

Message from the President/CEO



Dear Member-Owner,

While doing some reflection, it struck me how much consumer expectations have evolved in the last

decade. In today's commoditized world, it's the consumer experience that defines a company's value proposition. A key component to delivering a quality experience is passion. A company may offer great products, but if there's no passion in the presentation or service of those offerings, today's consumer isn't likely to remain loyal.

Premier America's newly defined seven core values (introduced in last quarter's newsletter) included a defined *Passion for Member Experience*. This core value reinforces our ongoing commitment to go the extra mile for members. Here are a few recent member experiences where our team members truly exemplified their passion for member experience:

"Everything was processed quickly, and efficiently, and Monica was very helpful in giving me a quick tour of your website (showing me where to access online bill pay, and other online banking features).

She even escorted me to the ATM to make sure my new ATM card worked!"

"Someone attempted to write a fraudulent check from my account, but Henry caught the forged signature before it was deposited. Very grateful for everyone at Premier America!"

Give back is another one of our core values, and community investment is a part of our giveback culture. In the last two years, Premier America has donated more than \$340,000 and 1,552 hours to over 100 community organizations! What's really exciting is it's only the beginning. Last year, we established the Premier America Making a Difference Foundation, which provides ongoing support to local non-profits through employee payroll contributions. Talk about passion!

As an organization driven by its core values, I hope you find your continued experience with Premier America to be exceptional.

Best regards,

Rudy Pereira
President/CEO
818-772-4001

UPDATE



How Will Tax Reform Affect You in 2018 and Beyond?

In December 2017, Congress passed legislation that significantly altered the U.S. tax system for the first time in more than 30 years. Most of the changes enacted under the new law begin in 2018 and remain in effect through 2025.

Here are six of the biggest changes expected to individuals and families:

- ✓ **1. You may start to see more money in your paycheck.** Tax rates in five of the seven income tax brackets were reduced, resulting in an increase in take-home pay for many.
- ✓ **2. Standard deduction amounts nearly doubled.** With increased standard deductions, it might not make sense for some taxpayers to itemize anymore. The new deductions are: \$12,000 for singles and married filing separately; \$18,000 for heads of household; and \$24,000 for married, filing jointly.
- ✓ **3. Child tax credits are expanded.** Previously, the credit started phasing out at \$110,000 for joint filers and \$75,000 for everyone else. Under the new law, it begins phasing out at \$400,000 for joint filers and \$200,000 for everyone else. The credit for children under 17 increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000. And a new credit of \$500 is available for qualifying dependents who are 17 or older, which could help provide relief to families who are supporting college students or adult children with disabilities.
- ✓ **4. Personal exemption deductions are repealed.** If you have a small family, this change will likely be offset by the increased standard deduction and expanded child tax credits. But if you have a large family, your taxable income could be higher than it would have been under the old law.
- ✓ **5. The cap on mortgage interest deduction is reduced.** You may deduct qualifying mortgage interest on up to \$750,000 of your mortgage debt. If you purchased your home prior to December 15, 2017, the previous \$1 million mortgage debt limit still applies. You can no longer deduct interest on home equity loans. NOTE: If you take the standard deduction, this probably won't impact you.
- ✓ **6. Deductibility of state and local property, income and sales tax is limited to an aggregate of \$10,000.** Previously, these expenses were generally fully tax deductible.

Please note: this article is for informational use only and is not intended as tax advice. Consult your tax advisor to find out how these changes will impact you and your family directly.



Your Credit Union Board and CEO were pleased to represent the Premier America Member-Owners in Washington DC at the Credit Union Governmental Affairs Conference, meeting with our representatives and aides. Pictured are Gary Holmen, Premier America Board Member (right) with his wife, Kay Holmen and Brad Sherman, Congressman representing California's 30th Congressional District.

