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Member Insights

MERCK EMPLOYEES
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

From the desk of the President/CEO:

Credit Union System Upgrades in Full Swing, What Members Need to Know

2024 is off to a fast start at your credit union as we work to upgrade our internal banking systems as well as the systems our members use to interact with us, notably Online and Mobile Banking.

First, why are we doing this? It is vital for your credit union to invest in its systems to ensure we can serve members safely and effectively. Technology is always evolving and we are committed to utilizing systems that have the latest security standards and features and functionality.

When I have spoken to members about our coming system changes, there is less interest in our internal system changes as there is in what these changes mean to members' experience with the credit union. That is what I will focus on here. How will these changes impact your day-to-day experience with the credit union and what can you expect on conversion day and the days leading up to conversion?

Let's start with those members that visit us in-person at branches. One thing you will immediately notice is there will be less paper involved in your transactions. Deposit and withdrawal slips will no longer be used. Instead, members will utilize an electronic signature pad to confirm transactions. Of course, members will still receive a receipt of their transactions but will no longer need to manually fill out deposit and withdrawal slips. Other transactions, such as adding a new account, opening a CD, etc. will also no longer be paper-based. This not only reduces paper but also limits fraud as there is less of a paper trail for fraudsters to intercept.

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System Upgrade Q&A

What's Happening?

The credit union is upgrading our technology platforms to ensure that we continue to deliver a safe and feature-filled banking experience to our valued members!

When Will These Changes Occur?

The new systems will go into effect on April 1, but members will start being impacted on March 29 while the upgrades are underway. Here's what will happen and when:

March 29

Online Banking, Online Bill Pay and Telephone Teller Will Be Unavailable Starting on or around 4:00 PM on March 29.

Debit Cards will have limited transaction capability starting around 7:00 PM on March 29. (Debit card transactions will be limited to $200 at ATMs and $300 at POS locations).

April 1

Online Banking, Online Bill Pay, Telephone Teller and Debit Cards will come back online throughout the day of April 1. Our website will update you with a more precise time when these services will resume on April 1.

What Should Members Do to Prepare for the Upgrade?

Bill Pay Users

Given that Online Banking will be unavailable from March 29 until it resumes sometime on April 1, members should schedule any bill payments prior to March 29 to avoid nonpayment.

Check Images

Your transaction history will be available on the new system, however prior cleared check images will not. If for some reason you require check images of recently cleared checks, please download them in advance. However, do remember that the credit union can retrieve any check image upon request.

What Will Members Notice on First Log-In?

Members who access Online Banking for the first time after the upgrades will log in with their existing Online Banking credentials, but will be prompted to change their password. Telephone Teller users will be prompted to create a new PIN upon initial log-in.

Is the Mobile App Changing?

Yes. Members will have to download the new mobile app. As soon as information is available on downloading the app, we will provide that information on our website.

Thank Your For your Patience!

Please note that we understand the minor disruption that system upgrades can cause. These upgrades reflect your credit union's commitment to investing in our infrastructure to deliver a safe, secure and feature-rich banking experience. Your credit union continues to be one of the safest institutions in America to bank with and it is upgrades like this that keep our risk profile and banking functionality where it needs to be to best serve you!

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While we always love to see our members in person, the majority of transactions are done online and remotely. Here is where members will see a big difference as our online and mobile banking platforms are changing. Do note that you will be keeping your current username, but you will be required on initial log-in to change your password.

From a security standpoint, many members like to use two-factor verification at all times. Today that is done with a text or a phone call. The new system will also feature authenticator functionality so you can use Google Authenticator or some other authenticator to securely access your accounts.

There will be much more information available to members in the new online and mobile banking platforms. For example, today if you are one of our Visa credit union cardholders you do not currently see your Visa account in online banking. Not only will you see your Visa account in the new system but you will also be able to pay your Visa card directly with the credit union. Also, if you have a first mortgage with the credit union you will now be able to see your mortgage balance and make payments. Many Visa and mortgage holders have asked about this over the years and we are excited to offer this new capability.

Another noticeable change will be in adding new products such as new accounts. Today members that add new accounts remotely are asked to complete a Docusign from the credit union's web site. While this functionality is safe and relatively easy, members will now be able to do this much easier directly from online banking. In just a few clicks you will be able to add a new account or product.

We have many members that have IRAs with the credit union. This is a very busy time of year for IRAs as members are contacting us about their Required Minimum Distributions. This information will now be conveniently found by our IRA holders right in online banking.

Those members that use our call-in Telephone Teller will find the new system now features voice recognition (as well as touch tone) to give you another option to use the system. There will also be additional features for making loan payments. Telephone Teller users will have to reset their PINs on the first access of the new system.

One thing we hear a lot about at the credit union is how busy are phones are. Sometimes members are frustrated by the call-in process. I would note that despite the frustration we sometimes hear, your credit union does perform better here than most of its peers. If you were to call a large or regional bank you'll find in most cases you can not even leave a message and you are forwarded numerous times. We continually think about ways to enhance our phone service, but candidly much of it stems from our hands-on service approach. We take the time to walk our members through changing their password (our most popular phone call), looking at account history, etc. These things can certainly be done much faster by the member on their own by doing them online (which all members should learn how to do for their own safety), but we have a large subset of members that want to speak to someone at the credit union. In an effort to alleviate this, once our systems are updated the credit union will have a full-featured after-hours call center system that will be able to handle just about any request. Today, due to the lack of system integration, our after-hours call center can only answer limited questions. This will be a significant service upgrade for the many members that call us after business hours.

The Disruption of Conversion

With any system upgrade of this scale and scope, there will be some initial inconvenience. Our conversion window will be from 7:00 PM on March 29 to the morning of April 1. During that short period, debit card usage will be limited. Members will still have access to their debit cards, but the dollar amount of transactions will be reduced. If you are planning any larger debit card transactions, we urge you to do that prior to March 29 or after April 1.

Online banking will not be accessible from approximately 4:00 on March 29 until sometime on April 1. We will keep you updated on our web site on a more precise time when online banking will resume. Telephone teller will also be unavailable during this same timeframe.

Many members utilize bill pay to pay bills. Our bill pay system is not changing so functionality will be familiar to existing users. However, bill pay will also be unavailable from March 29 to April 1. We encourage members to schedule any bills prior to March 29 so they stay on schedule.

For those members that use scheduled transfers to do transfers between accounts, we do expect those scheduled transfers to carry over to the new system, but urge you to verify on the new system that they are still in place.

Your account history will carry over to the new system, however historical check images will not. If for some reason you would like to have your historical check images, we encourage you to download those prior to conversion, but do note that the credit union can retrieve any check image upon request. I must continue to stress to members we urge you to write fewer checks and certainly discourage members from mailing any paper checks. There is a consistent flow of checks being stolen from USPS boxes and residential mail boxes. Those checks are stolen and washed by fraudsters. Payments, especially regular and routine payments like phone or power service, can be done much safer using ACH or bill pay.

We are only a few months away from conversion. I am confident these new systems will serve the credit union's staff and operations well for years to come and our members will benefit from the new security features and functionality. As always, we do all of these projects with great care and caution and ask that you bear with us during this exciting transition.

Paul Gentile
President/CEO
pgentile@merckefcu.com