

Membership Matters

Looking Back at 2024, and Ahead to 2025

On behalf of the staff and volunteers of Piedmont Advantage, I wish you a healthy, happy and prosperous year in 2025! Your loyalty and trust as member-owners drive everything we do, and for that, we extend our deepest gratitude. Let's start the new year by taking a moment to reflect on an unforgettable 2024 and then look ahead to what's coming in 2025.

Celebrating 75 Years of Service

2024 was a landmark year as we celebrated our 75th Anniversary. Our Annual Meeting in September was not only a tribute to our history but also a chance to look ahead. Highlights included Winston-Salem Mayor Allen Joines proclaiming December 10 as Piedmont Advantage Credit Union Day and special recognitions from state and congressional elected and appointed officials, including Administrator Kristina Ray of the North Carolina Credit Union Division.

In case you missed it, our YouTube channel features videos from our *Voices of Experience* series and the *PBS's Viewpoint with Dennis Quaid* documentary. These stories capture what truly matters—the importance of a dedicated team of employees and volunteers who are committed to serving you, our member-owners. As we move into the future, we're guided by the same people-first philosophy that has sustained us for 75 years.

Modernizing for the Future

Our mid-year core banking system upgrade improved efficiency, enhanced your experience and laid the ground work for our continued growth with new products and services. This fall, we introduced a new credit card program, offering features you requested from our consumer and business cards, like a robust rewards selection and cashback offerings. You also asked for student credit cards to help your children build their credit and secured credit builder cards to help you improve your credit score.

Making an Impact with Simply Service Day

While other financial institutions were closed on Columbus or Indigenous Peoples Day, our employees put into action our purpose of Simply Service[®]. For a second year in a row, this federal holiday in October was **Simply Service Day**, during which we all spent the day volunteering at eight community organizations across the state where we packaged supplies for communities in western North Carolina impacted by Hurricane Helene, boxed and handed out community meals, sorted through clothes, stocked shelves, did yard work, cleaned and more.

Looking Ahead to 2025

The new year brings opportunities to enhance how we serve you, **starting with the roll out of our website, PACU.com, redesign** to improve how you connect with us by providing a seamless and efficient experience when exploring all we offer. How you connect with us also includes when you call into our in-house call center, or what we refer to as our **Member Relationship Team**. Your feedback about our after-hours third-party call center services has been heard. **We're bringing modified after-hours calls in-house**, replacing this outsourced service. While these extended hours won't be 24/7, this change reinforces you'll always speak with someone who understands your needs and shares our commitment to personalized service.

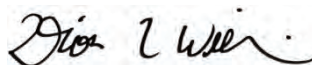
The PACU Foundation marks its fifth anniversary in 2025. Since our public charity was formed in 2020, it has raised and gifted more than \$100,000 to community organizations that are equally as committed as we are to helping residents overcome financial hardship. I hope you'll agree with me that over the years, the PACU Foundation has proven that community support is more than a mission. It's a way of life. **Please join us in making a significant impact in 2025 by donating today at PACUFoundation.org.**

Closing with Gratitude

As we enter 2025, I want to reaffirm what has carried us through the last 75 years: Our unwavering focus on people. Whether it's offering financial counseling, wealth management or programs for all stages of life, everything we do is designed to support your financial journey. Piedmont Advantage isn't just a credit union; it's a community. Our slogan captures this sentiment best, "More than Banking. It's Belonging." **Thank you for the honor of being your financial partner. We look forward to another incredible year together.**



Here's to a bright 2025,



Dion L. Williams
President & CEO

PACU Foundations gifts \$31,200 to Six Charities

The PACU Foundation gifted \$31,200 to six North Carolina charities on Giving Tuesday to increase their capacity to help area residents overcome financial hardship.

Since the foundation's formation in 2020, it has gifted more than \$100,000 to area charities.

"Giving Tuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea – a day that encourages people to do good. This idea has grown into a global movement, held annually on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate and celebrate generosity," said PACU Foundation President Jean Golden-Rumer, adding, "As such, we felt that this was an appropriate day on which to hold our check presentations as a way of honoring the spirit of Giving Tuesday."

The PACU Foundation's ability to contribute these funds is due to the support of corporate sponsors and fundraising event participants and the volunteerism and generosity of Piedmont Advantage Credit Union employees and members.

