



ECD/HOPE Holds Annual Membership Meeting

Members elect leadership, hear about past successes and future plans

HOPE experienced another outstanding year, creating many new benefits and opportunities for HOPE members in 2009. Those gathered on March 27 at HOPE's Annual Membership Meeting heard results from the past year and learned about their credit union's plans for the future.

During 2009, HOPE broadened its reach into the Mid South and grew membership to over 27,000. HOPE also expanded its commercial and mortgage lending activity. Lending in underserved communities accounted for 62% of its business lending. HOPE's foreclosure prevention counseling has assisted hundreds of homeowners and continues to offer education and resources for those seeking to avoid foreclosure. HOPE is committed to helping our members reach their financial goals and first time homebuyers represent 85% of the mortgage loans closed at HOPE.

This growth has allowed the credit union to offer new products and expanded services such as: paper checking, relationship pricing, StretchPay, and more options in mortgage and business lending. In 2010, HOPE will introduce a credit card and offer the convenience of mobile banking to members.

"HOPE is committed to making affordable financial products and services available to more Mid South families and communities during the current economic downturn," said Robert Gibbs, HOPE's board chairman. "Our ability to meet challenges and answer the tremendous needs of our region is greatly enhanced by the experience and wisdom of the volunteers who serve as HOPE's leadership."



During the annual meeting, members elected representatives to the board of directors and supervisory committee. Elected to serve as directors were: Austin Porter, Porter Law Firm; James Brooks, MS Department of Education; Gwen Harmon, National Civil Rights Museum; George Penick, St. Andrew's Episcopal School; Regina Austin, Minority Capital Fund; and Carol Burnett, Moore Community House. Joanne Mickens of Parents for Public Schools was elected to the supervisory committee.

HOPENet Upgraded

HOPE has upgraded our online banking system to better serve you and help you get the most out of banking with us. HOPENet now offers the option of reordering your checks online directly from Harland Clarke (don't forget to add Harland Clarke as a trusted site to order checks). HOPENet also gives members the new option of creating stop payments and viewing/printing images of your checks.

HOPENet continues to provide easy access to your accounts for balance information and everyday transactions such as fund transfers. You even have the option of paying your bills online using HopeNet Plus with BillPay. Online banking with HOPE is simple, convenient and available 24 hours a day. Log on today and enjoy the freedom of managing your money anytime and anywhere.

Branch Closing Notice

HOPE branches will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

2010 HOPE HOLIDAY:
MEMORIAL DAY
INDEPENDENCE DAY

DATE OBSERVED:
MONDAY, MAY 31
MONDAY, JULY 5

Don't forget: HOPE is always open, even when the branches are closed. Just use the HOPE24 telephone banking system or HOPENet, our internet banking solution.

Tap Into the Value of Your Home with a HOPE Home Equity Loan

Getting a home equity loan from HOPE can be a smart money move to pay down debt and other expenses. If you have a good amount of equity in your home, it can be a way to borrow money at a lower rate than you'd pay on a credit card or personal loan. When you need extra cash, getting funds from the equity in your home is a simple solution.

A Cost-Saving Way to Get the Money You Need

Use a home equity loan to take care of those things you and your family need now, such as home renovations, college costs or to pay off higher-rate debt you've accumulated from other expenses.

Save more with HOPE's competitive interest rates and simple application process. For a home equity loan application packet, visit any branch or call 1-866-321-HOPE to get in touch with a member service representative.



Avoiding Foreclosure: Know Your Options



Foreclosure can happen to anyone. As the economy has slowed, foreclosures have become more widespread. Many homeowners have found themselves struggling with a reduction in income due to job loss. With less income, their

monthly mortgage payment is no longer affordable, and they are looking for solutions. Did you know that, in many cases, you can prevent foreclosure on your home just by taking action quickly when you first begin to see signs of trouble?

Unfortunately, more than half of homeowners facing foreclosure did not seek assistance when they began to fall behind on their payments, according to industry studies. However, the early stages of delinquency are the most crucial – the same studies show that homeowners who take action when they are only one or two payments behind are more likely to keep their homes than those who fall further behind on their payment schedule.

If you are facing foreclosure, HOPE can help. With the help of a counselor, a homeowner can work with his or her lender to develop a reasonable action plan that will offer relief to the borrower. Lenders are often willing to work with a borrower to put a family back on stable financial footing.

Let our foreclosure specialists work with you and your lender. HOPE offers a variety of options based on member needs. If you are having trouble keeping up with your monthly payments and have received a notice from your lender, foreclosure may not be inevitable. Our trained professionals can help you understand the law and your options, organize your finances, and negotiate with your lender.

HOPE is here to help you find out what alternatives may be available to you through your lender. To speak with a counselor, dial 1-888-246-6314.

Identity Theft Insurance: Is It Right for You?



If someone steals your identity, having some way to protect yourself against the unpleasant consequences sounds like a good idea. But you should know that identity theft insurance is not a perfect solution.

First, keep in mind that many of the identity theft insurance plans and other related services are being offered by the same organizations, such as banks and credit card companies, that are sometimes failing to protect your personal information. Insurance programs are revenue-producing programs that may not meet all of your needs.

Consumer experts say that most people don't need identity theft protection. Why? Identity theft insurance doesn't reimburse you for money that is stolen from you. Some policies pay expenses such as lost wages (often capped at \$2000) and legal fees, but a lawyer is usually not required to resolve an identity theft case. The main requirement is your time in dealing with creditors to provide documentation and work out the issues. Even though some plans claim to cover the costs associated with resolving an identity theft case, the burden of dealing with creditors will still fall on you, because most creditors won't deal with anybody else.

Finally, identity theft is usually committed by someone known by the victim, often a relative. Since identity theft insurance generally doesn't pay if the crime is committed by a family member, you're not protected against the thing that is most likely to happen.

As an alternative to spending your hard-earned money on identity theft insurance, take steps to avoid being a victim. Protect your social security number. Pay bills online instead of having them mailed to you. Shred documents that contain personal information. Opt out of credit card offers (call 888-5-OPTOUT) to reduce the chance that an offer could be stolen from your mailbox or trash and used to set up an account without your knowledge.

CONTACT HOPE

GENERAL ACCOUNT INFORMATION –

HOPE24 Telephone Banking: (877) 214-HOPE

HOPENet Online Banking: Go to www.hopecu.org, then login to HOPENet.

DEPOSITS – Phone: (866) 321-HOPE

E-mail: deposit@hopecu.org

U.S. Mail (Do not send cash deposits through the mail):

Hope Community Credit Union

P.O. Box 22886

Jackson, MS 39225-2886

Consumer Loans – E-mail: consumerloan@hopecu.org

Mortgage Loans – E-mail: mortgageloan@hopecu.org

HOPE Affinity Network – E-mail: affinity@hopecu.org

Supervisory Committee – Phone: (601) 944-1100

Email: supervisory.committee@hopecu.org

BRANCH PHONE NUMBERS:

Dial (866) 321-HOPE to be connected to your local branch.