



HERITAGE SOUTH

YOUR COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER • WWW.MYHSCU.COM

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:

Memorial Day

Monday, 5/29/23

Juneteenth

Monday, 6/19/23

Independence Day

Tuesday, 7/4/23

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Color Me Healthy

Saturday, April 1, 2023
Central High School, Coosa

Coosa Fest

Saturday, May 6, 2023
Downtown Childersburg

Sunshine Saturday

Saturday, May 13, 2023
Bluebell Park, Sylacauga

Supporting the ARC of South Talladega County

Rockford Spring Fling

Saturday, May 20, 2023
Downtown Rockford



**RATES AS LOW AS 3.75%^{*APR}
UP TO 60 MONTHS!**

Receive car sale loan rates on new purchases from April 1st-15th and refinancing rates the entire month of April!

Join us as we partner with local dealers for our **13TH ANNUAL** Car Sale Event. We will have a team on site to assist with questions and financing. The two-day event is happening at BOTH of our Sylacauga locations, Hwy 280 and Broadway - but don't forget we can also help with your auto re-financing needs at any of our five locations from April 1-30. Trust us - you don't want to miss this opportunity! Get pre-approved today by calling, visiting us online, or coming by one of our branches.

NUMEROUS LOCAL DEALERS!

Federally Insured by
NCUA 

APR = Annual Percentage Rate. Rates as low as 3.75% on new purchases April 1-15. Special refinancing rates available all month. All loans subject to credit approval. Rates, terms, and conditions subject to change without notice. Other restrictions may apply. HSCU does not warrant, guarantee, or insure any product or service offered or provided by any dealership. HSCU and participating dealers are separate entities. Contact the Credit Union for further information. Federally Insured by the NCUA.

Preapprove Your Way to a Better Car Deal

Before you set foot on the car lot, get preapproved for an auto loan at Heritage South Credit Union. Getting preapproved for a car loan means you'll know what kind of rate you'll pay, and what size loan you're qualified for. You can apply for preapproval: online, in person, over the phone.

If you have questions about how much car you can afford, or how financing works, a Heritage South Credit Union loan officer will be happy to help.

To apply for preapproval, you'll need to show:

- Name and address
- Social Security number
- Driver's license number
- Employer information (name, hire date, gross income)
- Current housing information—monthly payment, time in current residence
- Debt obligations—current credit card debt, home association dues, auto insurance

Once you're preapproved, you'll receive a preapproval letter that you can take car shopping showing the amount you're approved for.

Getting preapproved is a big advantage, as it shows car sales staff that you're a serious buyer. It also removes the pressure of negotiating financing contracts at the dealership and allows you to focus your attention on finding the right vehicle. And, if you need another incentive, our low auto loan rates can get you on a faster track toward making your dream car a reality.

Call or stop into Heritage South Credit Union today. We're here to help with all your vehicle loan needs.

BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED with These Products

GAP

Can you imagine having a car that you've financed declared a total loss? GAP Insurance is a type of auto insurance that car owners can buy to protect themselves against losses that can arise when the amount of compensation received from a TOTAL loss does not fully cover the amount the insured owes on the vehicle's financing. HSCU is here to help protect you, so please discuss with one of our Loan Officers on your next automobile purchase to see if you qualify.

Warranty

Should you get a Warranty on your next auto purchase? Automobile repairs are very expensive, and we have an extended service contract that will protect our Members from high repair costs. Please discuss with one of our Loan Officers on your next automobile purchase to see if you qualify.

Credit Life/Disability Insurance

HSCU offers credit life and credit disability that can protect your loan. Credit life pays the remainder of your loan in the event of death and if you are unable to work, credit disability will pay your monthly payments if you become totally disabled and unable to work. HSCU is here to help protect you during these times, so please discuss with one of our Loan Officers the next time you apply for a loan to see if you qualify.

Credit Involuntary Unemployment Insurance

HSCU offers Credit Involuntary Unemployment Insurance in the event you are unable to work due to result of involuntary unemployment. Under this plan, your payments could be paid while out of work to avoid delinquency or a loss. Please discuss with one of our Loan Officers the next time you apply for a loan to see if you would qualify.

How is My Credit Score CALCULATED?

35%

PAYMENT HISTORY
Do you make payments on time or late?

10%

NEW CREDIT
How many new credit accounts have you opened in the last 12-18 months?

10%

CREDIT MIX
Have you handled different types of credit responsibly?

30%

AMOUNT OWED
How much of your credit are you using?

15%

LENGTH OF CREDIT HISTORY
How long have specific accounts been used?

Tips to Improve Your Credit Score:

- Pay your bills on time.
- Don't max out your credit cards.
- Pay more than the minimum each month.

Keep Your Credit Utilization Under 30%:

\$3,000 total of all credit card balances

\$10,000 total of available credit

= **30%** Credit Utilization

4 TIPS TO PREVENT TAX ID THEFT

Take these four steps to help protect your tax refund this year.



