

# Possibilities

Summer 2025

[ascend.org](https://ascend.org)



**Ascend**<sup>®</sup>  
Federal Credit Union

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## QUICK READS

### HOLIDAY CLOSURES

All Ascend branches and offices will be closed on Friday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day and Monday, September 1, for the Labor Day holiday.

### TAX FREE WEEKEND

Tennessee tax-free weekend will take place Friday, July 25 – Sunday, July 27. During this annual sales tax holiday, clothing, school supplies, and computers may be purchased tax-free. Certain restrictions apply. Visit [tn.gov](https://tn.gov) for more information.

### SAFE DEPOSIT BOX RENEWAL

Don't forget, rental fees for all safe deposit boxes are due September 1. The fee will be transferred automatically from your specified checking or savings account. If you have questions regarding the fee, please give us a call at 800-342-3086 before September 1.

### WORK WHERE YOU BANK

For the ninth consecutive year, Ascend has been named one of the Best Credit Unions to Work For by American Banker — and we're hiring. To see the current list of open positions, visit [ascend.org/careers](https://ascend.org/careers).

### VIRTUAL APPOINTMENTS

Members now have the option to meet virtually with one of our Ascend Financial Service Officers or Business Banking Advisors. Visit [ascend.org/schedule](https://ascend.org/schedule) to book your appointment today.



## *Matt's Message*

As we get into the middle of another hot Tennessee summer, you may find yourself contemplating your teen's first car, planning a family vacation before school resumes, or preparing for upcoming college payments. Now is the perfect time to review your financial plan to ensure you're ready for whatever life has in store next.

What sets Ascend Federal Credit Union apart from other financial institutions is our member-first structure. We are a not-for-profit cooperative owned by our members. Our cooperative nature goes back to our roots — we started at Arnold Air Force Base in Tullahoma with just eight people pooling their resources together so they could offer credit to their neighbors who otherwise may have not been able to obtain it. That cooperative principle — people willing to invest in each other — is really what makes the difference.

To that end, we'd love to invest in you and help you reach your financial goals. All Ascend members can meet with one of our Certified Financial Counselors for a free Financial Health Checkup either virtually or at any of our 28 Middle Tennessee branches. They'll make sure your budget, goals, and savings strategies are aligned to keep you on the right path. Schedule an appointment now at [ascend.org/schedule](https://ascend.org/schedule).

Enjoy this edition of Possibilities, where we further show what sets us apart from our peers: our commitment to giving all Middle Tennesseans the financial resources to succeed. We are proud to announce the recipients of this year's scholarship program, as well as offer some tips to save.

Thank you for your membership with Ascend. I hope the rest of your summer is safe and fun.

Regards,

Matt Jernigan  
President & CEO



Be sure your email address is up to date with Ascend to take full advantage of your membership. To quickly update your contact information, select Profile under the Settings drop down menu inside digital banking.





# Ten Ascend Scholarships Awarded for 2025

For over 20 years, Ascend has proudly provided scholarships to students attending accredited colleges, universities, technical, and trade schools. In 2025, Ascend is providing \$2,500 scholarships to 10 deserving students.\* Congratulations to the winners of the 2025 Ascend Federal Credit Union Scholarship:

<b>Wren Augustine</b>	Murfreesboro, TN	East Tennessee State University
<b>Luke Cameron</b>	Anchorage, AK	University of Memphis
<b>Jordyn Cedeno</b>	Antioch, TN	Middle Tennessee State University
<b>Marynn Enders</b>	Smithville, TN	University of Tennessee-Knoxville
<b>Jennifer Heylek</b>	Sparta, TN	Roane State Community College
<b>Lyriq Lillard</b>	Murfreesboro, TN	Austin Peay State University
<b>Aastha Oza</b>	Murfreesboro, TN	University of Tennessee-Knoxville
<b>Peter Skoropat</b>	Watertown, TN	Western Governors University
<b>Faith Stoller</b>	Dickson, TN	Middle Tennessee State University

Details for Ascend’s 2026 scholarship will be posted at [ascend.org/scholarships](https://ascend.org/scholarships) later this year. Scholarship winners may reapply for the next academic year if they still meet program requirements. ➡

\* Ascend employees, officials and any of their family members are excluded from eligibility

One scholarship award pending acceptance.

