

Member Insights



**MERCK EMPLOYEES
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

85th Annual Meeting Highlights: Honoring Johnson, Pandemic Changed the Credit Union's Operational Model

The credit union held its 85th Annual Meeting on April 28th in a virtual format, marking the second year the credit union held a virtual annual meeting in recognition of pandemic protocols for large gatherings.



Longtime credit union board member Herman Johnson's contribution's will forever be remembered at America's Credit Union Museum.

Although it was virtual, it was an action-packed meeting that opened with honoring longtime Board Member Herman Johnson, who stepped down from the board in 2020 after 40 years of volunteer service.

MEFCU Chairman Bernie Wisniewski thanked Johnson for his 40 years of service, noting his past tenures as chairman and his avid work on the investment committee as well as the supervisory committee. Johnson enjoyed a long career at Merck, while serving as a volunteer for the credit union.

To recognize Johnson, he was awarded a commemorative brick at America's Credit Union Museum in Manchester, New Hampshire. America's Credit Union Museum sits on the site of the nation's first-ever credit union, St. Mary's Bank, and is where the credit union system's rich history and traditions are chronicled. Johnson's brick will be proudly placed in the walkway of the courtyard area of the Museum. America's Credit Union Museum Executive Director Stephanie Smith joined the meeting as a guest speaker to recognize Johnson on behalf of the Museum.

In his opening chairman remarks, Chairman Wisniewski thanked the members for their support in 2020 and reaffirmed the credit union's commitment to serving all members in these challenging times. He then introduced MEFCU President/CEO Paul Gentile who presented some data and trends about the credit union's performance in 2020, which included a record of \$280 million of new deposits, bringing the credit union's assets to \$2.2 billion.

Gentile addressed the record low Treasury rates that the credit union had to navigate in 2020, due to the Federal Reserve cutting rates by 150 basis points in reaction to the pandemic. The credit union, true to its mission of returning value to the members, only cut its rates by 0.625 and for much of 2020 paid between 1.125 and 1.25 on its regular share account, which was a market leading rate in financial services.



During the pandemic year of 2020, your credit union continued to pay members a market leading dividend yield.

Gentile also highlighted how due to the pandemic the credit union moved many more services online, allowing members to self-serve online for many account functions. The credit union also launched a new Web site in 2020 (www.merckcu.com) and redesigned its Upton Place Branch to be more accommodating for employees and members given pandemic protocols. But one of the credit union's biggest achievements in 2020, said Gentile, was

the launch of its Financial Wellness Center.

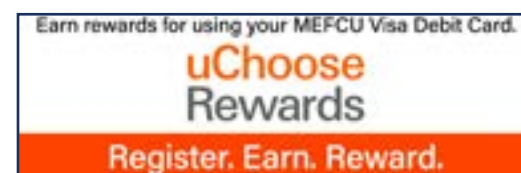


The credit union redesigned its Upton Place Branch in 2020, with themes honoring the historic service to Merck & Co.

"Financial wellness is so important, especially now as members face additional stresses due to the pandemic. We are committed to assisting our members. In addition to offering some of the lowest fees and best rates in financial services, we have committed to an educational platform to help members learn about key personal financial topics in an interactive, self-paced environment," said Gentile. The Financial Wellness Center can be found at the credit union's Web site.

The meeting also featured board elections which saw the election of Lisa Auerbach, Ronald Coleman, Patrick Ruane and Andrea Krysienski to the board. After the meeting, the board held its organizational meeting where Jeffrey Hack was named as Chairman, Ruane as Vice Chairman, Krysienski as Treasurer, and Rae Karby as Secretary.

Members can view the 2020 Annual Report on the home page by visiting About MEFCU and clicking [Financial Statements](#).





COVID-19 Pandemic Causes Scams Surge—Protect Yourself

If it feels like you're inundated with scam calls, texts and emails lately, you're not alone. The Federal Trade Commission says fraud reports surged during the pandemic. Nationally, the FTC counted more than 2.2 million reports of fraud with people telling the FTC they lost nearly \$3.3 billion in 2020.

It seems every time you hear about a new scam warning and take steps to protect yourself, there's another scam taking its place. So, how does a consumer keep up?

Scams have evolved

Scams have become increasingly elaborate. They're not always easy to spot.

Consumers used to have to watch out for bad grammar, bad spelling or unprofessional looking web design. Now, cybercriminals can easily build official-looking web pages and spoof real companies and people to make their scheme more convincing.



Criminals often follow headlines to promise solutions to real problems like delayed tax refunds or scarce COVID-19 vaccine appointments. Cybercriminals prey upon the fear and uncertainty that the pandemic has brought because they know that people are more vulnerable when they're afraid. Criminals use psychological tricks to get people to do what they want – creating a false sense of urgency or appealing to someone's fear of authority or maybe even exploiting someone's empathy with a sad story.

Before getting caught up, slow down and think. Recognize your own gut feelings and consider other options when you receive an email or text message that includes links or is asking for more information.

For example, instead of clicking on a link in an urgently worded text message about resetting your bank password, take

a moment and consider what other options are available rather than clicking the link or responding directly. Merck Employees Federal Credit Union would not text or email requesting you reset your password. Occasionally the credit union will send an email instructing you how to reset your password, but those emails are prompted by you, our member, requesting that assistance.

The best thing you can do is make staying vigilant about cybersecurity a habit.

Easy habits to protect yourself

One easy habit is changing your passwords and ensuring they're different for each account. Hackers may post email address lists and passwords that go with them when they compromise a company. If you reuse a password, you've given away access to other accounts too. Some experts recommend maintaining several email addresses in order to keep public, shopping, social media and financial accounts separate.

When it comes to the security questions you use to recover your username or password - pick a lie you'll remember. For the question, "What is your favorite color?" Use an answer that's not a color, perhaps "flamingo" or "explorer".

Recognize what scammers want

There's still a lot you can do by simply using common sense—but you do need to be more skeptical.

No matter the scheme, recognize the criminal wants something from you: most likely money.

You can research information about the person or company you are interacting with. If you do so, don't go to the website they send you to and don't call the number they provide.

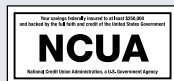
If you are victim of the scam, don't be ashamed, [here are some steps](#) you can take. The FTC says it's important to act fast.

The FTC also wants to hear about scams even if you didn't lose any money. Following the see something, say something motto is best in these situations as well. To report a scam you are aware of click [here](#).



Member Services: 732-594-3317
 Loan Department: 732-594-3018
 Debit Card Lost/Stolen: 800-554-8969
 Credit Card Lost/Stolen: 800-237-6211

Established in 1936, Merck EFCU is federally-chartered and federally insured by the National Credit Union Administration.



Featured Loan & Deposit Rates

Auto Loans
as low as
2.75% APR*

E-Checking
as high as
0.25% APR*

Credit Cards
as low as
8.25% APR*

Savings
as high as
1.00% APR*

IRAs
as high as
1.75% APR*

Home Equity
as low as
3.25% APR*

*Annual percentage rate. Visit www.merckcu.com or visit a branch for more information.