The Fall season marks the beginning of a new fiscal year at FirstOntario Credit Union and it’s also the start of our annual Board of Directors elections. I would like to take this opportunity to stress the importance of voting in our annual Board of Directors elections. Being a Member of FirstOntario means you own your bank; you have control and have a say in how we operate. It’s important that you cast your ballot. You can vote by mail or online.

Members will receive a brochure in the mail with a biography on each candidate running for election and will include your vote by mail ballot. It’s important that you review each candidate and cast your ballot. Or if you choose to do your banking online, we’ve made it quick, easy and secure for you to cast your vote online. Online voting will open on October 1, 2013 and all you have to do is log in to your online banking to cast your vote.

Please note that voting closes on November 12, 2013 and we strongly encourage all FirstOntario Members to vote.

I would also like to encourage Members to take part in our Annual General Meeting (AGM). This year our AGM will take place in Niagara-on-the-Lake on December 4th 2013 at the White Oaks Conference Resort & Spa. I’m always saying that FirstOntario, in many ways, is much more than a bank. One of the differences is that, as a Member of FirstOntario, you’re also an owner with a voice and stake in how your credit union functions. Come out to the AGM and hear the results of your credit union’s performance during the past year, hear about our successes, hear about our initiatives and hear details about the many community projects we’ve taken part in, and more.

Please join us at our 14th Annual General Meeting in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

**Date & Time:** December 4th, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.  
Registration begins at 6:15 p.m.  
**Place:** White Oaks Conference Resort and Spa  
**Address:** 253 Taylor Road, SS4, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON

Please note: Only FirstOntario Members may attend this meeting.

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**Added Online Security**

At FirstOntario Credit Union, our Members’ online security is important to us, that’s why we’ve partnered with Trusteer to offer a protection software called Rapport, free of charge to our Members.

Trusteer Rapport is security software that protects your online banking communication from being stolen. By protecting your internet connection and creating a tunnel for safe communication with FirstOntario’s website, Trusteer Rapport blocks malicious attempts to steal money from your account.

Rapport does not replace your anti-virus software and firewall that you have on your system, but compliments your current security and gives you added protection. It’s free, easy to use and only takes a few minutes to install and has automatic updates at no charge.

You can download Trusteer Rapport directly from our website at www.FirstOntario.com
Credit Card Control!

FirstOntario’s Chief Operating Officer, Dave Schurman is a regular on CHCH TV’s Finance Friday segment, sharing financial tips with our local communities.

I’m usually pretty good about watching what I spend, but while on vacation I put too many items on credit cards. What can I do?

“Many people spend more money in the summer than they had maybe planned to, particularly on vacation, but also shopping for back to school clothes and supplies for their kids. A recent poll found that Canadians on average will spend over $400.00 per child on back to school shopping, while parents with kids who are in college/university plan to spend an average of almost $600 per child, so if you have spent that money but didn’t save for it or budget for it, chances are it likely went on a credit card. You should never carry a balance as you are paying very high interest. If you can’t pay the balance off in full, you should look at a personal loan to consolidate those card balances. A personal loan has a much lower interest and is better than a line of credit, because many people run their line of credit back up, so you never really pay it off.

What about the department stores that offers you big discounts on your purchases that day simply by applying for their stores credit card?

“There’s a very good reason why retail stores offer you great discounts if you sign up for the store’s credit card and put your purchases on the card. The stores know that many people don’t pay the balance off in full, so now you have a loan to the store and are paying over 20% interest every month. So much for the deal you got on your purchases! Look at your card statement because the law now requires department store credit card statements to disclose how long it would take you to pay the balance in full “if” you just paid the minimum payment.”

Speaking of back to school, post-secondary students sometimes rack up their credit cards, what should a student do if they have already begun gathering debt?

“Credit card companies love selling to students, it creates brand loyalty early so they want their card in your pocket. But the good news is that most students (82%) pay their balance in full every month, so they are getting the message not to rack up debt on their credit cards. Student credit cards generally have no annual fees and low interest rates. But should be used sparingly and pay it off right away. Students should develop a budget and stick to it. Get a clear understanding of what is essential and what is discretionary. Books are obviously essential but an idea to save money may be to find used books instead of new, or even rent text books rather than buy. When it comes to spending money, keep down the discretionary spending. You’ll need any savings you have, it’s a long school year!”

