

Membership Matters



From the Desk of Our President / CEO

There is so much to say and reflect upon for the year 2020. The pandemic disrupted daily life in so many ways. Yet, hardship and adversity can bring out the best in us. Each year, the credit union has an Employee Engagement Day in the fall in which we come together as a team for a day of fellowship, education and engagement. As with so much in 2020, we had to be creative in delivering the messages to adhere to social distancing and COVID guidelines.



Dion Williams
President / CEO

For this newsletter, I would like share some excerpts from my address to the PACU staff as it sums up 2020 for Piedmont Advantage Credit Union.

“2020 is a year we will never forget for many reasons. While it may seem easy to assume the context of that statement is negative, I want to be clear that it is not. Sure, there is a pandemic, but PACU came together to put the safety of employees and members first. Thus, my takeaway is about our collective resilience and cooperation to continue delivering services in a safe environment while making tremendous strides on upgrading infrastructure.

While we have had a challenging year from an earnings standpoint, we remain well capitalized by regulatory standards, which allows us to weather difficult times much like a rainy day fund. We weren't forced to make shortsighted cuts with long-term implications. Rather, we have stayed true to the plan for this year of upgrading products and services while continuing to emphasize staff development. Thus, my takeaway is that we have the wherewithal and a plan for long-term relevance and sustainability. Our best days are ahead of us.

Again, it would be easy to look back at this year as one of the worst ever. I do not know about you, but I choose to look at the lessons learned. I learned that our members were willing to adapt to alternate service delivery models. I learned that our team was willing to adapt to different work conditions and not miss a beat in delivering services and completing projects. I learned we are extremely fortunate to have a Board that supported us throughout this year and cares deeply about the staff and members. You see, these lessons learned illustrate the power of coming together, working together, trusting one another and knowing that we can come out of these uncertain times stronger than before. So to the year 2020, I say thank you ... you have brought out some of our best qualities as individuals and as an organization. We are better for it so you have only served to strengthen our unity and resolve!”

On behalf of the Board and staff of Piedmont Advantage Credit Union, thank you for the opportunity to serve you. As a new year is upon us, our wish for you is a year filled with good health and much happiness!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Mekis Chairman	George Price Vice Chairman	Steve Gilliland Secretary	John Reece Treasurer	Justine Lerch Director	Darren Cranfill Director	Mark Saunders Director	Gene Sharp Director	Jim Taylor Director	Ramon Hoots Director Emeritus
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Elderly Financial Abuse on the Rise

by Sandi Richardson,
Risk Management Operations Manager

I am Piedmont Advantage’s Risk Management Operations Manager and thought it would be helpful to share some information on the trending increase in elder financial exploitation. In our service areas, more than 50 percent of our fraud cases in the last six months have involved financial exploitation of individuals 65 years-old and older.

I have worked in the financial industry in risk management for many years and this percentage is unusually high with expectations of continued increase. Based on what I am hearing among my colleagues at other financial institutions, PACU is not alone in seeing this trend. As the economy weakens, our elders tend to be easier targets of financial exploitation with their secure source of income through Social Security, investments or retirement plans; and with the pandemic, fraudsters have increasingly preyed on the elderly, who may be lonely and socially isolated.

The official definition of Elder Financial Exploitation is “fraudulent or otherwise illegal, unauthorized or improper act or process of an individual that uses the resources of an older person for personal benefit, profit or gain.” It’s also actions that result in depriving an older person of rightful access to, or use of benefits, resources, belongings or assets. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Solicitations to donate money for nonexistent charities, especially in the wake of a natural disaster.
- Claims that relatives are in the hospital and need money wired to them.
- Email-messages that appear to come from legitimate sources and ask for verification about personal information, including financial information.
- Notifications of winning a sweepstakes or lottery and that a deposit is needed to access winnings.

PACU and other financial institutions work diligently to prevent and combat fraudulent and criminal activity conducted through financial accounts. I urge individuals who suspect loved ones are being financially exploited to encourage them to contact their financial institution to report the potentially fraudulent activity as soon as possible and ask for assistance. Financial institutions do their best to investigate the activity, help their members or customers mitigate any impact of financial exploitation and assist with measures to help prevent future exploitation from occurring. Of course, if criminal activity is suspected, contact the local police department to report it.

The more we raise awareness that elder financial exploitation is on rise during these unprecedented times, the more we all can help to keep a watchful eye out on our older family members, friends and neighbors. They watched out for us during our formative years, protecting us from bullies and bad social influences. It’s time we do the same for them.



**Nothing but Smiles
with our Liberty Loan**

LOW, LOW, LOW CLOSING COSTS

Refinancing? *Just \$200**
Purchasing? *\$400 Credit***

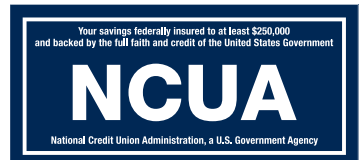
Get started today with the best mortgage solution the industry has to offer. Call 800.433.PACU (800.433.7228) or go to PACU.com/MortgageSolutions.

*Applicants will only be charged \$200 of applicable closing costs for loans secured by real property eligible for this offer. Eligible real property consists of 1-4 family residential real estate located in North Carolina, and excludes rental properties and manufactured homes. Offer does not apply to loans to finance the purchase of real property. Applicable closing costs may vary depending on location of collateral. Flood and/or property hazard insurance may be required. Typical closing costs and fees include origination fees, discount points, appraisal fees, title searches, title insurance, surveys, taxes, deed-recording fees and credit report charges and range between 2% to 5% of the purchase price.

