

In This Issue:

- **401(k) Strategies As You Age**
How you should invest in your retirement over time
- **Everything You Need to Know About Smart Home Devices**
Here's what the commercials don't tell you
- **Presents From Partners**
- **Smart Spending in the Holiday Season**
Making sure the spirit of giving doesn't haunt you with debt
- **Volunteer Ideas for the Holidays**
Volunteer ideas to celebrate the season of giving

Presents From Partners



The credit union is gearing up to have a well-stocked Parents Room and Boutique this year at the Presents From Partners event. For the parents' room we are looking for gently used items that children can pick from to give a present to their Mom, Dad or special someone in their life. The items can be valued around \$10. You can bring items into the branch or give us a cash donation and we will do the shopping for you!

The boutique is in need of gently used clothes, coats, shoes for men, women, teens and children. The parents are able to pick out some much-needed clothes for their family. Please consider going through your closets and making a donation at the credit union.

We greatly appreciate all the donations we can get to bring holiday joy to so many within our community! **Please have all donations to the credit union by December 6th!**

Holiday Skip – A – Pay

The holidays are upon us and to help give you some extra spending money we are offering our Holiday Skip-A-Pay once again! For a small fee of \$15 per loan you can skip either your November or your December payment*. You can download the form from our website or contact the credit union at 800-356-6507 x340.

*some restrictions may apply

Manage Your Cards – Mobile App

As the holidays approach and you are busy meeting up with friends or family at a restaurant or out shopping and....then you think, "dang, where did I leave my card?!?" Don't worry your credit union has your back!! Go to your IBEW & United Worker FCU mobile app and YOU can turn your card off until you find it....and then turn it back on,,,,its that simple! Download our app and see what else we can do to help you Manage Your Money on the Go!

RV Loan Promotion

Hunting for a RV this Season? Set your sights on a New or Used RV and get up to .50% off the published RV rates*. Contact one of our Relationship Officers to get preapproved and lock in your rate during the month of November. Don't let this great offer get away from you! Our team will work with you to get into an RV that fits within your budget and you will be ready to hit the outdoors in style!

*The rate may vary depending on each individuals' credit history, year of RV and underwriting factors.
All Credit Union loan programs, rates, terms and conditions are subject to change at any time without notice.

Holiday Closures

Veterans Day November 11
Thanksgiving November 28 & 29
Christmas Eve December 24
Christmas December 25

401(k) Strategies As You Age

How you should invest in your retirement over time

Some of the most common financial advice you can receive regarding preparing for retirement is to contributing to a 401(k) plan, and usually, thanks to your employer, putting a portion of your earnings toward that plan every paycheck is easy. But where your money is being invested and at what age you're investing it matters, so it's important to assess the best 401(k) strategies available to you as you get older.

In your 20s and 30s

When you're in your 20s or 30s, you still have a lot of time ahead of you before you retire, which allows you to take on more risks for higher rewards. "The basic rule of thumb is that a younger person can invest a greater percentage in riskier stock funds," personal finance expert Carol M. Kopp explains in an article for Investopedia. "At best, the funds could pay off big. At worst, there is time to recoup losses, since retirement is far ahead."

Try to contribute 10 to 15 percent of your salary toward your workplace 401(k) as well as contribute more, if you're capable, to a Roth IRA. While young, you should look to invest in long-term stock investments, which have been shown to return more than bonds. "While bonds are more stable, you won't beat stocks if you're looking to multiply your money over the long-term," says Barbara Friedberg, a former portfolio manager and university investments instructor. A good place to start is to invest about 75 percent in stock funds and the rest in bond and cash investments.



In your 40s

As you age, you should begin to lean toward slightly lower-risk bonds and fixed investments than in your 30s. There's no fixed ratio of stock-to-bond allocation that you should follow — it all depends on how comfortable you are with risk. If you're an aggressive investor, you may still wish to invest about 70 percent in stocks, but if you're more conservative and prefer to avoid risk, then nudge your stock allocation down to around 60 percent. "Just remember, the more stock holdings you have, the more volatile your investment portfolio," Friedberg says.