What is tax ID theft? Tax identity theft occurs when someone steals your Social Security number in order to file a false tax return in your name. The goal is to get your refund before you even have a chance to file a return. You may not even know you're at risk until you try to file and the IRS tells you a return was already filed in your name. Unfortunately for everyone, tax identity theft doesn't discriminate. Anyone with a Social Security number is vulnerable. Criminals even prey on children's identities during tax season so they can claim them as dependents and get a deduction.

The good news is that in recent years, cases of tax ID theft have been vastly reduced. According to the IRS, ID theft cases dropped 40% from 2016 to 2017. Hopefully, that trend continues. In the meantime, it's best to prepare yourself for tax identity theft before it happens. That's why federal agencies have Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week. It's a week at the beginning of tax season that encourages taxpayers to protect their identities and their refunds. This year, it runs from January 30 through February 3rd. So, let's look at four things you could do next week to protect yourself from tax ID theft.

1. File as early as possible

Tax identity theft relies on fraudsters getting a return submitted in your name before you do. If someone has your Social Security number (SSN), they can accomplish this relatively easily. Filing your return early keeps them from being able to file fraudulently. This way, you are the only one who gets to cash in on your tax return. Once you have all of your W2s, don't wait! File immediately so you can get your refund and avoid a giant hassle. Also, remember your 1095s – they are still required this year.

2. Take steps to protect your Social Security number

Your Social Security number is necessary for a fraudster to use your identity for tax ID theft. Taking steps to protect your SSN helps you minimize the risk of tax identity theft (and a host of other problems). There are standard best practices that you can follow:

- Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet or purse
- Keep your cards locked up at home
- Get a locked mailbox and retrieve your mail promptly every day
- Shred documents that include your SSN and other personal data before you toss them
- Avoid putting your SSN on forms at doctors' offices, hospitals, and other service providers – even if they ask for it, see if it's required
- Additionally, you can register your Social Security number at www.ssa.gov/myaccount to open a "my Social Security account" online. This account allows you to check your Social Security statements anytime you want. It also shows your earnings, which can reveal that someone has gotten a job using your number. It's another sure sign of SSN identity theft.

3. Sign up for an Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN)

This year, the IRS announced they have a new tool that can help taxpayers protect their refunds. It's called an Identity Protection PIN. It's a 6-digit number that a taxpayer sets up that must be submitted when they submit their returns. This number is known only to the taxpayer and the IRS. You can set up your IP PIN through the IRS website at www.irs.gov. You will go through what the IRS describes as a "rigorous identity verification process" to confirm you are really whom you say you are. Then you can select your PIN.

IP PINs are only valid for one year, so if you sign up for a PIN now it will be good for one year. When you submit your returns this year, you would provide the IP PIN to verify your identity. If you e-file, your unique identity protection PIN must be provided to submit your return electronically. If you file a paper return by mail, you will provide your PIN next to your signature. If the IP PIN is not provided when a return is submitted in your name, the return will be rejected. This ensures that tax scammers cannot file a return in your name, even if they have your Social Security number. It's an added layer of protection that may be worth the time it takes to set up, especially if your identity has been compromised.

4. Only trust-mailed IRS communications

Whether you've already filed or not, you should never trust any communication from the IRS unless it's an official, mailed letter. The IRS will never email you, text you, call you on a phone (even your home landline) or send you a message over social media to initiate contact. If someone contacts you any other way claiming to be the IRS, it's a scam! The most common type of this scam is IRS collections. Someone calls or texts claiming to be an employee of the IRS, stating you owe money and must pay immediately. They may even offer all or part of your SSN as proof that they are whom they say they are. They aren't. If someone contacts you about an IRS collection action, verify it first before you give them anything. You can call an IRS collection hotline at 1-800-829-1040 to confirm that you owe federal taxes.

EMPLOYEES OF THE QUARTER



JANUARY



AMBER
WHEELER

Congratulations, Amber Wheeler, for being our Employee of the Month for January. Thank you for monitoring all lines of electronic communication for the Credit Union. Your help is greatly appreciated in monitoring online loan applications, membership applications, as well as keeping track of online member messages being responded to within a timely manner. Let's not forget you are still handling your portion of the incoming Call Center requests from our members. We are looking forward to the additional ways you can contribute to the staff and our members in assisting them with their needs. Thank you, Amber!

FEBRUARY



MERIDITH
GOINS

Thank you to Meridith for always being eager to help our membership. She has tackled cross training in member service with ease. Meridith always has a willingness to help fellow employees and members get the job done!



MARCH



MISSY
LOMBUS

Missy has been a great asset to the Childersburg office. Missy has provided outstanding service to our members since the beginning. She goes above and beyond helping her coworkers get the job done and she's always willing to go the extra mile for anyone in our branch.

Missy's politeness and willingness to help our members really shines. Her patience, professionalism, and helpfulness represents Heritage South Credit Union's values at its core. Missy is celebrating her one year anniversary this month at Heritage South and we are so happy to have her on our team. Thank you for always being there to help our members and your coworkers!

