SLFCU and Animas Credit Union Announce Merger Plans

Sandia Laboratory Federal Credit Union and Animas Credit Union (ACU) have announced plans to merge. Having served San Juan County for over 65 years, ACU has branches in both Farmington and Bloomfield, NM, $140 million in total assets, 13,600 members, and 41 employees. Gary Sterton, CEO of Animas Credit Union, plans to retire in January 2021 making now the perfect time for both organizations to work toward this merger.

The proposed merger will allow SLFCU to diversify both geographically and demographically while also benefitting ACU members with access to technological upgrades, higher savings rates, lower loan rates, and fewer fees. Employees of both credit unions will continue to be employed and there will be no layoffs as the result of this merger. SLFCU anticipates obtaining appropriate regulatory approval in early 2021 and full integration will likely take 12 to 15 months.

Driven to Help Others

Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque Provides More Than Just Meals to Albuquerque Seniors

You could say that Shauna Frost “cruised” into her job as Executive Director of Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque.

“I was previously employed at Chalmers Ford, in their marketing department,” says Shauna. The dealership is very philanthropically minded, she notes, and to support their charitable efforts, she began delivering meals to Meals on Wheels clients on the first Friday of every month – a commitment she kept for seven years. “I just fell in love with doing it,” says Shauna – so much that she then volunteered her skills to the organization and eventually joined their Board of Directors. A little over six years ago, she was approached to take on the Executive Director position.

“Not only does Meals on Wheels provide meals, friendship, and compassion, but we also check on the well-being of those we serve,” explains Shauna. “This has become markedly more complicated with COVID-19.” During the early days of the pandemic, in less than a week their entire operation switched from delivering hot meals into the hands of their clients to delivering frozen entrees with contactless delivery.

“We immediately revamped how we prepare meals and utilize our volunteers, many of whom are high-risk to contract COVID,” says Shauna. Tasks they typically performed inside were moved outside. Their priority is on keeping everyone safe. They supply volunteers with gloves, hand sanitizer, and masks. Perhaps most importantly, they devised a plan to keep up communication with homebound clients. Being able to physically meet with clients had always been a hallmark of each visit. COVID-19 has made that near impossible. Shauna and her team quickly devised a phone tree system to visit with each client. She notes this step was crucial to maintaining operations.

Shauna acknowledges that all of this was accomplished by her trusted staff of 18 professionals and scores of amazing volunteers. “I am beyond grateful to everyone who has helped. We also appreciate the opportunity to partner with SLFCU. In addition to the generous donation, we appreciate the chance to get our message in front of members and help build SLFCU’s social media community.”

Here’s How You Can Help

Follow SLFCU on Facebook, Twitter, and/or Instagram to help Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque and Meals on Wheels of Alameda County (California) get a $5,000 donation from the Credit Union. Additionally, Meals on Wheels is always grateful for monetary donations and volunteers. Visit mow-nm.org and feedingseniors.org for more information.

Meals on Wheels provides nutritious meals and crucial social contact each day to people who need help. Founded in 1972 by a group of women from Presbyterian Churches around Albuquerque, the organization serves approximately 1,300 individual clients with the help of more than 400 volunteers.

Today they deliver more than 140,000 meals annually. Meals on Wheels is the only home-delivered meal program in the Albuquerque area preparing special diets for a variety of needs, including diabetes, renal failure, heart issues, and chewing and swallowing problems.

Meals are priced on a sliding scale based on each person’s gross monthly income and typically range from $5.95-$9.95. Anyone below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines receives meals at no cost.
Hope + Education = Life Opportunities

All monetary donations made to the New Mexico Credit Unions Connected Academy (NMCUCA) go toward funding the employment of an accredited full-time teacher at UNM Children’s Hospital and purchasing school supplies and online courseware. Following is a report on the program’s first-year progress.

Jeremy P. Abshire, Superintendent and Principal at UNM Mimbres School, says, “Classroom and online learning at UNMCH is exceeding all of my expectations. I’ve been an educator for more than 20 years, but I’ve never seen students like these. They don’t take learning for granted. Their caring and compassion are unprecedented. They understand how medical treatments and illness can affect a person. They know how learning can 1) be a distraction from the discomfort, 2) enable pathways to true friendship, and 3) provide hope for a better future.”

Monica Garcia-Roach, Lead Special Educator at UNM Mimbres School, agrees with Jeremy. “When we enrolled our first student in August 2019, I didn’t know what to expect. We now have 19 students enrolled from K-12th grade. But that’s not all: in our first year, we helped more than 80 patients and their siblings from eight New Mexico counties complete 3,000 classwork assignments and activities. Undeterred by treatments and their aftereffects, or medical appointments at distant facilities, these students never give up and are comfortable asking for help. They gain socialization skills, help each other with homework, and form friendships that transcend long absences. They love our school, and their parents feel it is much safer than sending them to their public or private school, especially now with COVID-19.”