If you didn't invest toward retirement in your 30s and are just getting started, you should look to supercharge your savings and reach the maximum \$18,000 annual investment allowed. If you do this at age 40, your nest egg will still reach a million dollars by the time you reach age 67. It still won't be as good as if you had started young, but it's a good place to start.

In your 50s and older

As you get closer to retirement, you should continue to take more of your stock investments and put them in bonds and cash investments. "The specific percentages will be determined by how much and when you anticipate dipping into your investments," Friedberg says. She explains that if you expect to retire at 67 and receive Social Security and other income sources, you can delay spending your investments and therefore continue being more aggressive with them. Remember that you will keep investing even during retirement, and that you need to take your own life expectancy into consideration. For example, women are incentivized to invest more aggressively in their retirement because they live about five years longer than men on average, leading to higher retirement costs.

In fact, the rising life expectancy has led some financial planners to throw the old rules straight out of the window, as retirement money now needs to last longer than ever. To make the most of your income today and optimize your 401(k) strategies for the future, make sure to seek assistance from a certified financial planner at your local financial institution.

Smart Spending in the Holiday Season

Making sure the spirit of giving doesn't haunt you with debt

The holiday season is fast approaching, a fact alone that may already have alarm bells ringing in your head. With its arrival comes the return of holiday shopping, and if you have an expansive list of people to buy for, it may very well mean another sizable debt that takes months to pay down. However, it doesn't necessarily have to be that way. By following some simple strategies, you can make sure you satisfy your shopping list without going over your budget.

Make a budget

It seems like it should go without saying, but making a budget is the cornerstone of responsible holiday shopping. Liz Weston of NerdWallet suggests creating a spreadsheet that includes your anticipated income for the holiday months and a list of the people you need to gift-shop for. Subtract your fixed expenses as well as how much you plan to pay for things like decorations, travel, food and drinks for holiday gatherings. This should give you a pretty solid idea of how much money you'll have to work with for your list and allows you to budget accordingly.

Stick to your budget

However you decided to create a budget, the only way it pays off is if you stick to it. As Reyna Gobel of Investopedia suggests, you may be inclined to try and match the generosity of gift-givers who don't carry the same level of financial obligation or burden. Rather than attempting to match someone else's spending, you should shop in accordance to your budget. Those close to you should understand your budgetary needs, so there's no need to try and impress them with a gift you can't really afford.



Cut down on costs

If you want to try and shop a bit outside of your means, it should only come at the cost of other less necessary expenses. Gobel suggests that you could cut down on how much you spend on coffee, eating out, entertainment or other inessential purchases and apply that toward your holiday budget. If you feel that the temptation to go outside of your budget and rack up a balance on your credit card may be too great, consider limiting yourself to cash purchases.

The thought really does count

It's virtually a given that gift-giving in the holiday season means spending big bucks on material goods. If you have a tighter budget but still want to show your friends and family how much you care, Sean Pyles of NerdWallet suggests shying away from that mindset. Instead, be creative and leverage your skills. If you're renowned for being crafty in the kitchen, hand out certificates good for a fancy meal of the holder's choice or, as U.S. News & World Report's Karen Cordaway recommends, bake a smorgasbord of sweets to give out. If you have friends who have a newborn, you can gift them with a day of peace and quiet by creating a voucher for anytime babysitting. Experiences matter, and they're easier to customize to a particular person's needs or interests. What's more, they may not cost you as much in the run up to the holidays.

You may already feel yourself sweating the impending holiday season, but there's no reason to. Though you may feel pressured to give expensive gifts and go into debt out of generosity, you can spend smart and mitigate any financial damage the season of giving might cause.

Volunteer Ideas for the Holidays

Volunteer ideas to celebrate the season of giving

The holidays can be a whirlwind of activities, but one way to appreciate the season of giving is to give back. Donating your time and sharing your talents with organizations, local causes or your community will make the holidays even more special this year.

Look around your neighborhood

You don't have to look far for volunteer opportunities. You can look out your window or step out your front door to find someone in need. Start with your neighbors, especially the elderly ones, and inquire if they need assistance with outdoor maintenance, landscaping projects or decorating their homes. If they have a hard time getting around, ask them what groceries they need from the store or offer them a ride so they can complete errands.

