



MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY

EXTENSION

*Montana High School
Financial Planning Newsletter*

October 2006

You are receiving this newsletter because you are a part of Montana High School Financial Planning (HSFPP). If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter notify Keri Hayes at (406) 994-3511 or email khayes@montana.edu.

You may have heard that HSFPP is revising their curriculum for 2007– 2008. I will learn more about the new materials at the National Extension of Family & Consumer Sciences & Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Educators meetings during October and November. I'll keep you posted on developments.

Enclosed is a blue order form for HSFPP materials. Please note that email orders should be sent directly to LDK@NEFE.org.

As you can see there is a new look to the HSFPP newsletter to incorporate the new MSU-Extension logo and University branding that is now required on all MSU related printed materials.

Sincerely,

Marsha A. Goetting

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Saving & Investing: Our Future Depends on It!



The Montana Financial Education Coalition is sponsoring a conference on April 10 - 11, 2007 in Billings at the Holiday Inn Grand Montana. The theme is "Saving & Investing: Our Future Depends on It."

The first day of the conference will include a variety of speakers, Susan Beacham, founder and CEO of the *Money Savvy Generation*, a company that develops and markets innovative products that help parents and educators teach the skills of basic personal finance to elementary school age children and teenagers. Ms. Beacham has been featured on Oprah, and the Today Show. She also has received the Financial Literacy Trailblazer award from the Illinois State Treasurer in 2005. She promises to be a very motivating speaker!

Other featured speakers will include representatives from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and the National Jumpstart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy. Governor Schweitzer (invited) will also share thoughts on the importance of personal savings and investing to our Montana Economy.

Hope you will be able to attend. Mark your calendars for this special event!

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The Marriage Calculator



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has developed *The Marriage Calculator*. This web-based tool can calculate the “cost of marriage” for a specific couple in a specific State. It also explains how welfare programs and tax policies might interact to create

penalties and/or incentives and how they differ across the States and across different income family structures. For more information go to: <http://marriagecalculator.acf.hhs.gov/marriage/>

Back to School...Learning at Home

The *KidsWealth Money Kit* has been designed to assist parents in introducing and teaching money concepts to their children.

The kit teaches the value of money, how to manage money successfully and how to develop smart money habits. It also teaches kids how to invest for a prosperous future, as well as how to set goals and make plans.



This innovative program uses kid-friendly concepts and fun characters that children can easily relate to. This program is specifically for kids between ages 4 - 12. www.kidwealth.com.

Behind on Retirement Savings

Did you know the majority of workers (55 percent) believe they are behind schedule when it comes to planning and saving for retirement?

According to a survey released by the Employee Benefit Research Institute, 70 percent of workers have saved for retirement, but many have saved less than \$25,000. Sixty-eight percent of today’s workers are skeptical that Social Security will not be able to provide them benefits of at least equal value to those that current retirees receive.



To access the complete survey results, go to: http://www.ebri.org/publications/ib/index.cfm?fa=ibDisp&content_id=3745

Brochure Helps Consumers Repair Credit

Did you know the average American credit card debt is about \$785 billion or approximately \$7,500 per household? This is a reminder that managing credit is a challenge that many individuals have yet to conquer.



The good news is that poor credit can be repaired over time. To help consumers improve their credit records, the Financial Planning Association, National Foundation for Credit Counseling and NEFE developed *Overcoming the Credit Barrier: Clearing the Way to Your Financial Goals*, a 10-page brochure that outlines a step-by-step approach to improving credit.

This brochure explains how to improve your credit by repaying debt, paying your bills on time, and ensuring that creditors update their accounts accurately with the major reporting agencies.

For more information, visit FPA’s Web site at www.fpanet.org, click on press room, then type *Overcoming the Credit Barrier* in the search engine.

A New Exciting Interactive Course for Kids

The Kansas Jump\$tart Coalition has developed an exciting new tool *Financial Foundation for Kids*. This interactive computer course has many lessons on personal finance for kids.

The course contains a total of 28 hours of interactive learning for students grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8. Each of the 75 lessons provides approximately 20-50 minutes of instruction delivered by engaging, age-appropriate characters.

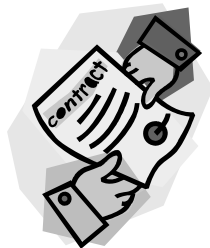
A companion Web site offers teachers an array of online resources including a teacher’s guide, online testing, correlations, and a governor’s award program.



To access go to: www.ff4kids.com

NEFE and CSREES Team Up Again!

An overwhelming 92 percent of parents surveyed believed high school students should be required to take a class in practical money management. The National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) and the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES), USDA are working to make this a reality!



