



First Choice
Federal Credit Union

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The New Direction - July 2025

A Letter from our CEO - For the Love of the Game

My grandfather loved baseball. He would watch any game played on any little league field, any AA Farm Team, church softball, he didn't care, he just loved the purity of the game. I don't recall that he ever cheered for any particular team or player.

Despite being the oldest sport in North America, baseball is the hardest to get into the Hall of Fame. From 1839 to today, only 278 players, 23 managers, 10 umpires, and 40 pioneers are in Cooperstown. Since 1871, 20,917 players have worn an MLB Jersey.

If you ever watch SportsCenter you would swear there are only two types of baseball plays, the homerun and the diving catch.

Scouts will often talk about a 5-tool prospect. Everyone is looking for the next "can't miss" player to come change a franchise. Those 5-tools for positional players are:

Hits for Power - There is nothing more energizing (or deflating depending on your perspective) than watching that ball sail over the fences. In life, we often look for someone who can "knock it out of the park". With one (metaphorical) swing of the bat the entire trajectory of a game (life) can change. Hitting for Power consistently is rare. Do you know what a lot of those guys in the MLB have in common? They strike out a lot. You see the harder you swing, the easier it is to screw yourself into the ground. When a good hitting coach meets a powerhouse, there are little things they can tweak; there are techniques that can be worked on; but do you know the most important thing that hitter can hear? I believe in you. Dust yourself off and get right back out there. We are going to need you this next at-bat.

Hits for Average - That long ball is exciting, but you can lose a lot of games 2-1 or 3-2. Normally the wins come from the players that time and again get on base. Consistency is key to most of life. Can you be counted on to put your team in a position to win?

Baserunning - A long time ago my little league coach would tell me, "you can't steal second if your foot is on first." In life you need to be APPROPRIATELY aggressive. If you take too far of a lead, you can be thrown out. Don't get out of the blocks fast enough and you get picked off. Often times the key to success is seeing what you want, focusing in, and taking a chance.

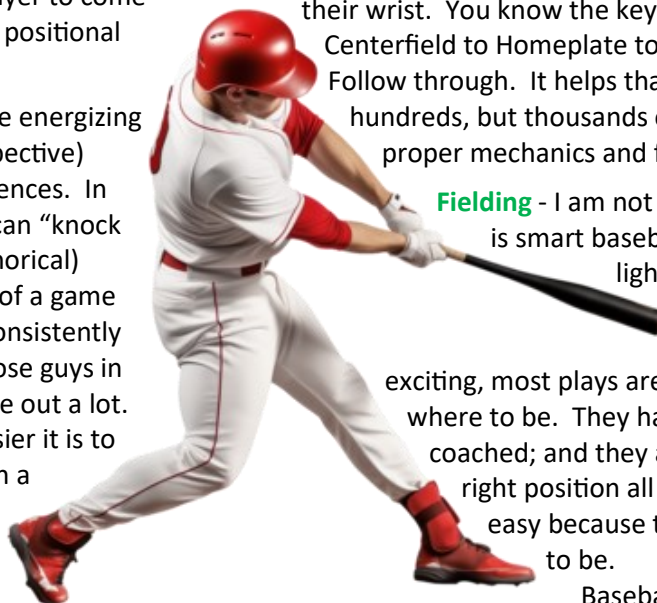
Throwing - Do you know how big a baseball stadium is? Go to the next game and just watch the warmups of the outfielders. These gargantuan men are tossing that ball over great distances with what appears to be a flick of their wrist. You know the key to throwing a laser from Centerfield to Homeplate to get that crucial out? Follow through. It helps that they have done it not hundreds, but thousands of times in their life, but proper mechanics and follow through are the keys.

Fielding - I am not a fan of "the switch", but it is smart baseball. While diving catches, lightning fast reflexes, and a short-stop apparently made of rubber are super exciting, most plays are routine. The player knows where to be. They have studied; they have been coached; and they are just seemingly in the right position all the time. The game looks easy because they are where they need to be.

Baseball can be a pure game of strategy and execution. And so can life.

We try and "knock it out of the park" with Customer Service. We strive to put you in a consistent position to win. We are constantly reviewing the financial landscape to be appropriately aggressive with rates in both the lending and savings space. We try our best to follow-through on our promises. Finally, we want to show up in the places where you are and where you need us to be.

Thank you for allowing us to be part of your financial journey. See you in the Hall of Fame.