**Applicable closing costs may vary depending on the location of collateral. Applicants for Liberty Loans secured by eligible real property being purchased in North Carolina and South Carolina will be given a credit of \$400 toward applicable closing costs. Eligible real property consists of 1-4 family residential real estate, and excludes rental properties and manufactured homes. Flood and/or property hazard insurance may be required. Typical closing costs and fees include origination fees, discount points, appraisal fees, title searches, title insurance, surveys, taxes, deed-recording fees and credit report charges and range between 2% to 5% of the purchase price.



NMLS# 686550



Introducing a New Annual Tradition

PACU Foundation
Collectible Holiday Ornament

Donate \$10 or more to the PACU Foundation at any one of Piedmont Advantage Credit Union's branches or donate \$20 or more online at PACU.com/Foundation and you will receive an inaugural, keepsake ornament.

PACU Foundation is a North Carolina nonprofit corporation, EIN 84-4139152, with a pending application for 501(c)(3) status. If PACU Foundation qualifies for 501(c)(3) status for the period in which your contribution is made, your contribution may be tax-deductible. If goods or services provided in return for your contribution, the amount of your contribution which is tax-deductible may be limited to the amount exceeding the value of such goods and services. PACU Foundation maintains discretion over the use of all donated funds.

Time is money!



Get your checks the night before payday

As a benefit to our members, we post all direct deposit checks the night before payday. To take advantage of this service, contact your employer and/or payors to let them know that you would like to deposit your checks directly into your Piedmont Advantage account.

Types of direct deposits with contact information to switch financial institutions or change from paper to electronic deposits are listed below as examples:

Salary/Wages, Pension, Dividend/Investment Income -
Contact employer or other payor directly to complete their forms

Social Security - Call 800.772.1213

Veterans Compensation and Pension - Call 877.838.2778

Questions? Visit one of our branches or call 800.433.7228.

Did you know?

The PACU Foundation was founded in January 2020, grown out of the desire of Piedmont Advantage's Board of Directors and leadership team to enlarge our capacity to make a difference within our North Carolina service areas of Forsyth, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Cumberland, Duplin, Iredell, New Hanover and Rockingham counties.



The PACU Foundation logo with the display of wings is a contribute to our humble beginnings within the airline industry.

A Message from The Needham Group

The Needham Group (TNG) is excited to be onsite at select PACU locations. You may ask, "What does this mean for me?" TNG is an independent insurance agency that has 30 years experience in the business. We can offer you 20 plus companies to meet your insurance needs. This allows us to help protect what's most important to you. Among these providers include Nationwide, Progressive, AllState, MetLife, Utica and Travelers.

Our agency can cover your home and auto as well as any event you are planning, or if you have some toys (RVs, motorcycles, boats, golf carts, etc.). With our combined years of experience in the industry and our knowledge, we offer competitive prices and professional counseling. This gives you the confidence and peace of mind that you have the correct coverage. We now have offices at PACU branches in Winston-Salem, Greensboro and Wilmington. Meet the TNG team:



At Advantage Way branch in Winston-Salem, left to right, Travis Haddox and Jonathan Waterman



Left to right, Richard Needham at Greensboro branch and Brady McClain at Wilmington branch

After this year, you deserve a holiday treat.

Let us help you get that special gift.

New or Used Auto
Boat or RV
Home Improvement
Mortgage Refinance



Call 800.433.7228 to get started. A Member Relationship Team Member will connect you to the appropriate loan specialist.

New Rate & Fee Schedule

On December 4, 2020, our New Rate & Fee Schedule will go into effect. This new schedule reflects just one fee increase, which pertains to when a member's account becomes inactive due to no activity within a 12-month period. This fee went from \$7.00 to \$10.00. It also includes a new checking product offering, "More Checking," which launched in September. See highlights on page 3.

The description of the hourly expense for our team to do "Research" on a member's behalf changed to "Research and Legal Processes," yet the hourly rate of \$20 per hour did not change.

To serve our members better, starting on December 4, 2020, we will no longer charge fees for the following:

- Early Account Closure
- Low Account Balance
- Share Transfers by Phone
- Holiday Club Early Withdrawals
- Vacation Club Early Withdrawals
- Legal Process for Escheats

We will no longer be offering money orders so that fee will be removed.

Truth-In-Savings Disclosure Change

Upon opening a Piedmont Advantage share account, members are given our Truth-In-Savings Disclosure, where rates, fees and terms applicable to the account are provided. Within this disclosure, under "Amount of Penalty," the early withdrawal penalty for CD terms greater than 12 months was changed from 90 days' dividends to 180 days' dividends. This change will become effective on December 4, 2020. CD terms of 12 months or less remained the same at 90 days' dividends.

To celebrate our new Platinum and Rewards Mastercards®

we are offering a low promotional rate on purchases for all cardholders plus bonus reward points on Rewards Mastercard.

These promotional offers are for a limited time, so go to PACU.com for details and apply for your new card today!



Upcoming Holiday Branch Closings

Christmas Eve*	Dec. 24, 2020
Christmas Day	Dec. 25, 2020
New Years Eve**	Dec. 31, 2020
New Years Day	Jan. 01, 2021
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Jan. 18, 2021
Presidents Day	Feb. 15, 2021

*Closing at 12 p.m.

**Closing at 2 p.m.