Shop for a good cause

Receiving a special gift during the holiday season is a dream of every child. Unfortunately, not every child will have something to unwrap. If you want to make the holidays a bit brighter for a child, help organize a toy drive or show off your shopping skills by donating toys to local organizations that support children. If there is an already established toy drive in your community, ask how you can help.

Gather sustenance

Although your local food pantry is in need of donations and volunteer hours year-round, the holidays pose a special need. Check in with your community organization to see if they need help packaging meals, collecting canned food or non-perishables for a food drive or preparing meals. Local churches often have lists of families who would greatly appreciate groceries and a holiday meal, and Meals on Wheels, a nationwide program that provides meals for seniors, might be able to put your volunteer spirit to work.

Send a message of love

A kind word can make all the difference to someone struggling during the holidays. If you are eager to share a message of love, hope and kindness, consider volunteering with More Love Letters, a letter writing campaign that spreads love through the mail. New letter requests are posted each month on the organization's website, so you send a letter of love not only during the holidays, but also throughout the year.

If you love to combine your writing skills with creative crafting, check out the organization Cards for Hospitalized Kids. The charity specializes in bringing joy to kids who have to spend the holidays in the hospital. All you have to do is pen an uplifting message in a card you create, and the organization will send your special message to a kid in the hospital. You don't have to be an artist or a celebrated wordsmith — just write from the heart. Creating cards for this organization works wonderfully as a group event, so invite your friends, coworkers and family to share their artistic abilities for deserving patients across the country.

There are so many ways to volunteer your talents and time during the holiday. Whether you have a ton of time or only a few hours to spare, you can make a difference in someone's life.



Everything You Need to Know About Smart Home Devices

Here's what the commercials don't tell you

Smart home devices offer unprecedented convenience and connectivity. However, with an ever-growing selection of smart home devices on the market, it can be tough to know where to start. Here are four factors to consider before you commit to building a network of smart home devices.

Bring on the bandwidth

Since all of your smart home devices will be connected to the Internet, they'll be consuming a considerable amount of your bandwidth. Make sure your Internet infrastructure is capable of handling this deluge of data — before buying a full suite of smart home devices, upgrade to a high-quality router and opt for more bandwidth from your service provider. When you set up your new router, make sure it's centrally located, so all of your devices can receive an unobstructed signal. If you have a larger home or the walls are obstructing the Wi-Fi signal, consider purchasing a range extender.

Consider compatibility

Although you don't need to commit to one brand, compatibility can make a huge difference in the convenience of your smart home. Choose devices that run on the same platform, such as the Apple Home App or Google Nest. Also, consider how the platform lets you access your devices. For example, you can manage your Apple Home-compatible products with your iPhone and Siri voice commands. Alexa, on the other hand, offers in-vehicle integration. Ford, Toyota and Lexus are just a few of the automakers that offer Alexa integration, so you can control your devices on your daily commute.

Protect your privacy

Every time you use a smart home device, you're giving away your consumer data. While most of this data seems innocuous, be aware that companies are using your data to paint a picture of you, based on everything from your Internet activity and thermostat settings to your grocery list and favorite podcasts. Most smart home devices do have privacy settings, but they're disabled by default, so be sure to switch them on if you'd like an extra layer of protection. Smart home devices also give hackers an easy way to access your home network, potentially allowing them to intercept the data you send online or control your home devices. You can give your home an added layer of protection by purchasing a Virtual Private Network service.

Upfront costs and long-term savings

Electronics aren't cheap — and many smart home devices can be expensive to purchase and install. For instance, smart home security systems have pricy installation costs, so be sure to read the fine print before committing to a product or service. However, other smart home devices can save you money in the long run. Of course, there are small savings, such as smart lights and smart thermostats that can help you shave down your utility bills. You can net bigger financial gains from other smart home products, including security systems, which can increase your home's resale value and help you score a discount with some insurance providers. Some providers may even subsidize the costs of smart home devices, or even pay for them outright.

Smart home devices can make your home safer, more convenient and more efficient. Before you start investing in smart home products, see what reviewers, as well as your friends and family, have to say about specific products. A little research and insight can go a long way towards a stress-free smart home journey.



