

Six Ways to Start 2016 on the Right Financial Foot

Community bankers can help consumers plan for a more successful financial future

Clewiston, Florida – December 30th Before the New Year begins in earnest, **First Bank** encourage consumers to keep their financial goals front and center in 2016. “No matter what your financial aspirations are—it’s important that everyone learns how to properly manage their finances and work towards a financial goal, and the New Year is a perfect time to start fresh,” said First Bank Chairman Miller Couse. “Just remember that it is never too late to take control of your finances. Local bankers are available to help customers succeed and thrive in their financial lives.”

First Bank offer consumers six tips on how to manage their finances in 2016:

- **Set up and follow a budget.** Organize household income and monthly bills, and prioritize your family’s needs and wants. Use online tools, such as budget calculators or a simple spreadsheet, to track expenses against income.
- **Pay bills on time—every time.** If you’ve made large purchases over the holiday season, have a plan to pay off some or all of the balance as quickly as possible. Paying on time avoids late fees and protects your credit score.
- **Check your account balances.** Keep in mind the amount of cash you can withdraw or how many purchases you can make. Avoid having an overdraft, and pay attention to fees and charges that can be avoided. Frequently checking your accounts will also help you detect and resolve any unauthorized transactions faster.
- **Use credit cards wisely.** Know what your limits are and when you are approaching them. Don’t think of credit cards as free money or unlimited funds.
- **Pay yourself with automatic savings.** An automatic transfer plan can pull from your checking account and deposit to your savings account as soon as you get paid. Setting aside a little money every payday is manageable and will help you achieve your financial goals.
- **Protect your identity** by providing credit card, debit card and checking account information selectively and by only using your cards on websites that you trust. Community banks will never ask for your account numbers over the phone so don’t release this information to people purporting to represent your bank.

“Don’t forget to take advantage of financial planning locally,” **Carey Soud, President of First Bank** said, “Community bankers are a great resource available to you and your family and can help you create a financial roadmap that meets you and your family’s needs. Drop by for a visit at any of our offices in Clewiston, Moore Haven, LaBelle, East Fort Myers, Immokalee and soon in Belle Glade or visit us online at first1bank.com”.

About First Bank

First Bank serving SW Florida since 1922 is a locally owned community bank dedicated to serving the financial needs of the communities it serves. For more information, visit first1bank.com

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