



# THE HPCU ADVANTAGE NEWSLETTER

## CALENDAR EVENTS

### JULY

- 3rd: Independence Day\*
- 5th: Independence Day\*

### SEPTEMBER

- 4th: Labor Day\*
- 6th: Labor Day\*

### NOVEMBER

- 11th: Veterans' Day\*
- 25th: Thanksgiving Holiday\*
- 26th: Thanksgiving Holiday\*
- 27th: Thanksgiving Holiday\*

*\* All branches will be closed for the holiday.*

## Branch Updates THINGS TO NOTE

### NO APPOINTMENTS

HPCU members will no longer need to make an appointment for account or loan needs. We will also resume all member service functions at our Travis and Willowbrook locations.

All current HPCU branch hours will remain the same until further notice. For more information on branch hours, please visit our website at [HPCU.coop](http://HPCU.coop).

### NO MASKS

Members and employees who are fully vaccinated will no longer be required to wear a face covering at HPCU locations.

We will not require proof of vaccinations, but we ask all members and employees to be responsible and respectful in consideration of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) new guidance.

### ACCOUNT ACCESS

While we are excited to see all of our members in person again, HPCU does offer many convenient alternatives to in-person banking.

With our mobile app, phone banking and call center, you can access your account when and where you need it.



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## Should You Remodel Your House? FACTORS TO HELP YOU DECIDE

If you're contemplating remodeling because you want to sell your home, focus on cosmetic changes instead of functional ones—they're more likely to draw buyers. For example, people who replace garage doors get 98.3% of their value back in sales dollars, while replacing wood windows returns only 69.5%.

To make your property more attractive for sale without spending too much money, skip remodeling. Instead, fix anything that is broken, remove personal touches, declutter, deep clean, paint in neutral colors, refinish floors, and replace aging hardware and fixtures. A remodel may force you to set a much higher asking price than the other homes in your neighborhood, and you'll have a much harder time selling your home. To determine a reasonable asking price,

check recent listings in your neighborhood to see current prices.

If you want to enjoy your living space more, first ask yourself what you want to change. If you want to replace your tub with a walk-in shower or finish your patio and build an outdoor grilling station, remodeling may be for you. If you want to add an in-law suite or replace your galley kitchen with a chef's kitchen, moving might be a better option.

Make sure your house can handle the changes you want. Then compare those costs to the cost of selling your home and buying another. If remodeling is better for you financially, then staying put is the answer.

The following steps will help make your remodeling project run smoothly:

-  Start with design ideas—the more specific the better
-  Decide whether to combine functional home changes with your remodel
-  Research materials and contractors to come up with a reasonable budget
-  Determine how you will pay for the project
-  Check with your Dept. of Permitting to see which permits you'll need
-  Decide how you will tolerate the disruption to your daily life
-  Ask yourself whether you can remodel while keeping your home's design consistent with the neighborhood aesthetics

## Pay off Credit Card Debt USE YOUR VEHICLE'S EQUITY

Do you owe a piece of the \$420 billion in U.S. credit card debt? For many of us, making minimum payments on credit card debt can feel like taking an ice pick to an iceberg. Here's a solution that has worked for many people. Remember the age old game, "Would you rather?"

Would you rather pay interest back at 5.99% or 16.99%? Typically, auto loans have a relatively lower interest rate than credit cards. Consider refinancing your existing auto loan and taking cash against the equity in your vehicle to pay off some of that high-rate debt.

Example: Let's say you have an auto loan with a \$10,000 balance, a rate of 5.99%, a monthly payment of \$289, with about 39 months left on the term. Approximately \$1,050 will be paid in interest for the remainder of your loan term.

If you have a credit card with a \$2,000 balance and a rate of 16.99% and you are paying \$50 a month, it will take you 60 months, yes, 5 years, to pay it off. You will also end up paying approximately \$971 in interest.

Refinancing your auto loan, and taking \$2,000 cash-out to pay that credit card off would do the following: You would have a monthly payment of about \$339 a month, which is \$50 more than your original car payment. The total interest over the life of the loan would be \$1,237, which is \$187 more than the original loan. Why is this a good option, in fact, better option?

1. Monthly spend does not change. The original car payment plus credit card payment was \$289 + \$50 = \$339. Your new car payment is \$339.
2. Assuming you do not extend the term,

you will pay off the auto at the exact same time.

3. You will save \$784 in total interest.
4. The \$2,000 debt is now paid off in 39 months instead of the 60 months it would have originally taken you. That's almost 2 years faster!
5. The credit card is now paid off—not spending on it once it's paid off creates a larger available total balance which may improve your credit score.

### NEXT STEPS + ADVICE

1. Reach out to HPCU and see what options you have to refinance your auto.
2. You'll need to have positive equity in your vehicle, so if you've had it for at least three years, you're probably safe. Check the approximate value at KBB.com.

## Be Careful with Automated Payments HOW BILL PAY CAN HELP YOU

If you can't afford a personal assistant, but your life is busy enough to warrant one, then automatic payments can be a blessing. By simply preauthorizing payments with a company that provides you a service, like your cable or mortgage provider, can save a lot of hassle. However, if you don't fully understand how payments will be made, it can also wreak havoc on your budget.

### PREAUTHORIZED PLANS

Automatic payment plans allow you to authorize your financial institution to schedule a bill payment to a company at a specified time. Although it's a helpful time saver, it can lead to a "set it and forget it" mindset of banking. For example, consider variable rate charges, such as electric bills or minute-charging smartphone

preauthorizing payments, but you keep the control instead of handing it over to another company.

