

# CREDIT UNION TIMES

Vol. 15, No. 26

Weekly Independent Report On Credit Unions

June 30, 2004

## Enhancing Your Reputation Through Community Involvement

Being not-for-profit, credit unions must constantly look for creative ways to reach their target audience. A very effective way is through community involvement. To enhance the credit union's public image, planning and participating in a variety of activities should be the first step.

Over the years People's Alliance Federal Credit Union (PAFCU) has been in existence, they have held events and been involved in the community. Their involvement and events are geared not only to their members but potential ones as well. This helps the credit union establish a civic-minded positive image in the minds of members, potential members and their Select Employer Groups.

Activities should focus on helping the public understand the credit union, its products and services. Joining a local Chamber of Commerce, networking groups and getting employees involved in a local charity is a good start. Once you have the employees excited, you can then plan other activities such as job shadowing for students, sponsoring little leagues and volunteering time at nursing homes.

**Staying active in the community will also boost your employee morale. Employees see that the credit union cares about its local surroundings and therefore takes more pride in their work.**

Additional events such as hosting free seminars are then recommended. Seminars have proven to be most valuable to members. Each seminar should be designed to educate your members about financial topics important to their financial future. You may also want to take your credit union out on the road by offering credit union seminars at local libraries. During informative meetings, your employees can explain what a credit union is and how they can help individuals with their financial needs. can also set up booths at trade shows, malls and flea markets. You will find your credit union becoming more recognized in the community and ultimately opening new accounts.

In addition to offering new and used car loans, on site car sales are a hit. Bringing a car lot directly to the credit union plus all the elements that are necessary for members to buy, finance, register and insure a vehicle. Run properly, car sales held at your facility will not only bring in loans but also have the potential to become an annual tradition among members. Car sales give members a reliable place to purchase a vehicle without hassle.

To show that you care about your members both young and old, consider holding special events geared towards your senior members. Many people over the age of 60 feel they are forgotten about. By holding events, you will not only have the chance to promote your products and services, but will become closer to your senior members.

Don't forget the kids! Remember, holding events geared towards youth will attract parents and future members too. Having management serve on School District Industry Advisory Boards is also very

productive. This enables your credit union to participate in and sponsor many events in your local area. As a result, both parents and students are more likely to open an account.

Planning a member outing to a local baseball game, coupled with the interaction of staff and members, will give members a chance to know their fellow credit union members and employees. These games will turn into a tradition that members look forward to each year. This will then open the doorway for the credit union to develop into a family.

Community involvement enhances a credit union's reputation as a quality financial institution. Staying active in the community will also boost your employee morale. Employees see that the credit union cares about its local surroundings and

therefore takes more pride in their work. Soon you will find your members have more confidence in their financial organization along with a sense of belonging to a great part of the community.



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In the end, your goal should be to draw positive attention to all aspects of your organization's local interest. This will create lasting memories in your members' minds and prompt them to return to the credit union time and time again. As a result, you will find a successful financial organization everyone will be proud of being involved in.