

MembersAlliance
CREDIT UNION

You can *rely* on us!

The DIRECT Line

a communication to our valued members

Four Reasons To Make 2015 The Year Of The Homeowner

Having a little piece of the world to call your own has always been a cornerstone of the American dream. Couple it with a picket fence and a dog, and you've got a perfect Norman Rockwell vision of Americana. It all begins with home ownership.



Yet, for many people, this has been a dream deferred. In 2014, the percentage of Americans who own the place they live fell to a 20-year low, with just under 64% of people owning their homes.

There are many reasons for this trend. Many young people, burdened by student loans and struggling to find stable employment, have postponed significant life decisions, including home buying. After the real estate bubble burst in 2008, many families watched as their assets evaporated. Job loss, mounting debt and depleted savings have put home ownership on the back burner.

Things are finally starting to look up. Jobs are being added to the economy and the long financial night may finally be over for many Americans. There has never been a better time to own a house! Here are four reasons why now is the time to buy.

1. The rent is too dang high!

For many Americans, the decision not to buy a house is motivated by their current housing affordability. They're happy where they are and there's no incentive to move. What could go wrong? Well, demand for apartment rentals is poised to skyrocket. The vacancy rate of rental properties in America was just 7% in the fourth quarter 2014, the lowest point in more than 20 years. As more millennials find jobs and move out of the house, that rate will continue to fall. New household formation, or the rate at which new addresses are registered, shot up to 1.7 million in the same period. This increase will apply continuous upward pressure on rent prices.

New construction in rental properties will not alleviate these concerns in time. It will take years for the new buildings to be habitable. In the meantime, the window to own will close.

2. The price will keep going up!

The traditional advice about home ownership is that it's the best investment you can make. Over time, the value of your home will increase. The rate of increase is never fantastic, but it'll gradually go up. That represents an increase in your total net worth. For most people, a house is the biggest piece of their net worth.

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LoveMyCreditUnion Rewards

FREE Homebuyers Workshop

Are you in the market to buy a home?

MembersAlliance will host a **free** informational workshop. Find out how to transform a vacant house into your new home!

DATE: Tuesday, June 9, 2015
TIME: 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: MembersAlliance Credit Union
6951 Olde Creek Road ~ Rockford

Presented by:



Eligible homebuyers will receive:

- between \$3,000 - \$5,000 for down payment and closing cost assistance
- up to \$20,000 to rehabilitate the property

Additional funds for the acquisition and rehabilitation may be available from the City of Rockford.

Reserve your spot at this informational program today! Space is limited!

Call MembersAlliance at 815-484-1160 or email ljaborek@membersalliance.org

(Attendance is not necessary in order to participate in the program.)

Year of the Homeowner *continued from front page*

The converse is equally true. The longer you wait to get into the housing market, the more expensive it'll be. That's never been more true. The median house price now is \$178,400. By May 2017, experts agree the price will have increased to nearly \$196,000, which is past the peak pre-recession price. Confidence in the housing market is clearly on the rise. Roughly 5.2 million people plan to buy homes this year.

3. Rates are low ... but not for long!

Low interest rates are the biggest benefit to potential buyers. If it's cheaper to borrow, a mortgage will ultimately cost less in the long run. Mortgage rates are currently stalling around 4% for a 30-year mortgage. Experts expect those rates to rise to 5% by the end of the year. That may not seem like much, but a 1% increase in mortgage rate increases the cost of a 30-year loan by about 11%.



4. Mortgage availability

A year ago, mortgages were hard to come by. Lenders were under very close scrutiny and no one without a superior credit history was in line for a loan. The shadow of financial crisis was still looming large.

Now, lenders are taking advantage of low rates and a booming market to make loans more available. Lower down payments and more complicated credit histories are getting approval for homes. That's a dream come true for millions of families. If you're on the fence about home ownership, you owe it to yourself to speak to a mortgage representative. Otherwise, you might wake up to find the fence has been sold – to another buyer. . .

We Do Mortgages!

MembersAlliance carries a full line of affordable mortgage products designed to fit today's lifestyles. With over 30 combined years of mortgage lending experience, our skilled team of local loan representatives strives to fit the members' needs, determine how much house they can afford, and fit them with the right mortgage product, quickly and efficiently. With **competitive market interest rates and flexible terms, plus lower fees and closing costs**, our mortgage specialists will make the process smooth for you, from application to closing. Apply for your home loan online or stop in for an information packet.

