



Money matters

August 2008



Saving Money in a Slow Economy

The rising costs of gas, food and other essentials are at the top of mind for most everyone these days – and it's easy to see why.

The price at the pump has risen almost 20% since 2007, according to AAA. And food costs are up sharply as well. It is getting more and more expensive just to buy the essentials, but the following tips can help you stretch your money, and maybe even leave you a little left over to save with Sacramento Credit Union.

FOOD

- **Cook from scratch.** Even with food prices rising, the cost of individual ingredients is still much cheaper than buying prepared food.
- **Buy in bulk.** If you have ample storage, buying in bulk from a warehouse store can help you save big.
- **Be prepared.** Restaurants are raising prices as well. Freezing a few easy meals ahead of time will keep you from eating out when you're not in the mood to cook.

GAS

- **Run all of your errands in one trip.** By making several stops with a warm engine you'll use less gas.
- **Opt to walk or bike whenever possible.** You'll get a little exercise, and save money too!
- **Consider carpooling.** If you have a friend who drives the same routes, you can both benefit from ridesharing.

- **Look into public transportation.** Your local transit service can be a cost savings, especially if it offers discounted passes for students, children and seniors.
- **Shop around.** Check out Web sites such as www.gasbuddy.com* to find the lowest gas prices in your neighborhood.

HOUSING

- **Think about downsizing.** Moving to a smaller home may save on your monthly housing costs. Our mortgage specialists at Sacramento Credit Union can help you decide what might be right for you.
- **Create energy-saving habits at home.** Fully load your dishwasher and washing machine before running them, switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs and keep your thermostat low in the winter and high in the summer. These small changes can add up to big savings.

FINDING MONEY TO SAVE

Making a few changes can add up to money saved. Want to start setting that money aside? Visit an SCU branch, and talk to us about setting up a savings account today.

* Web site provided for information only; no endorsement is implied.

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Calendar of Events

SCU Investment Seminar

Aug. 26
Downtown SCU Branch,
800 H St.
Noon-1 pm.

Get Control of Your Investments, Now

SCU invites you to learn about smart investing in a scary economy. This SCU Investment Seminar is hosted by Seth Hays, Financial Advisor. Lunch is provided.

Reserve your spot now. Space is limited.

RSVP by Aug. 21 by calling (916) 444-8599, ext. 3112

Investment products:

- Are not federally insured
- Have no financial institution guarantee
- May lose value

LISTEN TO THIS

Free Music Checking Is the Perfect Student Account

Parents and kids may not agree on what radio station to turn the dial to, but Sacramento Credit Union has a new checking account that will be music to the whole family's ears!

Free Music Checking is ideal for college and high school students, and not just because of the free *iTunes*®! Parents can be co-owners of the account, so they can oversee transactions, check account balances at any time and transfer money into accounts in case of emergencies.

Helping a teen or young adult with finances is always a great way to teach smart financial choices, and free music certainly sweetens the deal.

IN TUNE WITH YOUR NEEDS

Like all of our checking accounts, it is FREE! No minimum balance requirement and no monthly service charges, plus you'll get free BillPay. And it's easy. All you have to do each month is make 12 debit card transactions with your SCU debit card, sign up for e-Statements and log on to Online Access and you will receive four free downloads from *iTunes*®.

Sound like a good deal? You can open an account together by visiting your local branch. Want more information? Call (916) 444-6070, visit a branch near you or click FreeMusicChecking.com.





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Phone: (916) 444-6070
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9160 E. Stockton Blvd., Ste. 120

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 * Limited hours of operation.

www.sactocu.org

Home Loans

www.SCUhome.com
 (916) 441-LOAN

SCU Investment Services

(916) 444-8599, ext. 3112

Personal Auto Shopper Autoland

(916) 449-2763



Check Your Financial Forecast What Will Recession Mean to You?

Flashlights? Check. Battery-powered radio? Check. First-aid kit? Check. Typically, checking these items off your list would leave you in good shape to weather summer's usual fury. But a storm of a different sort is brewing this summer.

Just as meteorologists forecast storms because of low-pressure systems, financial analysts are predicting a recession based on falling home values, rising unemployment and declining consumer confidence.

Forecasts – both weather and financial – can be wrong. But knowing you're prepared can lower your anxiety when the winds blow.

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

Americans have survived recession before. This recession may affect us differently.

The government acted earlier this time to keep inflation down than it did in the 1970s. The Federal Reserve cut interest rates 3.25 percentage points since last August, and Congress approved tax rebates and encouraged spending them. You may be feeling pinched at gas pumps and grocery stores, but inflation actually isn't as high as it could be. Compare 11% in 1974 to 3% last year.

Inflation isn't expected to rise to double digits, but even an annual increase of 4% in prices means it will take a 4% greater return on your investments to maintain your purchasing power.

Inflation? Check: Schedule a portfolio review with your financial advisor to check rates of return on all of your investments.

Our investment specialists can lend a hand by guiding you through any questions you have about your portfolio. Visit www.sactocu.org to learn

more, or call SCU Investment Services at **(916) 444-8599, ext. 3112** for help reviewing your portfolio and developing a suitable investment strategy.

BUY NEW OR STAY PUT?

If you're looking for a new home, there are plenty of bear-market bargains out there. Nationwide, 3.9 million homes were for sale in the first quarter of 2008, up a third from two years ago.* If you're looking to sell, you may be looking for a while and it's becoming standard for buyers to offer 10% below asking price. However, don't get greedy: Houses priced too high are selling for less than similar houses initially priced lower.*

Home value? Check: A good real estate agent will make sure your home is priced competitively. Our mortgage specialists are here to help you make the best loan decision. Contact us today at **(916) 441-LOAN (5626)** or click www.SCUhome.com for more information.

REMEMBER YOUR UMBRELLA

Like summer storms, recessions happen. But with a little preparation, you can avoid getting all wet. We can help you check off each item on your list. Call us at **(916) 444-6070** to make an appointment or visit your local branch office.

* Source: Realtytrac.com.

Remember Your Umbrella

*Like summer storms, recessions happen. But with a little preparation, you can avoid getting all wet. We can help you check off each item on your list. Call us at **(916) 444-6070** to make an appointment or visit your local branch.*