

# Quarterly Newsletter

from Brewer Federal Credit Union

## President's Corner

As we head into a new year, we hope you enjoyed a great holiday season!

We know that the snow and cold will stay with us for a while, so our Winter Rescue Loan is available for the next few months. The Winter Rescue Loan, with a low Annual Percentage Rate, may help with those holiday credit card balances, filling the oil tank, or maybe even a warm weather vacation. Do you enjoy this time of year and like getting out in the snow? Then talk to us about financing options for snowmobiles, ATVs, or maybe a new 4 wheel drive vehicle. Whatever your plans are this winter, let Brewer FCU help you along the way!

This past year, we launched online account opening with great success! Do you have a friend or family member that would like to join the credit union but can't make it to the branch? Would you like to open another account with us but are too busy at work? No problem! Online account opening will allow you to join or add an account from any PC or mobile device.

And, as we head into 2020, we will be celebrating 60 years of service to eastern Maine. We certainly could not be celebrating this milestone without the amazing members we have, so thank you for choosing Brewer FCU.

As always, please remember that we are member-owned, so contact me any time with questions, concerns, or anything else you would like to discuss regarding your credit union.

The staff and volunteers at Brewer FCU wish you a happy New Year.

Sincerely,  
**Dave DeFroschia**  
 CEO



**BREWER**  
 FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

## Helping Your Car Survive a Bad Winter

Continuous pummeling by one snowstorm after another has been hard on New Englanders – and a real ordeal for the vehicles that have to get them to work. With luck you've made it through the wintery months so far, but extreme cold, icy roads, salt, and potholes can really punish a car or truck.

The nonprofit Car Care Council recommends that drivers take these steps to help their cars survive the winter, and save possible headaches and money later:

- **Wash your vehicle regularly.** Washing and waxing help protect the body and paint from salt and corrosive debris.
- **Stay on top of maintenance.** Whether you do your own work or use a local repair shop, following the manufacturer-recommended service schedule is essential to keep your car in safe and dependable running condition.
- **Don't put off the "minor" stuff.** Streaky windshield wipers, a cracked side mirror, or a dashboard warning light shouldn't be ignored. These could become safety issues or lead to more expensive problems down the road.

For car care information that's useful year-round, you might look into the 60-page Car Care Guide, available free in print or electronic form from [www.carcare.org](http://www.carcare.org). In the meantime, safe driving!

## 4 Financial New Year's Resolutions to Make

The beginning of a new year is a popular time to set new personal goals. Whether it be eating healthier, reading more, or learning a new skill or hobby, the beginning of a calendar year is the perfect opportunity to start working toward those goals. According to U.S. News, nearly one-third of Americans made a fiscal resolution for 2019. If you're among the 33% trying to improve their financial well-being in the coming year, here are four financial resolutions to make:

### 1. Start an Emergency Fund

Life can be unpredictable, which is why having a nest egg is so important. Your financial wellness can take a turn for the worse with surprises like job loss, illness, car troubles...the list goes on and on. It's often recommended that you have three to six months' worth of expenses saved away in the event of an emergency.

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## 2. Check Your Credit Score

To have control over your financial well-being in the new year, you should be monitoring your credit score. A great resolution would be to check your score from each of the three main credit bureaus – Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. You can check your score from each bureau for free once a year. Checking your score can tell you where your credit stands, ensure that your credit information is accurate, allow you to respond to changes quickly, and give you insight on how it can be improved.

## 3. Try the 52-Week Money Challenge

Making a resolution is a lot easier than actually sticking to it. If you often give up on financial resolutions because you're not seeing immediate results, try the 52-week money challenge. The idea is relatively simple and you start seeing results instantaneously. You start by saving away \$1 during the first week of the year, gradually increasing your savings by a dollar each week throughout 2020. You'll save away \$2 during the second week, \$3 in the third week...ultimately saving away \$52 in the last week of the year. By the end of the year, if you complete the challenge, you'll have saved \$1,378.

## 4. Do Your Taxes Early

If you traditionally wait until the last minute to file your taxes, make it a goal to do so earlier. As many people tend to procrastinate, you can get your refund much sooner. The fastest method to receive your refund is to file electronically and have your refund deposited directly into your credit union account with direct deposit. It can take several weeks longer if you opt for a paper return. Accountants and tax professionals are also first come, first serve. Their schedules can fill up by the time you reach out to them if you wait too long. If you aren't completely confident when filing your taxes, hiring someone can help you accurately complete your form. Also, filing early can help prevent identity theft. As soon as a criminal gets access to your Social Security Number, they can do a lot of damage. If they file with your Social Security number before you do, the IRS will decline your return since their records show you've already been paid. You haven't, but the criminal has been. It can take months to clear this up with the IRS. If you can, file your taxes early and prevent the fraudsters from successfully filing a fraudulent return.

# Four Home Improvement Projects to Do This Winter

**1. Install a programmable thermostat.** If you haven't already taken steps to save energy, an easy project is installing a thermostat that allows you to automatically set the temperature for different times of the day.

**2. Insulate your water heater.** Another way to save energy is to lower the temperature of your water heater by insulating it with an insulation kit from your local hardware store.

**3. Get organized!** With more time spent indoors during the winter, it's a great time to tackle your home's organization. Installing a modular closet-organizing system is a great way to cope with cabin fever and be productive.

**4. Hire a contractor.** Business for contractors usually slows down in the winter, so now is a great time to finish the

basement, transform the bathroom or remodel the kitchen. Be sure to visit our website at [brewerfcu.org](http://brewerfcu.org) or talk to a loan representative to get a quote for a great rate on a home equity loan.

Something else to keep in mind: Heating costs almost always jump as the temperature drops, so ask us about our home heating loan options. Brewer FCU can help with financing and possibly save you hundreds. Stay warm!



## Credit Union Hours

Lobby and Drive-Thru

Monday–Wednesday

8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Thursday and Friday

8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Saturday

8:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Saturday hours offered at  
77 North Main Street only

## Office Locations

77 North Main Street · Brewer

p: 207.989.7240

f: 207.989.7857

229 Dirigo Drive · Brewer

p: 207.989.7240

f: 207.989.5985

## Mailing Address

PO Box 189 · Brewer, ME 04412

[memberservices@brewerfcu.org](mailto:memberservices@brewerfcu.org)

[brewerfcu.org](http://brewerfcu.org)

## Holiday Closings

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, January 20

President's Day

Monday, February 17