MembersAlliance mortgage lending offers a full array of options**

- Conventional - 10*, 15*, 20, 30 year
- Construction and End Loans
- ARMs*
- FHA
- YourTerm - 8 to 30 year terms
- HARP Refinancing
- Home Equities & Lines of credit
- Bridge Loans

*Repayment terms generally held in MembersAlliance Credit Union's portfolio—The servicing on these products is generally not sold to another lender—they stay with MACU! **Some restrictions may apply. Certain loans are sold to our investor. This depends on the term, type of property and location. Primary mortgage loans held in the MACU portfolio will be secured by owner occupied residential real estate property located in Boone, DeKalb, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson or Winnebago County in Illinois and Green, Rock or Walworth County in Wisconsin. Mortgage loans originated that are secured in other counties, will be sold to the secondary market.



Credit Union

StudentChoice

Let us fill the gap with an affordable Student Loan!

Telephone Fraud on the Rise: Consumers Beware

There are hundreds of scams targeting consumers every day. But, all scams have one thing in common, a scammer who wants to take your money. What is the most frequent method they use to do that? The Better Business Bureau (BBB) says contrary to popular belief it's not the internet. According to the BBB, more and more frequently the scammers are plying their trade the old-fashioned way—by telephone. This phone trend is particularly troubling because it opens an especially vulnerable population – the elderly – to greater risk.



The National Consumers League (NCL) reports that nearly 43% of their complainants say they were first contacted by a scammer by phone. There is another trend in the NCL study worth noting: a change in how victims report sending money to the con artist.

Previously, wire transfer has been the method most often used. However, today, credit cards are used more frequently. That's good news because when the fraud is discovered, the victim has a better chance of recovering their money by filing a dispute with their credit card company.

Tips to avoid being scammed:

Know who you're dealing with. If a company or charity is unfamiliar, check it out with the BBB. Fraudulent operators open and close quickly, so the fact that no one has made a complaint yet doesn't guarantee the company or charity is legitimate.

Some telemarketing pitches are blatantly fraudulent, and you should know the signs. It's illegal for telemarketers to ask for a fee upfront if they promise or claim it's likely they'll get you a credit card or loan, or to "repair" your credit. It's also illegal for any company to ask you to pay or buy something to win a prize, or to claim that paying will increase your chances of winning. And it's illegal to buy and sell tickets to foreign lotteries by phone or mail.

Other danger signs of fraud may be harder to recognize. They include: pressure to act immediately; refusal to send you written information; use of scare tactics; demands to send payment by wire or courier; demands for payment of taxes or customs fees to claim a prize; requests for your financial account numbers even though you're not paying for something with them; promises to recover money you've lost in other scams, for a fee; claims that you can make lots of money working from home; and refusal to stop calling when you say you're not interested.

How you pay matters. If you pay for a transaction with cash, checks, or money orders, your money is gone before you realize there is a problem. Paying by credit card is safest because you can dispute the charges if you don't get what you were promised.

Be prepared when you answer the phone. Think about the advice you'd give someone else about how to detect fraud, then follow that advice yourself. Use Caller ID or an answering machine to screen calls. Don't hesitate to hang up on suspicious calls.

For more information, visit www.bbb.org

Car Buying & Borrowing Tips

An automobile is a major purchase. Just think about it: In the last 10 years, have you bought anything that costs more than a car? A house or your kids' education, maybe. Yet, unlike a house, a car is not going to appreciate in value; and unlike an education, an SUV is not going to increase your offspring's earning potential.



A car isn't an investment after all, because you're not going to receive a return on it. It's an expense, and the best you can do is to get the maximum use and pleasure from the money you spend. Getting the most out of your car is a matter of careful maintenance.

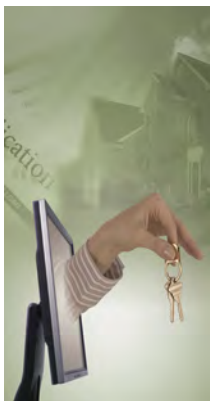
Getting the most out of your money is a matter of getting a good price on the car and a good deal on the related financing.

Negotiating a good price on your car can be stressful, but arranging for a good deal on your

loan might not have to be. When thinking of car loans, most people think of banks and dealer financing—but **your credit union may offer the best, most flexible terms and the fastest loan process that's available to you:**

- **Before you go shopping, come to your credit union to get pre-approved for a loan.** Pre-approval will mean you have one less thing to worry about when you find the vehicle you want.
- **Your credit union maintains a network of car dealerships.** Shopping within that network may give you a discounted price or a simplified purchase process.
- **The rates that your credit union offers on auto loans are probably lower than those offered by most banks and car dealerships in your area.** An additional discount on the rate is available if you use multiple products with us. Current Rates are **as low as 2.25% annual percentage rate!***
- **Refinancing an existing loan on the car you currently drive could lower your rate and monthly payment,** putting more money in your pocket—a good thing at any time, but especially in a troubled economy.
- **As one option, your credit union offers a kind of vehicle loan that would make the interest you pay tax-deductible*,** since your home is held as collateral.
- **Your credit union offers discounts on TruStage auto insurance,** as well as added protection products including GAP, Mechanical Breakdown Protection, and more.

