

Community First Communicator

CEO's Report

In turbulent times people turn to credit unions. Why? Not only do you get more for your money, which is important when times are tough, but people rediscover the importance of trust and ethics in a financial institution.

Community First, now entering its second half-century, has been rediscovered by North Bay residents. The just-completed fourth quarter saw this financial cooperative set all-time records for new Members, deposits and checking accounts.

We haven't changed. We have always offered higher deposit rates than the big banks (Our interest checking is 15 times higher than the .01% of the big banks. Our youth rate is at least 35 times higher.). Free checking continues to be absolutely free — without any strings attached like high balances, direct deposit and active debit card use.

Mostly, our rediscovery has occurred because people are embracing the fact that it matters where you put your money. One example: at the most recent annual fundraiser for Schools Plus, an organization that helps keep sports and arts programs alive at our local schools, Community First sponsored a table of 10. Redwood did the same, as did Summit State and Exchange Bank. The big Wall Street banks couldn't be bothered.

But it's not just about helping a local cause, it's about making all your loans in the same area where you get your deposits. It's about believing in the local economy and the people who live there. We do.

Know anyone who might want more money in their wallet, while, at the same time, helping the economy where they live? Tell them about Community First.

Todd Sheffield

Best Quarter Ever!

In October, Kristen Christian, a gallery owner in Los Angeles, became increasingly irritated with the fees charged her by BofA. She vowed to switch to a local credit union and challenged her friends to do the same. She posted that challenge on Facebook and it became a national phenomenon. In the four weeks leading up to Bank Transfer Day, 214,000 Americans left big Wall Street banks to join credit unions.

To make it convenient for people wanting to do the right thing — for themselves and their community — Community First opened its offices Saturday, Nov. 5. The result? It was the best single day in our 51-year history.



Front page — Press Democrat

Although Community First set monthly records for new Members and checking accounts in October, those **records were smashed in November** because of the legs of the Bank Transfer movement. In November we opened 329 new checking accounts, gained \$4,032,768 in deposits and welcomed 435 newcomers to your credit union!

“It was the perfect storm for us,” said Todd Sheffield, CEO of Community First. “Between the attention initiated by Facebook, and news accounts of the big banks illegally foreclosing on veterans, losing high-profile lawsuits due to deceiving investors and charges by state attorneys general of doctoring loan documents, people were fed up enough to act, and to act locally,” he added.

CFCU'er Honored

Beth Rudometkin, Community First Loan Officer, and the longtime “face” of the credit union in the Russian River area, was honored with the prestigious “*Spirit of Sonoma*” award by county officials.

The award recognized Beth for her “Economic development and enhancement of the Russian River communities through her donations of time, effort and expertise and in support of other local businesses and helping others.” We couldn't agree more.

The 24 hours before and after receiving the award (at a luncheon attended by 400 people) were somewhat typical for Beth.

Thursday, Dec. 1: Does her CFCU day job, then orchestrates the most successful Guerneville Merchants' tree-lighting ever.

Friday, Dec. 2: Receives aforementioned “Spirit” award. Rounds up 70 auction prizes, plus \$500 scholarship for the Parade of Lights Princess Dinner. Performs as master of ceremonies for fifth consecutive year.

Saturday, Dec. 3: Helps with downtown clean up, catches up on her loan queue, helps put on the town's annual Parade of Lights.



Beth, in red, is flanked by Sonoma County Supervisors (left to right) Mike McGuire, Shirlee Zane and David Rabbitt.

Not only does Beth serve on the Board of the Guerneville Chamber, she is personally responsible for originating millions of dollars in home loans to the River communities. We think Beth is a county treasure. We're glad the county thinks the same!

COMMUNITY **first**
CREDIT UNION

www.comfirstcu.org



51st Annual Member Meeting

Community First is a financial cooperative. It is owned and controlled by its Members — not shareholders. Each year we hold an annual meeting. We do our best to make the **one-hour meeting** fun, informative and worthy of your time.



The Annual Member meeting feels this fun to us — but we kind of like what we do. Attend and judge it for yourself.

As always, there will be food and prizes. We want to start our second half-century the right way.

We will also elect Board and Supervisory positions from our Membership. If you want to run for an open position, kindly contact Michelle Phillips, Executive Assistant, for an application (543-2663 or mphillips@comfirstcu.org). This year there are openings for two Board and two Supervisory positions. Applications need to be completed and postmarked no later than Thursday, March 1. Send to: Community First Credit Union, Nominating Committee, PO Box 6004, Santa Rosa, CA 95406-0004.

What: 51st Annual Member Meeting

When: Tuesday, April 24, 7 to 8 p.m.

Where: Agatha Furth Center, Windsor

Why: We're a democracy. Vote and voice your thoughts. Meet other Members and those who serve you.

Who: Members and their families

Low-Cost Loans

One of the best things about being a Member of Community First is taking advantage of our low cost loans when you want to finance a vehicle or home. Unlike the big banks that charge the highest loan fees the market will bear, we charge only what it actually costs us to do the loan. That means you can save a bundle. Or two.



If financing a vehicle, go to any new or used car dealer in Sonoma, Marin or Mendocino county. Once you and the dealer have agreed

to the best price for you, tell the dealer you are a Community First Member and that you wish to finance your vehicle through us. It's that simple.

The loan application you start at the dealer is then electronically forwarded to our experienced in-house lending experts. You get the "insider" rate and the lowest cost loan.

If buying a home or wanting a home equity line of credit, contact one of our five in-house home loan experts. Together, they have more than a century of local loan experience. Plus, as a Member of this financial cooperative, you are ensured of a great rate, no hidden surcharges or fees, and comprehensive consultation from the best in the business.

For more information about how to finance the most affordable local housing stock in a generation, contact any of Community First's home loan pros:

-  Beth Rudometkin, Russian River area, **869-9063**
-  Catherine Brunner, North County, **431-1051**
-  Mary Ann Lance, West County, **827-3250**
-  Monika Besancon, Real Estate Mgr., **543-2613**
-  Russ Anger, VP of Lending, **543-2670**



TO REACH US

online banking / web site
www.comfirstcu.org

call center
707/546-6000 (8:30a – 5:30p, M-F)

Member services
info@comfirstcu.org

BRANCHES

Central Santa Rosa
501 College Avenue

West Santa Rosa
70A Stony Point Road

SMART OFFICES

Sebastopol
130 Petaluma Avenue

Guerneville
16200 Main Street

Healdsburg
32 North Street

ADDITIONAL LOAN OFFICE

Santa Rosa
1105 North Dutton Ave., Suite A

mailing address

PO Box 6004
Santa Rosa, CA 95406-0004

locate surcharge-free ATMs
www.co-opnetwork.org

locate shared branches
www.cuswirl.com/locations

Important IQ Dates

Jan. 2	offices closed, New Year's Day
Jan. 16	offices closed, MLKDay
Feb 20	offices closed, Presidents' Day
April 24	51 st Annual Member Meeting