

FIRST FORUM

Your Source for Financial Solutions

Welcome, Savastate Teachers Federal Credit Union Members!

We are pleased to welcome Savastate Teachers Federal Credit Union to the MembersFirst family! On August 21, 2023, during a special meeting of members, attendees voted to approve the merger of our two credit unions and, on September 1, 2023, Savastate Teachers FCU officially became a division of MembersFirst! More than 700 members of Savastate will soon be able to take advantage of their newly expanded services and opportunities for financial growth.

Savastate serves teachers and staff of Savannah State University in Savannah, GA. Given the rich legacy of Savastate and its affiliation with the university, Savastate sought to find a credit union that mirrored their values and method of serving their members that would make the credit union

stronger and provide more competitive financial products and services. We're proud to offer these expanded services to the current and future members of Savastate and enhance the credit union experience.

This partnership is the first step into a promising future with MembersFirst. We look forward to growing with you and helping you achieve your financial goals.



Debt Collection Scams

We're willing to bet if you took a poll, you would find no one likes to be in debt. Any way you spin it, it can be an expensive burden to carry. Unfortunately, scammers often exploit feelings of helplessness and stress to lure victims into their debt-collection scams. Let's take a look at these scams and how to keep yourself from falling victim.

How the scams play out

In a debt-collection scam, a scammer posing as a debt collector will call a victim and demand payment for an outstanding debt. The caller insists on a specific means of payment, usually a wire transfer or prepaid debit card. The scammer will sometimes threaten to tell the victim's family members about the debt if it's not paid immediately. The alleged debt may be completely fabricated or an actual debt the victim has that the scammer has learned about through social engineering or by hacking the victim's private accounts. In either scenario, the caller is not a debt collector and represents only themselves. Of course, any money the scammer collects will go directly into their own pocket.

Red flags

Here's how to recognize a debt-collection scam:

- **The alleged debt collector demands immediate payment.** A legitimate debt collector will always provide you with the option to dispute the debt and discuss payment arrangements.

- **The caller insists on a specific means of payment.** Scammers love having their victims use a payment method that cannot be undone, such as wire transfers or prepaid cards.
- **The "debt collector" knows very few details about the debt.** A genuine debt collector will have all the information on the debt and be able to answer any questions you may have.
- **There is no contact information for the debt collection agency the caller allegedly represents.** Ask for a phone number and street address for the agency. Compare this information to a quick online search of the company name. If none are forthcoming, it's likely a scam.

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DEBT COLLECTION SCAMS *continued*

Protect yourself

Debt-collection scams can be difficult to spot, but with the right knowledge, you can protect yourself. Follow these tips to stay safe:

- **When called by an alleged debt collector, verify the debt.** Request written validation of the debt, including detailed information about the creditor, the amount owed and the nature of the debt. Legitimate debt collectors should be able to provide this information.
- **Never share personal information with an unverified contact.** If you're asked to provide sensitive information by an unknown contact, it's likely a scam.
- **Check for licensing and credentials.** Debt collectors are often required to be licensed in the state where they operate. Research the collector's credentials and licensing status through your state's attorney general's office or consumer protection agency.
- **Know your rights.** Familiarize yourself with your rights under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA) and other relevant consumer protection laws. These laws outline the rules that legitimate debt collectors must follow when attempting to collect a debt. For example, they can only contact borrowers at reasonable hours, and they cannot call them at their workplace, harass them about a debt using threats or violence, lie about money owed or falsify the name of the agency they represent, among other restrictions.
- **Keep detailed records.** Maintain thorough records of any communication you have with debt collectors, including dates, times, names and contact details. If you suspect a scam, these records can serve as evidence if you need to report the incident.

- **Request written communication.** Ask the debt collector to communicate with you exclusively in writing. Legitimate collectors should be willing to provide written documentation of the debt and any payment arrangements.
- **Stay informed.** It's a good idea to check your credit report on a regular basis for any unfamiliar or fraudulent accounts. Monitoring your credit can help you quickly identify any unauthorized activities related to debt collection. It's also advisable to keep up with the latest scams so you are better equipped to identify and avoid them.

Debt collection scams can wreak havoc on your finances. Use the tips here to stay safe!



Wealth Management for All Members

MembersFirst Credit Union offers wealth management options for our members, no matter where you are in your investment journey. As a MembersFirst member, you are invited to schedule a complimentary chat with our financial advisors, Evan Kulak and Michael McDermott. Evan and Michael are our dedicated advisors with the Credit Union Wealth Group who provide financial planning, investment and wealth management services to help you achieve your short- or long-term goals. There is no commitment required to have a conversation and no account minimum to get started.

Evan and Michael are excited to meet our members and begin working together! They can help you establish a clear path to reach your financial goals.