**BE ALERT:** Use HPCU's banking alert system. Get notification anytime a payment exceeds a certain amount, when your account is below a certain amount, etc.

**SET IT STRAIGHT:** Only use autopay for bills with set amounts, such as your mortgage, car payment or insurance premiums. You won't avoid the risk of wrongful charges, but accurate charges won't catch you by surprise.

### THE FINE PRINT

Closely read contracts you sign—and pay attention to the terms and conditions you agree to, usually by clicking a checkbox.



plans where one month's bill can be \$75 and the next month \$250. If you're not keeping track of the amounts being withdrawn, your checking account could go into deficit. And those times when you're mischarged for services? Companies could be making out with more cash—by accident or not—from customers who go on autopilot.

### HERE'S HOW TO AVOID MISHAPS

**TAKE CONTROL:** Sign up for HPCU's bill pay service. The convenience is similar to

Autorenewal clauses often are hidden. Other "gray" charges may be lurking as well. Some companies include legal fees that can catch many consumers by surprise. Companies know that people are busy and don't have time to read every page of the disclosure agreement. Also be aware of "cost creep". This is when you sign up for a monthly subscription or service for a certain amount, but the cost increases a small amount each month. You may not realize it because the company doesn't advertise the monthly increase, but it's in the fine print.

## SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

Total Assets .....	\$917,352
Loans to Members .....	\$421,867
Members' Savings .....	\$795,671
Total Reserves .....	\$115,997
Total Income.....	\$10,924
Total Expenses .....	\$5,356
Total Income Before Dividend Distribution .....	\$5,568
Regular Dividends to Members .....	\$2,057
Net Operating Expense Ratio .....	0.71%

*Dollar amounts in thousands as of  
April 30, 2021*

### AVOID UNWANTED CHARGES

**READ NOW OR PAY LATER:** Whenever you're providing payment for a service, read the contract or terms and conditions in full. It might seem easier to just sign or click to agree and move on but doing so could cost you time and money in the long run.

**TURN IT OFF:** Memberships for dating sites, game boxes and security software all come with auto renewals built in. Before you forget to cancel, head to account settings to turn the renewal option off.

**MAKE CONTACT:** If there are gray charges or auto renewal clauses in the terms of service, talk to the company before agreeing to anything. If you can't escape the conditions, walk away or accept the consequences.



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## How to Get the Best Car Deal

### FIVE EASY STEPS

#### 1. GET PREAPPROVED WITH US

We're a not-for-profit financial cooperative. This means we offer lower rates and will make sure you get an auto loan that fits your monthly budget. You'll walk into the dealership knowing exactly how much money you can spend, what your monthly payments will be and what your interest rate will be.

#### 2. KNOW HOW MUCH TO PAY

Consult online pricing guidelines, such as Edmunds or Kelley Blue Book, to get a good idea of what a fair price is for the car you're looking at. Research the sell prices at dealerships and trusted online retailers.

#### 3. TIME YOUR VISIT

The end of the month is a great time to shop. That's when dealerships will be trying to hit their sales quotas. Also, on a weekday when fewer people are shopping for cars. If no one's been in, the



sales staff is going to be hungry to make a deal. And the end of the year, when the dealer is trying to unload the previous year's models to make way for the newer models is also a great time for a deal on a new car.

#### 4. STICK TO THE PRICE

Negotiate up from the dealer's cost on the car, rather than down from the sticker price. And stick to the sale price of the car. Don't get lured into discussing

add-ons, extended warranties or monthly payments. Once you've got a firm sales price, you can worry about those other things.

#### 5. DON'T BE AFRAID TO WALK

Even if you love the car, you're not going to be happy if you buy it at a price that you can't afford. It will only end up adding stress to your life and you'll grow to resent it.

## Contact Us

### PHONE NUMBERS

Member Services  
713.986.0200 main  
800.927.8707 toll-free  
713.986.0394 fax

Lending Services  
713.225.6267

Telephone Banking  
713.227.7478  
800.609.1692 toll-free

Lost or Stolen Debit Card  
800.554.8969 toll-free  
973.682.2652 outside U.S.

Lost or Stolen Credit Card  
855.510.4590 toll-free  
301.287.3298 outside U.S.

### VISIT US ON THE WEB

HPCU.coop

### LOCATIONS & HOURS

Memorial Branch—Main  
1600 Memorial Drive  
Houston, TX 77007

Lobby Hours  
Mon-Fri.....Check HPCU.coop<sup>†</sup>  
Sat .....Check HPCU.coop<sup>†</sup>  
Sun .....Closed

Drive-Up Hours  
Mon-Fri.....Check HPCU.coop<sup>†</sup>  
Sat .....Check HPCU.coop<sup>†</sup>  
Sun.....Closed

Call Center Hours  
Mon-Fri.....Check HPCU.coop<sup>†</sup>  
Sat .....Check HPCU.coop<sup>†</sup>  
Sun.....Closed

Travis Branch\*  
1200 Travis Street  
Floor 20  
Houston, TX 77002

Lobby Hours  
Mon-Fri..... Check HPCU.coop<sup>†</sup>  
Sat-Sun .....Closed

Willowbrook Branch  
17314 State Highway 249  
Suite 107  
Houston, TX 77064

Lobby Hours  
Mon-Fri.....Check HPCU.coop<sup>†</sup>  
Sat-Sun .....Closed

*\* Restricted access. Branch is available to members with security access to Houston Police Department only.*

*† Branch hours are subject to change.*