*Some restrictions may apply. Subject to credit approval. Rates may vary. Consult your tax advisor.



Relax, Save Time –Apply for a Loan Online and Experience Easy

Introducing an even easier, faster way to apply for a low interest loan with MembersAlliance. This new online experience offers:

- loan documents provided electronically
- digital signature
- funds disbursed promptly

This service will be available on our website **soon!**

Go to the Online Application Center on our home page or click the **Apply Now** button on any of our loan product pages.

Double your Points on VISA

For the month of **August**, our MembersAlliance VISA Platinum Reward Credit Card holders can enjoy a “thank you gift” from us. . . **DOUBLE REWARDS POINTS** with every purchase!*



Just use your convenient, low interest VISA credit card any time, anywhere, August 1-31, 2015, and you'll double your pleasure. Rewards points can be redeemed for travel, merchandise, loan discounts, account credit, gift cards, and more. Visit the Visa Choice Rewards site to learn more.

*Some restrictions apply. Double points good on purchases only. Visit membersalliance.org

Save on Summer Fun!



Looking for fun, family-friendly entertainment in the local area at an affordable price? Your local credit union can help! Members can purchase tickets to these popular area attractions at a **special discounted price:**



One Day Admission
\$14.75
(Savings of \$8!)



One Day Admission
\$15.00
(Savings of up to \$11!)



\$42.00 general admission
(SAVE \$28.05!)
\$74.15 season pass
(SAVE \$10.05!)



Discount tickets can be purchased from your teller at any MACU location.*

*Subject to change & availability.

AUTO INSURANCE

YOU COULD SAVE ON YOUR CAR INSURANCE

Exclusively for credit union members

Call for your FREE, no obligation quote.

Toll-free **1-888-380-9287**

Visit us at **TruStageAutoHome.com**



TruStage™ Auto & Home Insurance program is offered by TruStage Insurance Agency, LLC and issued by leading insurance companies. The insurance offered is not a deposit and is not federally insured. This coverage is not sold or guaranteed by your credit union. *Figure reflects average national savings for customers who switched to Liberty Mutual's group auto and home program. Based on data collected between 9/1/2012 and 8/31/2013. Individual premiums and savings will vary.

Our local **Liberty Mutual agent Steve Harring** is happy to help you get started! Call him for a free quote at 815-633-1070 ext. 56895 or email Steve.Harring@LibertyMutual.com. Or, speak to him in person at our Alpine location on select Fridays each month.

You Can Rely On Us!

MembersAlliance

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Main office

2550 S. Alpine Rd.

Rockford

815.226.2260

Perryville branch

6951 Olde Creek Rd.

Rockford

815.484.1160

Inside Walmart

3902 W. Riverside Blvd.

Rockford

815.484.5350

7219 Walton St.

Rockford

815.484.5345

4781 E. Rockton Rd.

Rockton

815.484.1250



Your deposits are insured to \$250,000 per account.
This institution is not federally insured.



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Rockford, IL
Permit No 781



Love your Savings!

Everyone is looking for ways to save money, and that's just what **Love My Credit Union Rewards** is all about. MembersAlliance is excited to offer you, our member, exclusive discounts and

benefits on products and services you use every day. Credit union members have already saved over \$1 billion with **Love My Credit Union Rewards** discounts. So along with lower loan rates and fewer fees, here's another way you can save even more.

- Exclusive discounted pricing on most new Chevy, Buick, or GMC vehicles with the Credit Union Member Discount from GM
- Save 10% on select regularly priced Sprint monthly service; businesses save 15% on select regularly priced Sprint monthly service. Plus, waived activation and upgrade fees (up to \$36 savings for each)
- Savings of up to 50% off other popular plans from Credit Union Auto Club
- Save on services for your home from ADT, DIRECTV, Allied, and more
- Earn cash back when you shop at over 1,500 online retailers with Love to Shop

The more offers you take advantage of, the more you save.

Start saving today at LoveMyCreditUnion.org.



Calendar of Events

Subject to change.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| June 9 | Free Homebuyers Workshop
6:00-7:00pm MACU Perryville branch - see front pg. |
| July 3 | Independence Day observed
Traditional offices closed.
Instores are OPEN! |
| July 4 | Independence Day holiday
All offices closed. |
| Sept. 7 | Labor Day holiday - all offices closed |

Rockford Park District's Music in the Park concerts

Tuesdays & Thursdays June 9 - Aug 13 7:00p.m.
Sinnissippi bandshell. Free to public.

Midway Village Museum Center CommUNITY Picnic

July 25 Noon - 5:00p.m.
Free to public. Midway Village Museum grounds.