Joining Golden-Rumer in the presentation of \$5,200 to each of the following charities were the PACU Foundation's Board Chair, Mary Vitale, and Gifting Committee Chairman, James Moore:

- **A Storehouse for Jesus:** A volunteer-led distribution and medical ministry assisting in-need residents due to financial constraints, illness, domestic violence and homelessness with clothing, food, household and care needs, serving Davie County and surrounding areas
- **Education Over Debt Foundation:** Scholarships to African American high school students in Mecklenburg County who plan to attend college or university, along with helping the area's undocumented high school students of color on a path to citizenship and continuing education
- **Help, Incorporated's Square One Family Justice Center:** Financial safety resources to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse and human trafficking, along with its newly constructed SquareOne facility, serving Rockingham County
- **Jim Shaw ACE Academy:** Comprehensive education in aviation, financial literacy and STEM to middle and high school students in Forsyth County, empowering these young minds to change the face of aviation
- **The Christian Mission:** A holistic approach to combat intergenerational poverty with crisis assistance, case management and educational programming, serving Iredell County
- **The Women's Resource Center of Greensboro:** The promotion of self-reliance of women by assessing needs, providing resources and acting as a gateway to community resources

This is the third year the foundation has celebrated its supported charities on Giving Tuesday.



Pictured is the check presentation to the Jim Shaw ACE Academy, one of six check presentations of \$5,200 to North Carolina charities.

Left to right are the PACU Foundation's Gifting Committee Chairman, James Moore; the foundation's Board Chair, Mary Vitale; and ACE Academy representatives Alexandria Shaw, the organization's President, and Jacqueline Johnson; and foundation's President, Jean Golden-Rumer.

To view additional photos, go to PACU.com/GivingTuesday2024.



In the spirit of holiday giving, our Lending Department organized a toy drive for the Winston-Salem Police and Fire departments.

Lisa Davis, a lending underwriter, came up with the idea to do a toy drive when the department's team members discussed their plans for the office Christmas decorating contest. They decided to go with a Santa's workshop theme. That's when Lisa had the idea to bring Santa's workshop to life by spearheading a toy drive for families in need in the community.

The Winston-Salem branches collected toys from employees and community members for over a month. When the toy drive ended, we had two large boxes overflowing with donated toys.

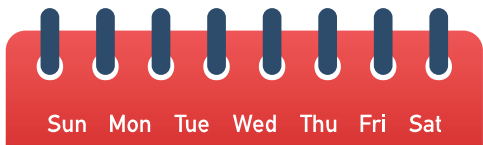
"I am so grateful for what we received and to all who donated," Lisa said. "I am proud our PACU team and members were able to help kids have a better Christmas this year."

Mortgage Lending Supervisor Heather Garcia said she is proud to work at a credit union that cares about its community. "I am honored that we could partner with the local police and fire departments to help families this holiday season."

While on the job, police officers identify and note families that may need extra help during the holidays and refer them to the police department's Community Engagement Committee. The committee then organizes toy drives and other events while gathering donations to give back to these families.

If you would like to host a toy drive this year or next, contact the Winston-Salem Police Department's Community Engagement Committee. Scan QR Code for details.





2025 HOLIDAY CLOSURES

New Year's Day	Wednesday, January 1
MLK, Jr's Birthday	Monday, January 20
President's Day	Monday, February 17
Good Friday	Friday, April 18
Memorial Day	Monday, May 26
Juneteenth	Thursday, June 19
Independence Day	Friday, July 4
Labor Day	Monday, September 1
Columbus Day	Monday, October 13
Veterans Day	Tuesday, November 11
Thanksgiving	Thursday, November 27
	Friday, November 28
Christmas Day	Thursday, December 25

Why do we observe these holidays? For several reasons:

Respect. Demonstrate respect for the country's cultural heritage and national identity.

Regulatory. Comply with legal requirements.

Convenience: Allow employees and members to participate in holiday festivities.

Community: Support community activities.



Don't Let Scammers Steal Your 2025



Scammers are sneaky, bold and, unfortunately, only getting smarter. With 2025 shaping up to be a big year for new tech and trends, they're ready to pounce on anyone caught off guard. But you have us. We're doing our best to arm you with the know-how to spot scams and keep your hard-earned money safe.

Here's your quick-hit guide to the scams we're watching this year and suggestions on how to avoid them.

"Is this really Grandma?" Scam: Scammers are now using AI to clone voices. Yes, even your loved ones' voices to trick you into sending money. It's scary, but here's the fix: Always double-check by calling the person back on a number you know is legit.



