

# accountability

southeast financial credit union | spring 2024 newsletter



## spring into a new home

Spring is a great time to start searching for a new home. April kicks off the home buying season, but the trick is being ready to buy when you find the perfect house. Even with a rise in mortgage rates over the last year, home inventory still remains low in many parts of the country. When you find your perfect home, you could also find yourself in a bidding war. To get ahead of your competition, follow these five simple steps.

**Get preapproved.** It's nice to know what your budget is before the house hunting begins. Getting preapproved gives you a starting point, plus it can often give you an edge over the competition when the seller has received several offers.

**Have a checklist.** Before visiting any potential properties, have a basic pros and cons checklist in place. How many bedrooms do you need and is the property in your desired neighborhood? After each visit, think about what you liked and didn't like based on your list.

**Pick a Realtor®.** It takes a lot of time and effort when looking for the perfect house. A qualified Realtor® can help you speed up the process with professional insight and search tools that are not available to the general public.

**Don't be afraid of a little DIY.** Focus on the quality and features of a home. Shag carpet and fuchsia painted bedrooms can easily be changed. With a little work, you can make it the home of your dreams.

**Search off the beaten path.** If you're having a hard time finding a home in your desired neighborhood, broaden your scope and you could get more bang for your buck.

As you can see, there's a lot to consider before purchasing a home. Contact one of our mortgage professionals today for information on preapprovals or finding a mortgage product that works best for you. Call 800-521-9653 or send an email to [mortgageservices@southeastfinancial.org](mailto:mortgageservices@southeastfinancial.org).

## call on us anytime

Member Services Call Center  
615-743-3700 or 800-521-9653

Loan Call Center  
615-743-3700 or 800-521-9653

Mortgage Services  
615-743-3700 or 800-521-9653

24-Hour Personal Access Line  
615-743-3777 or 800-242-2686

[www.southeastfinancial.org](http://www.southeastfinancial.org)

## holiday closings

Memorial Day  
Monday, May 27

Juneteenth  
Wednesday, June 19



## that's what you said

we love hearing from our members!

“The clerks greet me with a smile when I walk in. If I have a question, they try to find an answer quickly. I'm always asked “Is there anything else we could help you with?” I appreciate the calm, friendly atmosphere in my branch.”

- Joshua B.  
Member since 1974

“When I visit the drive-thru, I have the most pleasant banking experience. Everyone assists with whatever I am requesting with a smile and never acts as if they are rushed. I feel confident all my banking needs are met and plan on many more days ahead with SFCU.”

- Rebecca B.  
Member since 1984

“I can't say enough good things about Southeast Financial. I have watched a lot of friends and family have problem after problem with other banks and credit unions, wherever I've lived, but I've never had any of those issues with Southeast Financial. You are accurate, careful, ethical, fair and friendly, and you keep costs low for members. This is how you've earned my loyalty—many, many years of it. Thanks so much for running a tight ship and being excellent at all you do!”

- Janell S.  
Member since 2007

“You have a great website, so I rarely have to go in your office here in Corinth, but when I do, I am greeted and have fantastic service. A++ on the inside and online.”

- Adrian W.  
Member since 2017

“Sandy was great in explaining the loan process to me. I appreciate her willingness to assist and pull everything together before closing.”

- Martin P.  
Member since 2024

## refinance your vehicle loan

plus, no payments for up to 90 days!

Are you paying too much in finance charges? We've helped members just like you save thousands of dollars by refinancing their high-interest vehicle loans from other lenders at lower rates. If you're looking for a way to save a little each month, we can help by lowering payments with extended loan terms.

Our online and mobile applications make it fast and easy to determine if you qualify. The entire process can be completed online, from application to closing! Best of all, there's no application fee and no obligation to accept the loan. It's up to you! We offer great rates, local decisions, convenient closings, and the potential to put money back into your pocket.

Remember, you can refinance more than just cars and trucks. We refinance motorcycles, ATVs, RVs, boats, and even jet skis. Don't currently have a vehicle loan? We make loans against the value of paid-in-full vehicles, too. Contact us today for more details.

Subject to credit approval. Other restrictions may apply. Interest will accrue during deferment period. Excludes the refinance of existing Southeast Financial loans.

## forget your wallet?

no worries with our new digital options

Imagine standing in line with a cart full of groceries. You're up next, and it's time to pay. You reach for your wallet and realize you left it at home. No worries—just pull out your mobile phone, open your digital wallet, and use your Southeast Financial credit or debit card to pay for your items.

At Southeast Financial, accessing your money is easy, safe, and only a tap away. Make checkout a breeze by adding your card to Apple Pay®, Google Pay™, and Samsung Pay®. For complete information and instructions on how to set up your digital wallet, visit [southeastfinancial.org](http://southeastfinancial.org), and click the banner for complete details.