FIVE STEPS TO ORGANIZING YOUR FINANCES

Do you know your net worth? Or how much you spend each month, and on what? Or how much you can expect from your pension plan or Social Security in retirement? A majority of the population will answer "no," saying they've been too busy with life to get a handle on their finances. Fortunately, there's a 5-step action plan to help you take control of your money.

1. Set up a financial filing system either manually or online. Keep separate folders for different expenses and records, for instance "Auto Expenses," "Insurance," "Mortgage," "XYZ Credit Card," etc. There are also many online apps that will allow you to do this electronically.

2. Gather records. Look through your records to identify missing information. For example, you need an estimate of your Social Security retirement benefits. To request one, visit SSA.gov or call 800-772-1213. Gather copies of your health, disability, life, homeowners, and vehicle insurance policies, and get a copy of your credit report. You can check your credit report—the summary of your credit activity that generates your credit score—from each of the three major credit reporting agencies once a year for free. Always make your requests from the annualcreditreport.com website, the only site sanctioned by the Federal Trade Commission. Make one request every four months in rotation among the three credit agencies so you can monitor your credit report year-round.

3. Size up your situation. Add the estimated current value of all assets, including your home, car, personal property, savings, investments, and retirement accounts. Next, add all liabilities, including mortgage, credit card balances, and any other outstanding debt. Subtract the liabilities from the assets. This tells you your net worth. Then, make a list of income and expenses by reviewing paycheck stubs, online checking account information or your checkbook register, and credit card statements from the past year. Finally, track spending for a month by saving all receipts or recording cash purchases in a notebook or use one of the many expense tracker or money management apps that can help organize spending by category.

4. Chart a course. Set financial goals—long term and short term—and figure how much money you'll need for each. Create a target saving and spending plan that meets needs using your list of income expenses. For a month or more, track actual spending to see how you're doing, making changes as necessary.

5. Brush up on money management basics. Contact or visit HSCU for more information about how to save and spend finances wisely.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HOMETOWN HERO!



Charlie Oharr

Charlie is the fire chief of Oak Grove and he also runs the street dept for Oak Grove. He is always at the station cleaning up equipment so it will be ready to run calls. He is up half the night making sure everything is in order and in his spare time he is teaching classes for the volunteers so they will be trained when they go on calls.

BEWARE: Mortgage Loan Solicitations

Homeowners with mortgages should be wary of official-looking solicitations from companies posing as Heritage South Credit Union. The mailings may include a message such as "we have been trying to reach you regarding a matter of importance related to your mortgage". They may even reference HSCU in bold, but with a very small disclaimer indicating they are "not affiliated with or endorsed by any bank or lending institution." **Please be advised that these are not mailings from HSCU.**

Here's how it works. From public records filed for a mortgage, businesses can get a consumer's address and other personal information, such as the name of the mortgage lender. Then, legitimate businesses (or unscrupulous scam artists) send solicitations after the mortgage has closed, leading some homeowners to believe it is a necessary business communication and not an advertisement.

Beware! This deceptive, predatory and unsolicited marketing is disguised and presented in way that looks real and creates a sense of urgency, when in fact it's just the opposite.

If you receive any communication that claims to be HSCU or references your accounts with HSCU and you are unsure if it is legitimate, please contact us directly: at (256) 245-4776 or stop by a branch and we'll help you separate fact from fraud.

HERITAGE SOUTH
YOUR COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

Nominate your Hometown Hero TODAY at B101wfeb.com!

KIDS' CORNER

HOW MANY FLOWERS?

? + ? + ? + ? = ?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 + -
10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 =

Find 5 differences

HERITAGE SOUTH
YOUR COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

HSCU SPRING MARKET

MARCH 24TH, 31ST,
APRIL 6-7TH
MAIN BRANCH HWY
280 SYLACAUGA

More
Adventures.

Fewer worries.

Transfer your balance to a
PLATINUM REWARDS VISA | Rates as low as
1.99% APR

APPLY TODAY AT MYHSCU.COM!

Now through June 2023, take advantage of 1.99% APR introductory rate. The promotional rate of 1.99% APR is valid on new HSCU VISA Platinum Rewards credit cards for all activity (purchases, balance transfers, and cash advances) completed during the promotional period and that rate will remain in effect on that promotional period activity through the final billing cycle of June 2023, at which point the balances on that promotional period activity will convert to the standard card rate of 9.90% APR – see credit union for details.

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FOLLOW US ON:



NMLS
#712492

ESI

NCUA

EQUAL HOUSING
LENDER

CO-OP



HERITAGE SOUTH
YOUR COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

CONTACT US:

Phone: 256-245-4776/Email: mrsr@myhscu.com

Or visit us at one of our locations:

Sylacauga – Broadway Ave. / Sylacauga – Hwy 280

Childersburg – Hwy 280

Moody – Moody Parkway

Alexander City - Hwy 280