

# Let's Connect!

Member Newsletter | Spring 2014

## Letter From the President

Dear Members,

It seems that every year we talk about how the real estate market heats up in the Spring, and this year is no exception. With inventory down and rates threatening to rise a bit, experts report that for the first time in recent years, we are now in a seller's market. However, buyers need not despair. There are still great deals to be found and a variety of financing options that can help keep your home-buying plans on track. See our article about Adjustable Rate Mortgages and find out if this is a good option for you. And first-time homebuyers will be interested to read about the Equity Builder Program that offers down payment or closing cost assistance to eligible buyers.



We continually look for ways to help our members achieve all their financial goals. When you told us you needed a trusted advisor to assist with your long-range financial plans, we explored various investment service providers and recently partnered with Baystate Financial. Through this partnership, we are now able to offer our members this important service right here at LCU.

Having as much information as possible when considering investments, mortgages or any financial need will help you make the right decision for your situation. We believe that financial education is one of the most important services we can offer to the community. That's why we have designated April as Financial Education Month at LCU. Read more about the month-long initiative led by our own Financial Education Officer, Ingrid Adade.

Finally, there are thousands of applications available that let us do virtually anything from our smartphones. [Read Ten Steps to Smartphone Security](#) to find out how you can protect your smartphone and the personal information it contains.

Sincerely,

John J. O'Brien  
President and CEO

## Financial Highlights

*as of 12/31/2013*

Assets:	\$633.6 million
Total Deposits:	\$467.3 million
Loans:	\$406.2 million

## Equity Builder Grant for First Time Homebuyers

Leominster Credit Union is excited to announce that for the third year in a row, we will be providing assistance to first time homebuyers through a \$150,000 grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank's Equity Builder Program. Eligible homebuyers can receive up to \$15,000 in down payment and closing cost assistance. To qualify, buyers must meet the Equity Builder Program qualifications criteria, which includes income limits. According to Heather Dumais, AVP Real Estate Lending, "The income limit for a family of four in Worcester County is \$63,900, which is less restrictive than many would expect." Income limits vary from county to county. For more information and eligibility guidelines, call and speak with a mortgage specialist at 800-649-4646. The funds will be available starting in late March and will be distributed until the grant is depleted. Subject to Credit Approval.

## Time to reconsider Adjustable Rate Mortgages

Over the past few years, homebuyers have shied away from Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARM). Today, however, with new regulations in place and favorable interest rates, an ARM just might be the right choice for you. LCU now offers a 10/5 ARM, which means the rate is fixed for the first 10 years and adjusts every five years after that. This term is especially beneficial for those who plan to be in the house for less than 10 years. The ARM typically starts at a lower rate than a 30 fixed rate mortgage, but because it also

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## Adjustable Rate Mortgages

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amortizes over 30 years, your mortgage payments will likely be lower during the initial 10 year term than with a fixed rate. Check out our rates at [leominstercu.com](http://leominstercu.com) or ask to speak with a mortgage specialist at 800-649-4646.

## April is Financial Education Month

LCU is celebrating Financial Education Month with activities, tips and information to help you make informed decisions about your finances. Like us on facebook to get the financial tip of the day and visit our website for updates on seminars, visits from Grandma Moneybags and to view helpful videos on topics like Managing Credit; Budgeting; and Saving for the Future hosted by LCU's Financial Education Officer, Ingrid Adade.

## Spring Shred-A-Thon

20 Adams Street  
Leominster, MA  
April 26, 2014  
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
For info visit [leominstercu.com](http://leominstercu.com)



## Ten Steps to Smartphone Security

- **Set PINs and passwords** on your phone's home screen to prevent unauthorized access to your phone, and set your phone to automatically lock after five minutes or less when your phone is idle.
- **Don't modify your smartphone's security settings.** Tampering with your phone's factory settings, jail breaking, or rooting your phone undermines the built-in security features, making it more susceptible to an attack.
- **Backup and secure your data** such contacts, documents, and photos. Instead, store these files on your computer, removal storage card, or in the cloud.
- **Only install apps from trusted sources.** Apps can contain malware that, once installed, can steal information, install viruses, and cause harm to your phone's contents. Research apps for legitimacy before downloading.
- **Understand app permissions** before accepting them. Be cautious about granting applications access to personal information or access to perform functions on your phone. Check the privacy settings for each app before installing.
- **Install security apps** that enable remote location and wiping. This feature lets you remotely locate and erase all of the data stored on your phone. Some apps can activate a loud alarm even when phone is set to silent to help you locate and recover your phone when lost.
- **Accept updates and patches** to your smartphone's software from your service provider, operating system provider, device manufacturer, or application provider. Keeping your system current reduces the risk of exposure to cyber threats.
- **Be smart on open Wi-Fi networks,** where your phone can be an easy target of cybercriminals. Limit use of public hotspots. Instead, use protected Wi-Fi from a network operator you trust or mobile wireless connection, especially when accessing personal or sensitive information. Always be cautious when clicking web links particularly when you are asked to enter account or log-in information.
- **Wipe data on your old phone** before you donate, resell, or recycle it. Protect your privacy, by completely erasing data off of your phone and reset the phone to its initial factory settings.
- **Report a stolen smartphone.** The major wireless service providers, in coordination with the FCC, have established a stolen phone database. Report the theft of your phone to local law enforcement authorities and register the stolen phone with your wireless provider.

## Investment Services at LCU

LCU now offers our members full financial services with the addition of Investment and Retirement Planning Services through a partnership with Baystate Financial Services. John Lian is a financial advisor concentrating in retirement distribution planning and wealth management as well as corporate retirement plans, executive benefit plans and business succession planning. John will have office hours at each of our branches weekly, or you may contact John directly to schedule an appointment. John can discuss Estate Planning, Retirement and Investment Strategies, Risk Management (Insurance), and Saving for College. John will also be presenting informative, no obligation seminars throughout the year. Contact John directly at (508) 890-6222; email [jljian@baystatefinancial.com](mailto:jljian@baystatefinancial.com) or go to [leominstercu.com/investment-services](http://leominstercu.com/investment-services).

**Be sure we have your email address so we can notify you about upcoming seminars on important financial planning topics such as Retirement Income Strategies, Tax Strategies, Income for Life, Investing 101 and more. These seminars are free and there is no obligation to attend. Update your email address by calling 800-649-4646.**

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