

# Consumer News & Views

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**Consumer Confidence on the Rise for Second Straight Month.** Consumer confidence increased in May to its highest level in more than five years, suggesting American consumers were feeling better about their economic prospects despite the continued fiscal debate and belt-tightening in Washington, D.C.

The Conference Board reported its index of consumer confidence jumped to 76.2 from an upwardly revised 69 in April, topping economists' expectations for 71. It was the best level since February 2008, when the recession caused the index to drop significantly.



After falling in March, the May Consumer Confidence Report was the second month in a row consumer confidence has improved. Sentiment had been hit by debates in Washington surrounding fiscal policy as well as the expiration of the payroll tax holiday at the beginning of the year.

Thomas Hinton, president of the American Consumer Council, a non-profit consumer education and advocacy organization with nearly 140,000 members, stated, "This is welcome news, but consumers are not spending at levels necessary to sustain long-term economic growth. Congress and the White House need to create fiscal tranquility by agreeing on a spending plan so consumers know where they stand in terms of jobs, federally-funded programs, and their I-term economic prospects."



***The American Consumer Council and New Jersey Consumer Council are pleased to have Garden State Federal Credit Union as a Sponsoring Member.***

Garden State FCU, headquartered in Moorestown, NJ, is the alternative to the big bank. We serve our members by offering a variety of products and services to meet the needs of our members. We are regulated by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA). Because we are non-profit and member-owned, all earnings are given back to the membership in the form of higher interest rates on savings accounts, lower rates on loans, low or no fees, and/ or improving or offering new services.

#### **What do We Offer?**

We offer a variety of products and services to help you reach your financial goals!

- We have different types of accounts such as savings accounts, checking accounts, money market accounts, Christmas clubs, Vacation clubs, IRAs, and certificates of deposit.
- We offer a variety of loans such as unsecured loans, auto loans, home equity loans, credit cards (unsecured and secured), boat loans, RV loans, motorcycle loans, and savings-secured loans.
- We have many different services to help you manage your account such as PAM (account access via the Internet), Mobile Money, Account to Account Transfer, PAT (account access by phone), e-statements, and Visa check cards. We are also part of the shared branching network, so you can walk into a participating credit union anywhere in the United States to perform deposits and withdraws as if you were at our location.

#### **Who is Eligible to Join?**

Members of the American Consumer Council are eligible to join as well as those who live, work, worship, or attend school in select towns in Camden County, NJ and individuals who work for Verizon in Central and Southern New Jersey.

#### **How to Contact Us?**

- **Visiting our location.** Our Moorestown location is open Monday – Friday 7:30 AM to 6 PM and Saturday, and our Bellmawr location is open Monday – Thursday 8 AM to 4 PM, Friday 8 AM to 6 PM, and Saturday 8 AM to 12 PM.
- **By phone** at 1-800-713-2274 during our hours of operation

- **Via the web** at: [www.gardenstatefcu.org](http://www.gardenstatefcu.org)
- **By mail** at: P.O. Box 680, Moorestown, NJ 08057



ABCO Federal Credit Union is a federally-chartered financial institution headquartered in Rancocas, New Jersey. It was founded in 1959 as the Burlington County Teachers Federal Credit Union. Our first "deposit" was \$1.50 and we even had to borrow \$52 to buy our bookkeeping books and a hand-cranked adding machine. Our first members had to come to our garage to make deposits and take out loans.

ABCO has come a long way since 1959 and now serves members throughout the United States through its branch locations and website. Visit: <http://www.goabco.org> ABCO's primary member base is concentrated in central and southern New Jersey and consists of employees of the following groups and organizations:

- The American Consumer Council
- Boards of Education and teachers in colleges and universities in Atlantic, Burlington, Gloucester, and Cape May counties
- Hospitals and Casino employees
- Burlington County municipalities
- County and state workers
- New Jersey Consumer Council
- Many private employers

Family members can also join and use all ABCO services. Also, more and more businesses are offering ABCO membership as a benefit. ABCO membership is for life – even if a member moves or changes jobs – once a member, always a member! Join now!

Contact ABCO FCU at: 1-800-225-1859 or visit: <http://www.goabco.org/contact.cfm>

**To become a member of ABCO Federal Credit Union and take advantage of their low loans and outstanding customer service, please click on their website link at: <http://www.goabco.org/>**

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as a Sponsoring Member*

**ACC's Friend of the Consumer Award Recognizes Deserving Companies.** Is your company or organization a friend of the consumer? Are your policies and corporate practices winning the hearts, minds and wallets of customers? If so, you should apply for The American Consumer Council's prestigious *Friend of the Consumer Award*.



Throughout the year, the American Consumer Council receives numerous applications from companies and organizations seeking to be recognized for their commitment to consumers and providing consumer-friendly products and services.

To apply for the *Friend of the Consumer Award*, complete the online application and return it to ACC with the application fee. Applicants will be notified within 5 days of receipt of their application. Thereafter, a panel of independent judges will review your application and make a formal recommendation within 45 days of receipt of your award application.

For more information, visit: <http://www.americanconsumercouncil.org/awards.asp>

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**ACC Annual Meeting and Board of Director Nominations Announced for June 21st in San Diego.** The annual meeting of the American Consumer Council will be held on Friday, June 21, 2013 at the Rancho Bernardo Inn in San Diego, CA. the meeting will begin at 10:00 am PST. Members are invited to attend the meeting. There is no registration fee to attend the annual meeting which typically lasts one hour.

Guest rooms are available at a special rate of \$169 at the Rancho Bernardo Inn. For information and availability, please call: 877.517.9340 or visit the Rancho Bernardo Inn website at: <http://www.ranchobernardoinn.com/accommodations/>

At the annual meeting, the election of new members of the Board of Directors will be announced and newly elected Board members will be seated. Also, the annual meeting will discuss business matters pertinent to the management and operations of the American Consumer Council including budgets and tax filings for the previous tax cycle.

Currently, the following members have qualified for nomination to the ACC Board of Directors for a three-year term: Mark Rosenberger, La Mesa, CA; Robert Ross, La Costa, CA; David Romanski, Esq., Moraga, CA; Mary Schepkin, Tallahassee, FL; and, Margaret Loftus, Havertown, PA.

Retiring Board members include: Claudio Stemberger; James Bastis and Gary Plantz. Current Board members are: Thomas Hinton; Jean M. Greer, and Megan M. Hinton.

For information, please contact ACC at: [info@americanconsumercouncil.org](mailto:info@americanconsumercouncil.org)

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### **Green C<sup>SM</sup> Certification Accepting Applications for 2013 Summer Cycle:**

If your company or organization would like to increase its credibility with consumers, you should consider applying for the **Green C<sup>SM</sup> Certification**. Applications for the 2013 Summer cycle are now being accepted through August 31, 2013.

It's a proven fact that consumers want to do business with companies that are eco-friendly and practice Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The process is straight-forward and all applicants are recognized by ACC and the Green USA Institute.

All applicants complete the criteria and submit their responses to ACC's Green Consumer Council for review, assessment and feedback. Program details and the **Green C<sup>SM</sup> Certification** criteria can be viewed at ACC's website located at: <http://americanconsumercouncil.org/greenc.asp>