Digital Wallet is available for Southeast Financial issued debit and Visa® credit cards. Apple Pay is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. Google Pay is a trademark of Google Inc, registered in the U.S. and other countries. Samsung Pay is a trademark or registered trademarks of Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.

# protect your hard-earned money

## watch out for scammers this tax season

According to the Internal Revenue Service, 20-25% of all Americans wait until the last two weeks before the deadline to file their taxes. If you fall into this category, watch out for scammers ready to take advantage of those filing last minute. Check out these common scams and ways to take action.

### Text scams and phishing emails

The IRS warns that during tax season scammers target people with very convincing emails and texts about tax returns and refunds. Clicking on a link often takes you to a very official, but phony, IRS website.

“Spear phishing” is a technique that is on the rise. Cyber criminals use emails with the IRS logo and targeted subject lines to grab your attention. Examples include “Action Required: Your account has now been put on hold” or “Unusual Activity Report”. These type of emails always have a sense of urgency and are also always fake. Remember, the IRS will never initiate initial contact regarding a tax bill via text or email.

### Phone scams

Although phone scams are less tech-savvy than other techniques, they’re still popular with scammers. People

call impersonating the IRS and often target the elderly. Calls can be aggressive and threaten fines or jail time if an immediate payment isn’t made with a gift card, debit card, or wire transfer.

Again, the IRS states they will not first initiate a phone call to ask for these type of payment options or try to scare you with pending criminal charges.

### What can you do to stop scammers?

With so many scams happening on a daily basis, the IRS needs your help to try to stop the scammers. If you receive a text or email asking for information, take a screenshot and send an email to [phishing@IRS.gov](mailto:phishing@IRS.gov) along with the following information:

- Date, time, and time zone the message was received
- Phone number that received the text message

To learn about additional tips and tools you can use to protect yourself against scammers, visit the IRS website [irs.gov/individuals/taxes-security-together](https://irs.gov/individuals/taxes-security-together).

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## worst passwords of 2023

It’s time to do a little spring cleaning and update your passwords. NordPass.com looked at the most common passwords of 2023. Did your current password make the list? Think carefully about the words or phrases you choose to keep your accounts secure.

12345678	123	111111	1111	Pass@123
123456789	Aa123456	Password	P@ssword	112233
1234	1234567890	12345678910	root	102030
12345	1234567	000000	654321	ubnt
password	123123	admin123	qwerty	Aa@123456

### Some simple tips to make passwords more secure:

- A single password for multiple accounts creates a higher risk for all the accounts using that password.

- Never use personal information such as your name, birthday, user name, or email address.
- Try to include numbers, symbols, and both uppercase and lowercase letters.

Once you’ve chosen a new password or phrase, use a free password strength checker to ensure it’s strong and secure. Some sites will even calculate how long it would take for hackers to crack your passwords.

Concerned about forgetting your passwords? Visit a tech site like PCMAG.com and search for “best password managers.” You’ll find multiple options that make it easy for you to access your passwords while keeping them safe from hackers.



## rethinking diversification

learn how to manage investment risk

Retirement savers face new challenges in today’s volatile market. Traditional portfolio diversification may not grow your savings—causing you to risk losing it all. We’ll help you understand:

- what traditional portfolio diversification is
- how the investment landscape changes
- how you can achieve your goals with minimal risk
- how new annuity options help you rethink diversification

**Join us at a no-cost, no-obligation dinner and informative presentation.**

**Tuesday, April 23 | 6-8pm**  
Maggiano’s Little Italy  
Nashville, TN

**Tuesday, May 7 | 6-8pm**  
Sportsman’s Grille  
Brentwood, TN

**Space is limited, so don’t wait!** Reserve your spot at [southeastfinancialwealth.com/events](https://southeastfinancialwealth.com/events).

**Can’t make it to one of the in-person seminars? Join us online!**

**Tuesday, April 9 | 5-6pm**  
Women & Investing

**Tuesday, April 23 | 5-6pm**  
Social Security & Your Retirement

**Tuesday, May 7 | 5-6pm**  
Rethinking Diversification

**Tuesday, May 21 | 5-6pm**  
Income For Life

**Tuesday, June 4 | 5-6pm**  
Three Transitions to Retirement

**Tuesday, June 18 | 5-6pm**  
Understanding Medicare

**Reserve your spot at [southeastfinancialwealth.com/events](https://southeastfinancialwealth.com/events).**

There is no assurance that the techniques and strategies discussed are suitable for all investors or will yield positive outcomes. The purchase of certain securities may be required to effect some of the strategies.

Fixed and Variable annuities are suitable for long-term investing, such as retirement investing. Gains from tax-deferred investments are taxable as ordinary income upon withdrawal. Guarantees are based on the claims paying ability of the issuing company.

Variable annuities are subject to market risk and may lose value.

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Ken Coulthard, CFP®



David Harlan



Jodie Smith

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