via text messaging. Smishing scam messages appear to be from a financial institution – maybe your own, but not necessarily – and often include a link or phone number for you to click or call.

As companies have begun using two-factor authentication, where a verification code is sent to an email or phone number provided, consumers are more accustomed to receiving codes in text messages, making people less likely to doubt a seemingly random text message.

While receiving codes from your financial institution is common, receiving credit card offers, refunds and prizes via text is not.

Feeling funny about a text? Be on the lookout for these signs, according to www.simpletexting.com:

- **Unusually long numbers:** Most legitimate marketing text messages are sent from a six-digit code; a text-enabled, 10-digit toll-free number; or a business's 10-digit landline (you can Google this to verify). If you receive a text from an unidentified 11-digit number, even if they identify themselves as a company you work with, be aware this could signal a scam.
- **Random “family emergency” texts:** Scammers try to use a sense of urgency to get you to act quickly. (“Your (family member) who lives in ____ or is traveling in ____ has run into some trouble. They're in need of financial help, and a money transfer is the only way you can help them!”) While these

texts may sound frightening and urgent, take a moment to pause and think logically – ask questions and attempt to verify the person's identity, or reach out to another family member or friend to verify the story.

- **Refund scams:** Text messages claim money is owed to you. This scam is an attempt to secure your account information and steal from you.
- **Reactivation scams:** These texts may appear to come from a place of concern, claiming “your (email, text, app) password has been compromised. Your account has been deactivated for your protection. Text XXXXXX to reactivate your account.” Do not reply to these messages – go right to your accounts in question and check them yourself.
- **Claims that you've “won a prize!”:** If you ever receive a text message like this from an unverified phone number, believe it's too good to be true. Don't click on any hyperlinks in the text, respond in any way or call a phone number. If you didn't enter to win anything recently, you can't have won (the world doesn't work that way). Research the company they are claiming to be via website, phone or social media.

If your gut tells you something is off, go with it. Slow down and think about the text message you're reading and the likelihood of its contents. Never click links, reply to texts or call phone numbers in these texts. Instead, go to the source they are claiming to be and contact them directly. Delete the message and report the spam to the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov.

You can always call 1-877-FTC-HELP for advice.

Sources: fcc.gov; simpletexting.com; consumerreports.org

*The amount up to \$1,000 will be granted in a form of a credit on your final closing disclosure. Rates, terms and conditions are subject to change without notice. All loans are subject to credit approval. This is a limited-time offer that may be withdrawn at any time. New money only.





BRANCH HOURS

MON–THURS: 8:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

FRI: 8:30 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.

SAT: 9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.



BRANCH LOCATIONS

CENTRAL VALLEY

273 Route 32 (24hr ATM)

GOSHEN

117 Grand Street (24hr ATM)

MATAMORAS, PA

111 Hulst Drive (24hr ATM)

MIDDLETOWN

25 Rykowski Lane (24hr ATMs)

161-5 Dolson Avenue (24hr Drive-Up ATM)

MONTGOMERY

17 Walnut Street (24hr Drive-Up ATM)

NEWBURGH

2 Corwin Court (24hr Drive-Up ATM)

211 South Plank Road (24hr Drive-Up ATM)

PINE BUSH

36 Boniface Drive (24hr ATM)

WASHINGTONVILLE

131 East Main Street (24hr ATM)

NEW PALTZ

234 Main Street, Suite 6B (24hr ATM)

SUNY New Paltz Campus – Lower Level of Haggerty

MON–FRI 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Closed Saturday & Sunday

(ATM in Student Union Building, available during building hours)

Need an ATM?

You have access to over 30,000 surcharge-free ATMs across the U.S.! **Visit sum-atm.com or TEXT a ZIP code to 91989 to find nearby ATM and shared branch locations.**



Connect With Us:



/heritagefinancialcu



@heritagefcu



/heritagefinancialcreditunion



SCHEDULE ONLINE WITH **CALENDLY**

Visit heritagefcu.com/find-branch/ to begin



1

Select Branch Location



2

Click 'Schedule an Appointment'



3

Select HFCU Representative



4

Select Appointment Type



5

Select Date & Time



6

Get Confirmation Email

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairperson

Kenneth Affeldt

Vice-Chairperson

Thomas Houston

Treasurer

William Wiseman Jr.

Recording Secretary

Sandra Gerow

Directors

Gerard Amoroso

Nicholas Giglio

Paul Zalanowski

Associate Board Member

Jennifer Ryan

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Chairperson

Carolyn Evans

Recording Secretary

Sonia Rodriguez

Members

John Boyle

John Naumchik

Theresa Wong

This publication does not constitute legal, accounting or other professional advice. Although it is intended to be accurate, neither the publisher nor any other party assumes liability for loss or damage due to reliance on this material. Websites not belonging to this organization are provided for information only. No endorsement is implied. Images may be from ©iStock, ©Shutterstock or ©Getty. ©2021 Heritage Financial Credit Union