Schedule a complimentary chat at your convenience and discuss your financial goals and investments. Whatever your wealth management goals may be, see how we can help.

Members who take advantage of these services can enjoy:

- A relationship with a dedicated advisor
- Financial planning services and interactive tools
- Professionally managed investment portfolios

- Retirement/401(k) advice
- No minimums and no commissions

Learn more by visiting our website and connect with your advisor anytime, anywhere.



Schedule your complimentary call online at membersfirstga.com/wealth-management or scan the QR code!

**Financial Planning | Investment Management
Wealth Management | Retirement/401(k) Advice**

Just need a little help getting your finances in order? Visit membersfirstga.com/ccufc to learn how we can help you manage your finances and reach your goals.

Wealth management products and services are offered independently through Credit Union Wealth Group, an SEC-registered investment advisor. Credit Union Wealth Group and MembersFirst Credit Union are not affiliated. Products and services made available through Credit Union Wealth Group are not insured by NCUA or any other agency of the United States and are not deposits or obligations of nor guaranteed or insured by any credit union, credit union service organization or credit union affiliate. These products are subject to investment risk, including the possible loss of the principal amount invested.



REMEMBERING JO ALLEN

The Board of Directors, management and staff of MembersFirst Credit Union mourn the passing of our beloved Board Member, Ms. Jo Allen. Jo had a 49-year career in Information Technology at Piedmont Healthcare before she retired in March 2023. She served on the Board of Directors of Piedmont Plus FCU for several decades and was the Board Chair when Piedmont Plus partnered with MembersFirst in 2018. Jo continued with the same energy and dedication as a member of the Board at MembersFirst until the time of her passing on September 20, 2023.



Lily Still (left) with Jo Allen

Jo had an energetic, caring and generous spirit. She shared her vast knowledge of the Piedmont Healthcare System and worked diligently to help the credit union grow through her wisdom and insight. Lily Still, Business Development Officer at MembersFirst, responsible for serving the employees of Piedmont Healthcare, often worked with Jo and remembers her as kind, caring and genuinely interested in the people she met. Jo introduced her to many people in the Piedmont family and helped connect Piedmont employees with credit union services. She was a passionate advocate for our credit union and made a difference. We will truly miss her insight and commitment to the credit union philosophy of “people helping people.” Rest well, Jo. Your work here is complete, you will be dearly missed.

CHANGE IN AVAILABILITY OF SHARE DRAFT IMAGES

Effective Monday, October 16, 2023, due to a change in service provider, share draft images previously available within online banking may no longer be accessible online. Share drafts posted on **October 16 and thereafter will be accessible via online banking.** After October 16, to request a copy of a share draft posted before October 16 that you are unable to access online, please call 404-978-0080 or request a copy via secure messaging through online banking. We apologize for any inconvenience.

SWAP-AND-DROP Is Back Through November 17!

You asked. We listened. SWAP-AND-DROP is back again! Now through November 17, 2023, **SWAP** your auto loan over to MembersFirst, and you could **DROP** your rate **by as much as 2%** to as low as **5.25% APR**.*

Great Rates on RVs and Motorcycles, Too!

- RVs as low as **6.25% APR***
- Motorcycles as low as **7.25% APR***

Plus, **90-day no payment is available** for qualified borrowers!**

Perks of Refinancing With MembersFirst:

- Low, affordable rates
- Fair terms
- Affordable GAP insurance¹
- Truly valuable warranty service
- Discounts on auto insurance with TruStage[®]
- No prepayment penalties

REFINANCE AND SAVE TODAY!

APPLY at membersfirstga.com/refinance.

LEARN MORE at membersfirstga.com/offers.

Or call 404-978-0080 or 912-352-2902 for questions and additional information.

*APR=Annual Percentage Rate. Qualifications are based on an assessment of individual creditworthiness and our underwriting standards. Floor rate of 5.25% APR on autos, 6.25% APR on RVs and 7.25% APR on motorcycles is as of September 18, 2023. Maximum loan term on auto, motorcycle and RV loans is 84 months. MembersFirst Credit Union will match the remaining term of the transferred loan during SWAP-AND-DROP promotion period. To receive the 2% reduction on your existing rate, loan must be transferred from a lender other than MembersFirst Credit Union. Finance charge begins from date of funding and is repaid over the term. First payment due date may vary based on repayment terms. Offer not available on existing MembersFirst auto loans. Loan amount must be a new MembersFirst CU auto, motorcycle or RV loan of \$5,000 or more.

**90-day no payment offer is based on individual creditworthiness and is not available on loans refinanced outside of the SWAP-AND-DROP promotion guidelines. Offer available September 18 – November 17, 2023. All loans are subject to credit approval. Program, terms and conditions are subject to change without notice.

