

# Spotlight

A Publication of Cedar Point Federal Credit Union

December 2014

*The Board of Directors and Staff  
of  
Cedar Point Federal Credit Union  
wish you and yours  
A Joyful Holiday Season  
and a  
Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous  
New Year!*





A series of free seminars presented by  
**Cedar Point Financial Services, Inc.**  
A wholly owned subsidiary of Cedar Point Federal Credit Union

Wednesday, February 11, 2015  
6:00 pm

Estate Planning Basics presented by Joann Wood of The Law Office of Joann M. Wood, LLC

All seminars are free and open to the public.

Headquarters Office • 22745 Maple Road, Lexington Park

Reservations are requested.

Please call 301-863-7071 - Dora (ext 8427) or Michele (ext 8432) - or sign up online at [www.cpfcu.com](http://www.cpfcu.com)

## Smart Holiday Shopping Takes Planning and Control

You say it every year after the holidays: "Next year I'm going to spend less money." It's easy to get carried away. It can be just as easy to stay financially fit, even during the busiest shopping season of the year.

The Credit Union National Association, the trade association for credit unions, and the Consumer Federation of America, Washington, D.C., suggest these holiday spending tips:

1. Budget your spending and set goals: Start with a realistic idea of how much you can spend on holiday gifts, food, travel, and so on. Add it up and really give some thought to what you can afford. Think about where you might cut back and stick to your budget.
2. Make a list: Shop from a list to avoid impulse purchases that could leave you in debt at the end of the season.
3. Comparison shop: Take the time to find the best deal. Fight the urge to get your shopping over with as quickly as possible, and, don't wait until the last minute!
4. Trim your interest payments: If you must pay with a credit card instead of using cash, use a card with a low-interest rate. Now is a good time to look for a lower-rate card--start at your credit union.
5. Open a Cedar Point Christmas Club account: Put some money in the account each month based on how much you spent this year; arrange to have that amount automatically deducted from your paycheck. This way, next year you'll have all the money you need. Plus, you'll earn dividends rather than making interest payments to finance next year's holiday shopping.

## Protect Yourself when you Shop at Home for the Holidays

Does the thought of making your way through crowded malls and shopping at 20 different stores only to wait in long check-out lines have you feeling like the Grinch? Shopping online during the holiday season can save time and minimize stress, but know a few simple rules before you dive into the world of online purchasing.

1. Only buy from familiar companies. Confirm the seller's contact information in case you have questions or problems in the future. Know exactly what you're buying. Carefully read the product description. Remember--if it seems too good to be true, it probably is.
2. Protect your privacy. Read and understand the company's online privacy policy and keep any personal information, passwords, or PINs (personal identification numbers) private. Look for these signals indicating that you have entered a secure Web page:
  - A screen notice that says you're visiting a secure site
  - A closed lock or unbroken key in the bottom corner of your screen
  - The first letters of the Internet address you are viewing change from "http" to "https"
3. Pay safely. After you review all terms of the sale, such as cost for shipping, delivery date, and return policy, you are ready to buy. Credit or charge card payments offer consumers the most protection. Finally, print all transaction records and any other useful information pertaining to your purchase.

Although online shopping allows you to virtually load your sleigh with just a few mouse clicks, practice safe browsing this holiday season.

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