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Congratulations to our Coloring Contest Winners!

CONGRATULATIONS
to our coloring contest winners!

All 105 entries in HomeTown Bank's 50th Anniversary
Coloring Contest are beautifully displayed in our Main Bank
lobby in Galveston. Thank you, all, for entering!

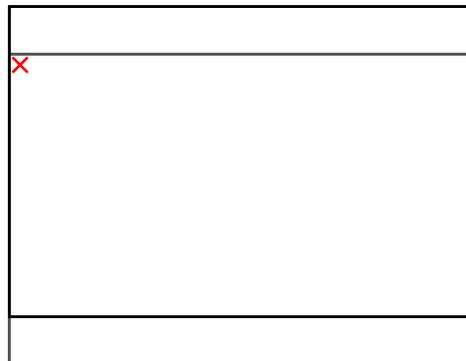
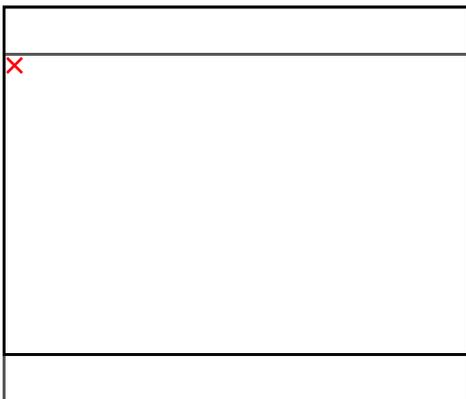
[Click here for a full list of winners!](#)

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Musical Beginnings

HomeTown Bank of League City was a recent sponsor in the Juneteenth event for the non-profit organization Musical Beginnings. Their donation funded music lessons for a child. Musical Beginnings provides music lessons to under privileged kids in the Galveston County Area. Pictured is HomeTown Bank New Account Representative Graylin Beals and Musical Beginning's Sharon Barron (CEO/Artistic Director).

Congratulations to our Anniversary Giveaway Winners!



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Ana Mireles- Dominguez celebrates 20 years at HomeTown Bank!

Assistant Vice President Ana Mireles-Dominguez is in our Electronic Banking/ Customer Service Department and she is celebrating her 20th anniversary as a member of the HomeTown Team. Ana served as teller in the Motor Bank for 15 years, then was promoted to Assistant Supervisor. She was our Employee of the Year in 2003 and became Supervisor in 2004. She joined the Electronic Banking/ Customer Service team in 2012, and was named Assistant Vice President in January of 2013. "I loved working in the Motor Bank. We had some great customers and I knew almost all of them. Now, in the Electronic Banking Department, I really enjoy helping customers with solutions to keep their banking easily accessible through their computer or phone. They save time and I help them experience that convenience!"



Tips for Building Your Credit Score

If your credit score could use a boost, read these foolproof tips

There's a certain three-digit number that can make all the difference between being denied or approved for credit, and whether you'll receive a low or high interest rate. That number is called a credit score, and it's derived from your payment history, accounts owed, length of credit history, types of credit used and other factors.

Many of the credit-related decisions you make can have an impact on your credit score. For example, skipping a payment on a credit card bill can have a negative impact on your score. Your credit score defines you financially, and if you do something to negatively impact it, you could face a risky financial future with poor credit.

"A low score warns lenders that you might be an unreliable borrower, which can thwart you from getting the credit you need," writes Credit Karma contributor Jenna Lee. "A high credit score can save you tens of thousands of dollars in interest over the life of your loans."

So how can you build up your score in the unfortunate event it's not where you'd hoped? Read on for expert advice on improving your credit score.



Get rid of small balances

on several cards. "A good way to improve your score is to eliminate nuisance balances," says John Ulzheimer, president of consumer education at Credit Sesame. "That way, you're not polluting your credit report with a lot of balances."

Since your credit score takes into account how many of your cards have balances, charging a few dollars on one card and then a few on another, instead of using the same card to make multiple purchases, can negatively impact your credit score. To build your score up again, pay off all the small balances you have on your cards, and then use just one or two cards for the majority of your everyday purchases.

Pay bills on time. If you're skipping payments or paying them late, your credit will suffer. If you're struggling to pay bills by their deadlines, try setting reminders on your smartphone or leaving sticky notes on your desk with the payment information and deadline for all your bills. Or hire a financial planner to help you get organized, which will help with paying bills on time.

"It isn't necessarily hard — it just takes discipline," says Hitha Prabhakar, a retail and consumer analyst and spokesperson for Mint.com.