The two organizations have extended their partnership to continue to promote financial education among America's youth. With the signing of a new five-year contract, NEFE and CSREES, the federal partner in the nationwide Cooperative Extension System, begin their 15th year of providing the NEFE High School Financial Planning Program (HSFPP) to thousands of schools throughout the United States.

Money Management for Young Adults

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation has recently published a special guide titled *Taking Control of Your Finances*. This guide is devoted to helping young adults from those still in high school to others just beginning a career or family.

This brochure features:

- Common mistakes young adults make with money and how to avoid them.
- A to-do list for key stages of life.
- A "Financial Aptitude Test" an interactive quiz based on the information presented in the special guide.

This guide is on the FDIC Web site at www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/cnspr05/. Single copies are also available on the Web site in a PDF format that can easily be reproduced.

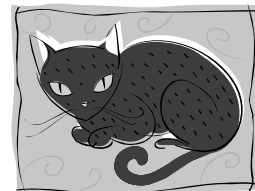


Credit-Wise Cats Reach Out to Peers

Over the past five years, the University of Arizona Credit Wise Cats have evolved into a highly respected team of students who teach personal financial management and coordinate the Duel in the Desert personal finance case study competition.

The Credit-Wise Cats Web site is also an excellent resource for other schools and organizations. This site is filled with educational resource links, including downloadable PowerPoint presentations on topics such as:

- Managing Credit
- Investing
- Avoiding Bankruptcy
- Roadmap to Financial Success



For more information go to: www.ag.arizona.edu/fcs/clubs/cwc

Ordering Publications

Attached is a pink order form. Single copies of the publications are available for free from my office as long as supplies last.

Please fill out the information and mail back to me, and we will send the publications as you requested.

Payday Loan Consumer Information Web site

The Consumer Federal of America launched its new PayDay Loan Consumer Information Web site to help consumers and policymakers combat extremely expensive check-based lending.



This Web site provides the basic facts and how payday loans work, industry information, the legal status of payday lending and key features of State laws and regulations in all 50 states.

To access this Web site go to: www.paydayloaninfo.org/

Issuing a Gift Card

The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) has issued a guidance on disclosure and marketing issues associated with gift cards. The guidance focuses on the need for national banks that issue gift cards to do so in a manner in which both purchasers and recipients are fully informed of the product's terms and conditions.

The OCC expects national banks that issue gift cards not only to inform purchasers about material terms and conditions, but to take appropriate steps so that critical information is likely to be available to the recipients as well.



Basic information that is most essential to a gift card recipient, such as when and how to use the card should be provided on the gift card itself, or a sticker affixed to the gift card. Disclosures should generally tell consumers:

- The expiration dates of the card
- The amount or existence of any monthly maintenance, dormancy, usage or similar fees
- How to obtain additional information and information on how to contact customer service for problems and questions

The OCC's new guidance also advises national banks to avoid practices that could be misleading to consumers. For example, issuers should not advertise a gift card with no expiration date if monthly service or maintenance fees consume the credit card balance.

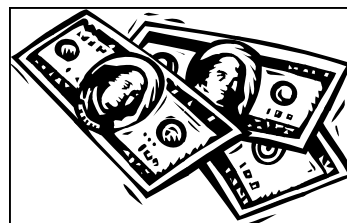
Helping Teens and Parents Communicate about Money

The National Endowment for Financial Education has provided a interactive CD titled *Money Speaks: Helping Teens and Parents Communicate about Money*.

Money Speaks provides teens and parents with information on a variety of financial and communication topics ranging from writing a check and buying a car to dealing with conflict and improving family financial discussions.

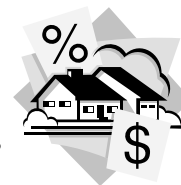
This CD features an interactive video illustrating teen and parent interactions in several financial situations. It includes information files, self-assessment quizzes, worksheets, and activities.

To receive a copy go online to: www.uark.edu/moneyspeaks



Building: Knowledge, Security, and Confidence

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) has created *Money Smart*. This financial education program helps individuals with little or no banking experience establish healthy banking relationships, begin building assets, and secure a better future for themselves and their families.



To access or order a free copy of *Money Smart*, visit www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/mscbi/mscbi.html

How does Auto Financing Work?

Americans Well-Informed on Automobile Retailing Economics (AWARE) is a non-profit organization seeking to build a greater understanding about how auto financing works. AWARE focuses on auto financing education materials, a Web site, and other educational offerings that are entirely free of marketing, advertising or sales efforts.



The Web site contains financing calculators, tips, free educational materials, a newsletter, auto financing quiz, and an advice column.

The Web site is at: www.autofinancing101.org/

Explore Financial Champion resources at www.montana.edu/extensionecon/financialchampions