Text Message Scams that Seem Legit: A message pops up: "Your account has been locked. Click here to fix it." Sound familiar? It's called "smishing," the text message version of email phishing. Rule of thumb? Never click the link. Go directly to the source, your PACU account, to confirm.

Cryptocurrency, the Wild, Wild West: The promise of big, fast returns sounds tempting, but scammers are preying on this excitement with fake investment schemes. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Stick with trusted platforms and verified advice.

Fake Charities Playing on Your Heartstrings: Whether it's a natural disaster or a heartfelt story, scammers are ready to take advantage. Always research charities before donating. Websites like GuideStar.org are your friends here.

"Renew Now or Else!" Emails: Netflix, Amazon, anti-virus software, you name it. Scammers send urgent notices claiming your subscription expired or something went wrong with your delivery or service, hoping you'll panic-click. Don't fall for it! Log in directly to your account to check your subscription or other statuses.

Student Loan Confusion: With new rules around student loans, scammers are jumping in, promising quick forgiveness (for a fee, of course). Quick Fact: You never pay a fee for legitimate government programs.

How PACU Has Your Back

We know scams can be overwhelming, but you're not in this alone. We offer fraud alerts to catch unusual activity fast and have friendly experts who are just a call or click away.

Plus, we offer identity theft protection through More Checking. Terms and conditions do apply, so go to PACU.com/Comparison for details.

Important Advice to Stay Scam-Free

- Take a breather. Scammers want you to act fast. Slow down and verify first.
- Protect your info. Don't share personal details by email, text or phone unless you started the conversation.
- Talk to us. If something seems off, call us right away at 800.433.7228.

2025 is too good to let a scammer ruin it. Stay sharp, stay safe and as always, if you're unsure, let's talk about it.



New Year, New Financial You: Resolutions to Consider

As we ring in the New Year, let's talk resolutions, not the kind that fade away by February but practical ones for your financial future. Here are five resolutions to help you take control, save smarter and live with less financial stress in 2025.

1. Set a Savings Goal and Automate It

Big dreams start with small steps. Whether it's a vacation, a down payment or a rainy-day fund, set a specific goal and automate your savings with our tools. It's like hitting the snooze button on effort. Money saved without lifting a finger.

2. Boost Your Credit Score (Your Future Self Will Thank You)

Your credit score isn't just a number. It's the VIP pass to better rates and opportunities. Commit to checking it regularly, paying bills on time and reducing debt.

3. Shop Smarter and Save More

This year, think twice before hitting, "Add to Cart." Are you chasing convenience or actual need? Tools like PACU's More Checking rewards can give you discounts on shopping, travel, and more—so you spend wisely without skimping on joy.

4. Get Serious About Retirement

It's never too early—or too late—to plan for the future. Open or maximize your IRA or retirement savings account. Our team is here to help make it simple, whether you're 25 or 55.

5. Make Giving Back a Priority

Financial health isn't just about what you keep; it's about what you give. Consider setting aside a small portion of your budget to help causes close to your heart. The PACU Foundation and community events are great ways to start.

This year, let's not just make resolutions. Let's make progress because a better financial you starts today. Cheers to a smart, secure and stress-free 2025!

Ready to tackle these resolutions? Let's do it together. Reach out to one of our certified financial counselors anytime at PACU.com/FinancialCounselors or scan this QR Code:



IMPORTANT

Effective February 17, 2025, the following changes will be made to our schedule of fees:

- Elimination of \$3 per transfer fee for automatic transfers between accounts to prevent an overdraft or NSF.
- New \$32 fee for returned checks for loan payments and new \$32 fee for returned ACH loan payments.

Board of Directors

The Piedmont Advantage Board of Directors represents the history and tradition of the credit union as well as a commitment to the members and communities we serve.

Directors are volunteers and serve without compensation; so their time, talent and knowledge are shared with the credit union as a labor of love.

Tom Mekis
Chairman

Mark Saunders
Vice Chairman

Diana Santos-Johnson
Secretary

Mark Linville
Treasurer

Darren Cranfill
A.J. Eaker
Justine Lerch
Brian Myers
George Price

Ramon Hoots
Director Emeritus

John Reece
Director Emeritus

Gene Sharp
Director Emeritus

Jim Taylor
Chairman Emeritus

Supervisory Committee

The Supervisory Committee ensures the Board safeguards assets and management complies with the organization's established policies. Committee members also are volunteers. Their gift of time demonstrates a commitment to the credit union's success.

Diana Santos-Johnson
Chair

Toni Douglas
A.J. Eaker