Keep old debt. It sounds counterintuitive, but it's actually better for your credit score if you leave old debt on your report. Some of that debt is good for your score, and trying to get older accounts off your credit score simply due to the fact that they're paid off isn't wise either.

Why? The longer your history of good debt, the better it is for your credit score. When you attempt to eliminate old good debt, it's like getting great grades throughout school and trying to get your records erased down the line. You want to keep it around.

Get rid of student loans. If feasible, try to pay off those pesky student loans in a timely manner.

"If you pay your student loans in full and on time each month, the credit bureaus will make a record of that on a continuing 30-day basis," writes contributor for NerdWallet Divya Raghavan. "And that will demonstrate to future lenders that you can be trusted to handle money responsibly."

Keep new accounts to a minimum. Every time you open a regular or retail credit card, or even just apply for one, your report is looked at to determine whether or not you'll receive the credit.

"Since a lot of hard inquiries may make it look like you're desperate or aren't getting approved for credit, it's best to minimize how often you apply for more credit," says Lee.

"You just don't want to do anything that would indicate risk," explains Dave Jones, retired president of the Association of Independent Consumer Credit Counseling Agencies.

Your credit score is an important part of your financial success. Stop by today to let us know if you have any questions.

How to Grow Your Emergency Fund

The best ways to put money away for all your unexpected life occurrences

Everyone could use a little (or a lot of) extra cash on hand. Emergency funds can be used for all unexpected situations that occur in life—from broken furnaces to hospital visits.

“There are many people out there who are living so paycheck to paycheck that a blown transmission would send them into bankruptcy,” says Brad Smith, CEO of debt management company Rescue One Financial in Irvine, California. “An injured child or a natural disaster could easily be handled with additional funds.”

No one wants to be strapped for cash, especially in an emergency. That’s why it’s wise to start building a just-in-case fund today.

Keep this number in mind

- Seven. It’s how many months’ worth of expenses you should aim to have in your emergency fund.

“Everyone has wants, needs and desires when it comes to spending money,” says Pete D’Arruda, financial radio show host, author and president of Capital Financial Advisory Group in Cary, North Carolina. “Make sure you have seven months’ worth of emergency income available for the

needs.” If that’s not possible at first, work your way up by saving little by little and adding to your fund only when feasible.

Pretend it’s a monthly bill - You wouldn’t miss a deadline on an important payment, would you? One of the best ways to build an emergency fund is to treat it like an actual bill. Adding a designated amount (determined by your income and expenses) will ensure that you continue to grow your savings. And like any company would, charge yourself late fees when you miss a payment (of course, that will go directly into your fund).

“The forced savings should feel like a bill pay transaction that is done on the same day of every



month,” Smith says. An easy way to make sure you “meet your deadline” each month is to set up direct deposit from your paycheck to automatically transfer money to your fund.

Use it for real emergencies only - One of the most common issues among people who aren’t able to grow a solid emergency fund is that they take money out when they think they need it, but it may not be for a real emergency.

“An emergency fund is for the unexpected,” explains Carrie Coghill, a Barron’s top 100 financial advisor and the director of consumer education for FreeScore.com. “For example, appliances that stop working, getting laid off from a job, a long illness or an accident. You use an emergency fund for any expense you cannot foresee.”

One way to avoid this is to always make sure you know what bills are coming up when.

“People budget to save and put away an emergency fund, then they forget to budget for an annual insurance expense or car expenses, etc.,” Coghill says. “You can foresee your car insurance expense next November, for example, so it is not an emergency.”

Don’t make it easy to access - “Do not get access to it via debit card,” Smith advises. “And if you are issued a checkbook, hide it.” Instead, open your emergency fund somewhere you can access your money but it’s just not as easy to get to.

“I like using an account away from my normal checking account to build a psychological wall between my spending habits and my emergency fund,” says Ray Lucia, a Certified Financial Planner and nationally syndicated radio host.

Have patience - While we all wish we could snap our fingers and our emergency funds would magically increase, unfortunately, that isn’t realistic.

“Rome wasn’t built in a day, and neither is an emergency fund,” says Kevin Gallegos, vice president of Phoenix operations for Freedom Debt Relief. “Any action you can take to establish an emergency fund will do you good. If you transfer \$10 to a savings account each week, you’ll have \$500 in a year.”

As long as you’re continuing to build it each month, it’s okay to start off slowly.

“When you pay off a credit card with a \$50 monthly payment, increase your savings by that \$50,” explains Gallegos. “With the same outflow you have today, you’ll be paying yourself.”

Creating an emergency fund can pay off down the line, so get started today and watch the savings grow.

