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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Welcome to the New Abnormal

Banks and Credit Unions Unveil New Mask Compliance Procedures

MAY 27, 2020 (BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS)-Who could have imagined that wearing a face mask when entering a financial institution today would be the appropriate and mandatory thing to do? In days past, wearing a mask in a financial institution meant one thing only, a robbery was about to occur. But now, due to state requirements, a way of life has been turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic; welcome to the new abnormal!

Since the beginning of the pandemic, banks and credit unions quickly responded to serve consumers and small businesses while protecting the health of their employees, members and customers. As they worked to "flatten the curve," most branches converted to drive-up window options, while all retail transactions were encouraged and available through mobile/online banking, ATMs, and debit/credit and electronic payments. Appointments with branch staff were also available.

However, as the Commonwealth and other states have initiated a phased approach to re starting the economy, many will be challenged by a new set of rules and procedures when it comes time for them to do their banking at their neighborhood bank or credit union.

"As we enter Phase I of the Commonwealth's re-opening plan, most of the industry will continue to provide service as it has during the last eight weeks, with a gradual opening of some branches," said Donald P. Gill, Massachusetts Bankers Association (MBA) Board Chair and President/CEO of Coastal Heritage Bank, Weymouth, Mass. "The health of consumers and our staff is paramount, with facemask protection a key measure of banking safety."

While the face mask may serve as a protective health barrier, steps are being taken to ensure the face behind the mask is properly identified for regulatory/security reasons before any transactions are conducted.

"As we opened this morning, we already have members coming into the lobbies and it's working out well because it gives members the delivery channel of their choice," said John Howard, Merrimack Valley Credit Union President & CEO. "Some are still weary, using the drive through. Others want to get back to normal and are using the branch." Howard went on to explain, "We have a full staff in the branches with one person assigned to manage the door traffic, serving as concierge who is asking members to momentarily lower their masks so their identification can be verified before they conduct their transaction."

In addition to face masks, branch lobbies will experience various changes. Much like grocery store policies, there may be set hours for seniors to do their banking. Furniture may be rearranged to facilitate office flow and maintain social distancing. Plexiglass shields may be installed to protect tellers and consumers. A "greeter" at branch entrance may direct lobby traffic, distribute masks, re-enforce social distancing guidelines, and possibly take the temperature of the person wishing to enter the branch. And, rather than a single universal teller line, each teller may have a separate queue. They, too, will practice social distancing.

"While members may experience a different way of doing business with their local and trusted credit union,

these changes are being done for the safety of both members and credit union employees," assured Ronald McLean, President / CEO of the Cooperative Credit Union Association, Inc. "What will never change, however, is the commitment of Massachusetts credit unions to work tirelessly to support their members, their families, and businesses, helping them continue to build a better and more secure financial future."

"If nothing else, the last few months have proven the banking industry 's resiliency in serving consumers seamlessly under extraordinary circumstances", stated Daniel J. Forte, President and CEO of the MBA. "While challenges remain, the banking community stands ready to meet consumer and small business needs. "

All throughout the "shelter in place" mandate, both banks and credit unions across the state continued to operate as essential businesses, meeting and at times exceeding consumer needs. Forte reported approximately 100-thousand Massachusetts small businesses received \$15 billion in loans as part of the Paycheck Protection Program; nearly 19 years' worth of SBA loans in 18 business days. As for Massachusetts Credit Unions, McLean noted that they have done payment extensions on consumer, mortgage, and business loan balances of more than \$1.5 billion, while also waiving hundreds of thousands of fees, saving consumers millions.

About Massachusetts Credit Unions

Credit unions in Massachusetts are non-profit, consumer-owned, financial cooperatives with combined assets topping \$42 billion. State-wide, 157 Massachusetts Credit Unions provide \$250 million in direct financial benefits annually to more than 3.1 million Massachusetts residents. Massachusetts Credit Unions are members in the Cooperative Credit Union Association, Inc., a regional trade organization serving over 200 credit unions collectively in four states - New Hampshire, Delaware, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. For more information, visit www.ccu.org.

About Massachusetts Bankers Association

The Massachusetts Bankers Association represents 135 commercial, savings, cooperative, and federal savings banks and savings and loan associations with approximately \$380 billion in local assets, 72,000 employees across Massachusetts and New England , over 2000 banking locations, more than 4500 ATMs, and donate more than \$105 million annually to social agencies and charitable organizations across the Commonwealth. For further information, visit www.massbankers.org.

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