Six Ways to Keep Your Mobile Devices Secure

- 🔒 **Select apps carefully.** You wouldn't visit a questionable website you're not familiar with. And it's a good idea to avoid apps you're not familiar with, too. Only download apps that come from sources you trust, to reduce the risk of having malware installed on your device.
- 🔒 **Say "yes" to updates.** Maintaining the most current versions of your operating system and apps resolves known security vulnerabilities. Consider setting up your devices to install updates automatically to help keep your information safe and secure.
- 🔒 **Install an anti-malware program.** Anti malware software on computers has been commonplace for decades. But it's not as prevalent on smartphones or tablets, and the incidence of malware on mobile devices has skyrocketed in recent years. Consider installing anti malware software to help protect your devices against viruses, ransomware and other types of online threats.
- 🔒 **Use a password.** Require users to input a password to gain access to your phone or tablet. Set up your devices so they default to the password log in screen after a short period of inactivity. If your device is lost or stolen, this will make it more difficult for unauthorized users to access your information.
- 🔒 **Back up your data.** Use either an external drive or cloud storage to back up your data, so you can recover it if your device is lost or stolen.
- 🔒 **Install an app that lets you delete data remotely.** If your smartphone or tablet falls into the wrong hands, this will enable you to remove your personal information without having the device in your possession.

To learn more about keeping your devices safe online, visit the Federal Trade Commission's online security resources at consumer.ftc.gov/topics/computer-security.

Premier America Pay it Forward Award



January - Sergeant Buttitta nominated the Police Unity Tour, a four-day bicycle tour that honors Law Enforcement Officers who have died in the line of duty and raises funds for the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Museum. This year, Premier America proudly sponsored Sergeant Buttitta, a retired LAPD SWAT Team Sergeant, who served the Los Angeles County community for 31 years. To learn more about the Police Unity Tour or to donate, visit SoCalPUT.com.



February - Shirley H. nominated the Camarillo Ranch Foundation, a non-profit organization that offers \$400 grants to pay for school bus transportation through their "Send a Child to the Ranch" program. Students from Ventura County learn about Adolfo Camarillo, whose ranch later became the city of Camarillo, and the Camarillo Ranch House. For more information, please visit CamarilloRanch.org.



March - Richard W. nominated the Arts Council of the Conejo Valley. The ACCV sponsors various cultural programs for their members at the Hillcrest Center for the Arts by providing resources such as marketing and technical assistance. Every year, they present the Arts Council Legacy Fund Scholarship that provides visual and performing arts students with the opportunity to continue learning and advancing their artistic gifts. For more information, visit ConejoArts.org.

15 Personal Finance Habits Everyone Should Follow

Developing good financial habits can take time, but the benefits of being responsible with your spending are worth the effort.

1. Regularly track your income and expenses using Premier America's Money Management tool.
2. Avoid buying anything on impulse. Make a shopping list and stick to it.
3. Open your bills when you get them.
4. Save a portion of your income for retirement. It's never too late to start.
5. Spend less than you earn every month.
6. Take advantage of automatic paycheck deductions to savings account(s). You'll pay yourself first and create a painless way to save.
7. Read contracts before signing. Ask for explanations of anything you don't understand.
8. Review your billing statements for errors and/or erroneous charges.
9. Develop and maintain a monthly budget. It is said, failing to plan is planning to fail.
10. Increase your 401(k) or other retirement contributions every time you receive a pay increase.
11. Pay your bills on time to avoid late fees. Sign up for automatic Bill Pay.
12. Avoid paying only the minimum on your credit card balances each month.
13. Establish, regularly review and update your savings goals.
14. Regularly check your credit report for errors, signs of fraud and identity theft. You're entitled to a free credit report every 12 months from FreeCreditReport.com.
15. Maintain an emergency fund. Have between three and six months of living expenses in a savings account.



Money Management, our online budgeting and financial management tool, can help you take control of your finances. To get started, log in to Online Banking and access the Money Management widget on your Account Summary page.