UNM Mimbres School Highlights

• Due to the prevalence of patient movement, the school primarily utilizes electronic coursework. Monica monitors her students’ online work in real-time. She sends encouraging text messages to students who are doing well, and offers assistance when she notices a student is having trouble.

• Younger students who are learning to read get in-person, one-on-one assistance. They also have paper-and-pencil assignments to help develop their writing skills.

• Monica conducts group chats with her students twice daily. She’s also available through email or her work phone, on which they can call, text, or video chat.

• In addition to the online component, Monica uses Zoom© and Google Classroom™ to encourage social and emotional connections.

• Patients from out of town are often hospitalized for a long time. Parents often bring siblings along for visits, causing those children to miss school days, too. Even patients not enrolled in the Mimbres school and all visiting siblings are offered tutoring and homework assistance.

“The devotion of the UNMCH students to academics is amazing!” says Jeremy. Monica adds, “I’m fortunate to be their teacher. They’ve taught me about the value of life and how important effective communication skills are in a virtual world. This is not just a school, and the students are not just classmates – we are family. I’m so grateful to SLFCU and the other credit unions who fund the NMCUCA program and make all of this possible.”

Consider Making a Donation to NMCUCA this Holiday Season

In honor of Giving Tuesday (December 1), please consider donating to a qualified charity or non-profit organization, or make a monetary gift any time before 2020 ends. If you itemize your tax return, your gift may qualify as a tax-deductible contribution (up to 60% of adjusted gross income*).

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* Google Classroom is a trademark of Google Inc.

Thank you!

While we know this year has been challenging for many of our members, SLFCU’s continued strength is a testament to your loyalty. We are grateful for the trust you extend to us and thank you for being members of Sandia Laboratory Federal Credit Union.

Monica Garcia-Roach, Lead Special Educator at UNM Mimbres School and Jeremy P. Abshire, Superintendent and Principal at UNM Mimbres School pose for a photo in the classroom.
There are a number of things that can influence one’s financial decisions. Groceries, rent, and other bills are all examples of financial obligations that adults have to commit to. As a teen still living with my parents, I don’t have to worry about the majority of those things. One thing that I do have to worry about is how my friends can impact my financial decisions. I’m sure that when you think of what impacts your financial decisions, your friends wouldn’t be the first thing to come to mind. In reality, they do so in an inconspicuous but rather important way. For many people, the opinions of their friends are very important. It’s very easy to make financial decisions based on a friend’s opinion without ever realizing it. However, in some cases, it’s important to make your own decisions.
Skip a Payment on Select Loans

Skipping a loan payment can be helpful during the holidays or when unplanned expenses pop up. SLFCU allows members in good standing to skip payments on auto loans, signature loans, CreditLines, and savings-secured loans twice within a rolling 12-month period. Your payment frequency determines how many payments you can skip with a single Skip-a-Payment request.

- A monthly schedule will skip a single payment.
- A biweekly* or semimonthly schedule will skip two payments.
- A weekly schedule will skip four payments.*

Requests can be made online at slfcu.org/SkipAPay, or by using the Additional Services widget in online and mobile banking.

* Since several months have five weeks, please be prepared to make your next loan payment on the fifth week.

Tired of getting paper statements and notices?

Switch to eStatements by 12/31/20 and we’ll plant a tree in a National Forest.

Learn more: slfcu.org/Trees

Share the benefits of SLFCU membership with those you love most.

As a member, your family and household members are eligible to join.
Visit slfcu.org/WhoCanJoin

Dollars & Sense

SLFCU and Animas Credit Union Announce Merger Plans
Driven to Help Others
Hope + Education = Life Opportunities

On the Calendar

Veterans Day
Wednesday, November 11 • All Branches Closed

Take a Frozen Turkey Day
Tuesday, November 17 • Noon - 2:00 p.m.
Drop off a frozen turkey at participating SLFCU branches to help New Mexico food banks. For a full list of participating branches, visit slfcu.org/Calendar.

Thanksgiving Day
Thursday, November 26 • All Branches Closed

Home for the Holidays Photo Contest
Enter to Win a $200 Lowe’s Gift Card!

Visit our Facebook or Instagram page between November 16 and December 31, 2020 and share a festive photo of your holiday or winter decorations. Add a note to share what you like best about this time of year and include #SLFCUHoliday. We’ll pick a favorite to win a $200 Lowe’s Home Improvement gift card, and two runners-up will each receive a $50 Target gift card. For instructions on how to enter the contest and complete rules, visit slfcu.org/PhotoContest.

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