You can follow Dave Schurman on Twitter @Finance_Friday.

Vote for your Board of Directors

Vote online or by mail
October 1st - November 12th, 2013
For details visit www.FirstOntario.com
Painting a Brighter Picture

FirstOntario Credit Union believes in giving back to communities and with paint brushes, paint cans and rollers in hand, FirstOntario’s Corporate Leadership Team banded together and rolled up their sleeves to help out Habitat for Humanity Niagara.

The team worked together in June to paint the interior of a brand new semi-detached home in St. Catharines. This home is the same home FCU has sponsored to help a new family being supported through Habitat for Humanity Niagara.

In October 2012, FirstOntario sponsored $10,000 to assist Habitat for Humanity Niagara with the building of a new home for a family in need in St. Catharines. On June 25th, the excited new family was given the keys to their brand new home. We are sure they loved their top-notch paint job, courtesy of FirstOntario Credit Union!

Supporting our young Members

2013 Bursary Winners

FirstOntario Credit Union continues to support communities we operate in and we encourage our younger Members to pursue their educational aspirations.

This year FCU awarded $9,000 in bursaries to six deserving young FirstOntario Members.

FCU received applications from 38 qualified candidates. The applicants were assessed on specific criteria: leadership skills, volunteer work, clear educational goals, and their demonstration of “Community, Caring and Cooperation.”

The 2013 Bursary winners are:

- Frank Battaglia – Stoney Creek Branch
- Emily Chemnitz – Scott Street Branch
- Darcy Rankin – Niagara Falls Branch
- David Ertsinian – Stoney Creek Branch
- Alison Howes – Niagara Street Branch
- Nikki Spitman – Upper Sherman Branch

Everyone at FirstOntario wishes all our winners success in their future endeavors.

Grand Opening Celebration

As we mentioned in one of our previous newsletters, our Linwell branch in the garden city has relocated to 387 Scott Street in St. Catharines, across from Grantham Plaza to serve you better and now it’s time to celebrate.

We encourage all Members to attend our grand opening celebrations and bring their family and friends on Saturday October 26, 2013 to the branch to share in the festivities. There will be something for everyone and the theme for our grand opening will be a fall fair and the best part – it’s FREE. The festivities start at 11:00 a.m. and go until 2:00 p.m. Make sure to drop in and say hello to our staff!
As a Member and an Owner, you deserve the highest level of financial advice

At FirstOntario Investments, our focus is on helping our Members achieve and maintain financial independence. As an owner, you deserve to have an experienced, professional and objective team of financial advisors at your disposal. Our work is directed by a few simple principles that ensure the financial advice you receive is not only well informed, but also backed by the strength of a common purpose and mutual accountability among our team of advisors. To work together effectively, our team members rally around a meaningful purpose that they’ve embraced as their own. That purpose is you. Our aim is to understand your unique needs, situations, and goals, and to develop solutions that lead you to successful financial outcomes.

Our team provides a robust and diverse range of expertise so you get the best, most experienced financial minds working for you. Our Advisors are highly qualified. They are among the best in the financial services industry. Each has more than a decade of experience. Their goal is to bring more wealth into your life, and this is a responsibility that they take very seriously.

Get the level of financial advice usually reserved for the wealthiest investor

Whether you are just starting to build wealth or you are living from your retirement funds, our approach is both flexible and comprehensive. Our Advisors tailor their advice to match your unique needs and investment style. We want you to sleep well at night knowing that your money is invested in high quality and sound investments. Our Advisors work with you to develop a personalized strategy and provide you with custom-made recommendations suitable for your unique circumstances. Because when it comes to managing your finances, there is no formula. Your Advisor is here to help you with a highly personalized plan because there is no one exactly like you.

Please contact one of our Advisors nearest you.

Sincerely,

Ejaz Nadeem
Managing Director
FirstOntario Investments