¹GAP, warranty and insurance services are available and provided through credit union affiliates. Separate terms and conditions apply.

GET MORE WHEN YOU INVEST WITH MEMBERSFIRST

You've made the smart choice to establish your membership at MembersFirst, benefiting from all the rewards your credit union offers. Why not further your membership by investing in your future?

Open a **Certificate of Deposit (CD)** or **Money Market** account and earn more for your money, safely and securely. No matter which you choose, invest confidently, knowing your funds are insured up to \$250,000 by the NCUA.

Certificate of Deposit benefits:

- Highest rate of return
- Fixed rate for the full term
- Higher rates available to members 55+

Money Market benefits:

- Accessibility of funds
- Higher rate than a basic savings account offers
- Access funds with a personal check*

*Up to 6 free withdrawals per month, 3 of which can be made by check.

Why wait? Open your next CD or Money Market account while rates are still in your best interest! View all savings and investment options at membersfirstga.com/invest.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Columbus Day
Monday, October 9, 2023

Thanksgiving Day
Thursday, November 23, 2023
Friday, November 24, 2023

Christmas Day
Monday, December 25, 2023

New Year's Day
Monday, January 1, 2024

CU HAPPENINGS!

We're working hard to give back to our friends and communities. Check out these CU Happenings – happening all around us!

2023 SCCPSS Back-to-School Expo

The Savannah-Chatham County Public School System holds an expo each new school year, hosted by the CTAE (Career Technical, Agricultural and Education) Department, for families to learn about the schools and the programs they offer. Also in attendance are community partners like MembersFirst, which offers special resources to families. Pictured, Ashley DuBois (center) with MembersFirst stands with CTAE educators at the expo. Ashley works closely with this department and many others to offer support and financial resources for staff, students and the community.



STEM Night at A.B. Williams Elementary School

What a fun night at A.B. Williams Elementary's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) family night! One of our student employees at Woodville Tompkins High School, Noemi Presa, worked very hard producing, designing, planning and completing a game geared towards elementary-aged children that teaches them the importance of making wise financial decisions. Students practiced making purchases and defining needs and wants and, depending on how much money they had left, were able to purchase candy at the end. The amount was up to them and their purchasing decisions. Noemi and Branch Supervisor Laura Columbia did a great job! Here, Noemi shows students the game and how current financial decisions could impact their future purchases.



PBIS Pick-A-Pop Winners at South Paulding Middle School

Congratulations to these three winners at South Paulding Middle School in the Paulding County School District. These students each received a Chick-fil-A® gift card donated by MembersFirst after picking a pop with a blue sticker on the stem. Students who participated in "Pick-A-Pop" used 15 of their PBIS points for a chance to draw a winning sucker. PBIS, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, is a schoolwide system approach aimed at establishing positive student culture and individualized behavior to create a safe and effective learning environment for all students.



Wellness Day at Wellstar Spalding

Wellstar hosted a Wellness Day event at Wellstar Spalding and, you guessed it; we were there to join in the fun! Pictured is LeeAnn Sims, Director of Business Development (left), with Angela Demons, Wellness Specialist and Well-Being Coaching Consultant for Wellstar Douglas, Spalding Regional and Sylvan Grove. Financial wellness is an important part of our total health and well-being. We truly enjoy visiting with each of you at these events – thank you for all you do for your community!



Locations and Contact Information

Call Center

METRO ATLANTA
Phone (404) 978-0080
Fax (404) 978-0095

COASTAL GEORGIA
Phone (912) 352-2902
Fax (912) 352-0838

Branch Locations

Visit a branch near you.

Atlanta, Austell, Decatur, Douglasville, Hiram, Marietta, Newnan, Pooler, Sandy Springs and Savannah.

Main Office
2476 Lawrenceville Hwy.
Decatur, GA 30033-3226

Mortgages
(404) 978-0080

Mailing Address
2476 Lawrenceville Hwy.
Decatur, GA 30033-3226

Phone Banking
Metro Atlanta
(404) 978-0089
Coastal Georgia
(912) 352-0059

24-Hour Lending Service
membersfirstga.com

Website
membersfirstga.com

This credit union is federally insured by the National Credit Union Administration.



Download our free Mobile Banking App from Google Play™ or the Apple® App Store. Just search "membersfirstga."



CU SUCCEED SCHOLARSHIP DRAWING

Congratulations to our latest CU Succeed Scholarship recipients, Eleanor H. and Maya D.! These lucky winners have each received \$250 toward tuition and college expenses. Our next drawing will be in January 2024, so be sure to share those impressive report cards and transcripts with us!

For more information on the CU Succeed program for teens and young adults, visit membersfirstga.com.