Board of Directors

Pamela Miller	<i>President</i>
Brian DeVivo	<i>Vice-President</i>
Russ Carley	<i>Treasurer</i>
Marilyn Wehr	<i>Secretary</i>
George Fiacco	
Jenny Flannery	
Michael Vatter	

Meet Our Staff

Michael Vatter	CEO
William Wehr	CFO
Maureen Dierfield	
Erica Holian	
Kathy Lorello	
Branch Coordinators	
Lillian Charles	
Beth Ferguson	
Trisha Goodrich	
Susan Kanary	
Madison Mangelli	
Mary Lou McPherson	
Danielle Memo	
Connie Million	
Jamie Powell	
Rhonda Powers	
Charlotte Sonntag	

Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday (All Offices)
9:00AM - 4:30PM
Drive-Thrus open at 8:30AM

Saturday (Neshannock Office)
9:00AM - 12:00PM

Proud Member of



Accounts Federally insured

What do I do about my lease?

If you are in a leased vehicle that is nearing the end, there are several factors to consider when thinking of buying it out from the dealership. Those factors include:

YOUR BUYOUT PRICE IS LOWER THAN THE VEHICLE'S MARKET VALUE

This really is the key factor in making your determination. If the lease buyout price you're offered is less than the vehicle's market value, then you have established value in the vehicle.

You don't have to drive this car "until the wheels fall off", but you also don't want to give away value if it exists. You could just as easily trade the car in a few months and receive a benefit for it. Many factors can lead to the value being in your favor, including: low miles, condition, difficulty in finding that vehicle in the market, economic trends, and even current gas prices.



issue a refund for unused miles. If you're way under your mileage limits at the end of your car lease, your vehicle may be worth more than the buyout amount.

YOU LIKE YOUR CAR

If you dread the prospect of finding a new vehicle, maybe you want to keep the one for which you already know and are

comfortable. Do a little research and see what the same make and model of your vehicle is currently being sold for. All leases are for 3 years, so that means sometimes the market gets "flooded" with

people turning in the same types of cars. This can impact the value.

YOU MAINTAINED THE VEHICLE WELL

Routine maintenance and repairs help keep the value of a vehicle. If you are consistent with timely preventative maintenance tasks, like oil changes and tire rotations, you may get a reward. Also consider the general repair costs of the brand of vehicle you have. Typically not a lot major goes wrong with vehicles in the first three years of life. Knowing the reliability and cost of repair of your brand may factor into your decision.

THE VEHICLE HAS EXCESS WEAR AND TEAR

Just as a vehicle in excellent condition may warrant a higher value, a vehicle with excess wear and tear can significantly decrease its value. Dealerships can charge penalties for damage or excessive wear. Depending on the condition it may make sense to buy out your leased vehicle.

YOUR LEASE WILL INCUR EXTRA FEES

Sometimes life situations change and maybe from the time you got the lease until now, you have a longer commute to work. You could incur expensive mileage overage fees if you exceeded the allowance in your lease contract. While high-mileage leases are sometimes an option, you'll usually have to request one before exceeding your allowed mileage.

YOU USED MINIMAL ALLOCATED MILES

Although dealers typically charge extra for exceeding mileage limits, they don't

Things to Watch Out For...

Whenever we post an article about fraud, I know that there are some common misconceptions.



Most people believe that fraudsters attack the most vulnerable in our society. They focus their efforts on the elderly, the sick, infirmed, or those in desperate need.

In my opinion, those fraudsters deserve a special corner of hell for their efforts to take advantage of people and con them out of their hard-earned money, especially those that are in need of covering their basic needs of food and medicine.

Yet we are seeing a dramatic upswing in fraudsters not being so discriminating.

Did you know that according to the FTC for 2024:

- Fraud against active military personnel grew over 5x of reported crimes. Our service men and women reported losses of more than \$200Million
- Fraud initiated over social media reported losses of \$1.9Billion
- Job Scams are up nearly 6x over 2023 and over 27x since 2020.
- Investment Scams totaled \$5.7Billion, up 24%.
- 44% of all Fraud had victims are 20-29!

No one is immune to scams.



**I'M OLD
BUT I'M LIKE
COOL OLD**

What is your recourse?

It is sad to say, but there is not a lot. You can work with the authorities to report the crime and attempt to shut down a network. If a culprit can be apprehended, there

may be an opportunity for restitution.

How can you protect yourself?

The MOST important thing that you can do is talk to someone. Almost daily our staff receive unusual deposits. Most of these items are completely explainable and legitimate. Because of our training to be in tune with recent fraud trends, examining the source of funds, or us knowing a little bit about you, our suspicions may be raised. It is our job to ask questions. We are **NOT** trying to pry into your personal life or question you or your integrity. Part of our job is to protect our membership. Sadly, many of our questions are answered with anger and mistrust.

Fraudsters even coach an individual to not speak to a credit union or bank representative. In fact, they will encourage them to use mobile deposit and avoid any sort of opportunity for intervention.

Very little is “new under the sun”. Many of the concepts are the same, but the methodologies tend to advance.

I routinely get text messages from “recruiters” or “head hunters” that saw my profile on LinkedIn or discovered my resume on Indeed.

The challenge is, I don't have a LinkedIn Profile, and the last resume I uploaded was on Monster.com over 25 years ago.



When I was 20 years old and seeking my first full time job, I responded to an ad in the local paper (shut up, I know I'm old) that promised to help me get the proper training and “jump the line” on the waiting list for a job opening. I just needed to send a check so they could send me the course material. I keep checking the mailbox... it may need to be my fall back career.

We respect your privacy and your intelligence, but we are partners on your financial journey. Our goal is simply to protect you. Unfortunately, there is not much we can do after fraud takes place, so let us help up front.

You are invited to participate

Credit Unions are a cooperative. We are owned and controlled by each of our members. We do not have stockholders. Credit Unions are not privately held. No matter how much money you deposit into the credit union, every member has an equal say. We elect a non-compensated Board of Directors from among our membership that is tasked with governance and oversight.

We are not-for-profit, like many hospitals. And like hospitals, who are not motivated by the "bottom line", we must invest in technology, personnel, and facilities to ensure we remain relevant to you and the Community.

We invite you to our 73rd Annual Meeting. Plan to join us to take part in this democratic process and see how we conduct business. We hope to share some exciting news and updates about our future. We would ask that you RSVP your intentions of joining us as soon as you can to any of our offices or by visiting our website at annualmeeting.firstchoicefcu.com. Our initial desire is to host this meeting at our Butler Ave Branch. However, if the response is too large, we will need to change venues. The sooner we can have that information the better. Thank you for your understanding and we hope to see you there!



WHO: All of our membership

WHAT: To our 73rd Annual Meeting

WHEN: Saturday, August 9th starting at 10:00am

WHERE: Current location is 1144 Butler Avenue, New Castle, PA 16101. If we need to change venues to accommodate reservations, we will alert members via social media and e-mail as soon as possible.

RSVP: Please let us know your intention to attend by Thursday, July 31st.

WHY: We would love to see you there to share in this experience and update you on all the recent happenings.



First Choice
Federal Credit Union

Loan & Savings Rates

Loan Rates in APR*, Savings APY**
Effective 1/1/25

Rates start as low as...

Personal:

Up to \$4,000	7.24%
Up to \$10,000	10.49%

Share Secured:

3.24%

Untitled Autos:

Up to +40 Mo.	3.99%
41-52 Mo.	4.49%
53-64 Mo.	4.99%
65-76 Mo.	5.24%
77-88 Mo.	6.24%

Used Autos: 2025-2023

Up to 40 Mo.	4.24%
41-52 Mo.	5.12%
53-64 Mo.	5.49%
65-76 Mo.	5.74%
77-88 Mo.	6.49%

Used Autos: 2022-2021

Up to 52 Mo.	5.24%
53-64 Mo.	5.74%
65-76 Mo.	6.24%

Used Autos: 2020-2019

Up to 52 Mo.	5.99%
53-64 Mo.	6.49%
65-76 Mo.	6.99%

Used Autos: 2018-2013

Up to 48 Mo.	9.24%
Up to 60 Mo.	9.99%

Home Equity: (1st Position)

Up to 5 years	5.49% Fixed
Up to 10 years	6.74% Fixed
Up to 15 years	7.24% Fixed

(2nd Position)

Up to 5 years	5.99% Fixed
Up to 10 years	7.24% Fixed
Up to 15 years	7.74% Fixed

Members pay costs

** Rates impacted by credit score.

**ALL RATES REFLECT A 0.50%
DISCOUNT FOR AUTO PAY**

Have a Loan Question?

Call when you can.

Text when you can't

to **724-856-0997** or contact
the loan rep directly.



Erica's Team at **724-740-8400**

MaryLou's Team at **724-856-0926**

Maureen's Team at **724-856-0976** or

Susan's Team at **724-761-2828**

VISA Cards - No Annual Fees

Platinum - 12.90% Fixed
Rewards - 15.90% Fixed

Share Accounts 0.100%

Loan Collateral 0.100%

IRA Accounts 0.750%

Unless tied to a CD

Club Accounts

Christmas Club 0.200%

Vacation Club 0.200%

Escrow Accounts 0.100%

Interest paid on share accounts
with a balance > \$100.

Inquire about rates for Motorcycles, ATVs,
RVs, Watercraft, and Other Titled Vehicles.

Anyone who lives, works, volunteers, or attends church or school in **Lawrence County**
is eligible to become a member and take full advantage of belonging.