## Welcome New Select Employee Groups

**Plant to Harvest Homeschool – Murfreesboro**

**Passing Nursing Boards Academy, Inc. – Smyrna**

**Woodland Point Townhouse Corporation – Nashville**

**Servpro Industries, LLC – Gallatin**

**Edyaly Pressure Washing & More, LLC – Tullahoma**

Email [bizdev@ascend.org](mailto:bizdev@ascend.org) to learn how employees and members of your organization can partner with Ascend Federal Credit Union. ➡



# Take Ascend to Campus

The new school year is just around the corner. If you’re heading off to college soon, take Ascend Federal Credit Union to campus with you — we won’t take up any room in your suitcase.

### Ascend Digital Banking

Ascend has a robust digital banking platform, giving you fast, free, and convenient online and mobile financial services wherever you need them. Inside digital banking, you can view account balances, transfer money via Zelle®, schedule payments, apply for a loan, deposit checks on the go, and much more.

### SavvyMoney

We’ve partnered with SavvyMoney to provide even more amenities inside Ascend Digital Banking. With SavvyMoney, you can monitor your credit score at any time and find other helpful credit resources — all at no cost to you.

### Thousands of ATMs

Ascend has a network of more than 55,000 fee-free ATMs worldwide. Chances are, there’s one close to your campus. Find branch and ATM locations at [ascend.org/locations](https://ascend.org/locations).

### Go Blue Raiders!

Middle Tennessee State University students and fans can show their Blue Raider pride with every purchase with the Ascend MTSU-branded debit card.

### There When You Need Us

An Ascend representative is there when you need them. Chat with us inside Ascend Digital Banking if you have any questions or go to [ascend.org/schedule](https://ascend.org/schedule) and schedule an appointment for a free Financial Health Checkup with a Certified Financial Counselor. We can even meet with you virtually.

Have a great school year! ➡



# Ascend in the Community



## American Red Cross

Ascend proudly supported the American Red Cross by sponsoring the Heart of Tennessee Chapter's Heroes Luncheon and the Nashville Area Chapter's Lifesaver Luncheon. Both events celebrated and honored local leaders and volunteers for their acts of compassion, bravery, and service to their

communities. Funds raised from the events will help the American Red Cross deliver critical services to the communities being served by each chapter.

## Rutherford Chamber Business Before Hours

For the second year, Ascend and United Way of South Central TN co-hosted the Rutherford Chamber's May Business Before Hours at our Main Street branch. The event brought together business and community leaders from across Rutherford County to network and learn about our shared commitment to improving financial and overall well-being in the region.



## Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee

Ascend continued its support of the Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee by partnering with the Tennessee Environmental Council to donate 100 trees to Tullahoma Troop 2163 for Tennessee Tree Day. Through Ascend's partnership with Banzai, we are providing troop leaders free access to interactive K-12 financial education courses — teaching skills like budgeting, saving, understanding debt, using the internet safely, and more.



## Financial Literacy Month

In April, Ascend partnered with Middle Tennessee State University's Jones College of Business to sponsor their Financial Literacy Month events. Activities included a keynote event by author and financial educator, Manisha Thakor, as well as interactive games and sessions for students on personal finance, investment basics, and more.



## La Vergne Safety Day Donation

Ascend donated helmets to support the City of La Vergne's upcoming Inaugural Safety Day, hosted by the La Vergne police and fire departments. The event will teach kids the importance of bicycle and fire safety in a fun, engaging way.





# It's Time to Start Your Holiday Savings Plan

The merriest time of year may seem like forever away, but it will be here before you know it. This year, why not start saving early so you can celebrate with less stress?

According to data collected by LendingTree\*, 36% of Americans took on additional debt during the 2024 holiday season. Thankfully, there are a few tools available at Ascend Federal Credit Union you can use to minimize or even completely mitigate debt this holiday season.

**High-Yield Accounts:** Ascend has many high-yield account options, including checking, money market, and certificate accounts, that offer competitive rates to help your money grow. These accounts earn higher dividends than traditional savings or checking accounts, making it easier to boost your savings and prepare for holiday expenses without dipping into emergency funds or racking up credit card debt.

**Christmas Club:** The Ascend Christmas Club is made for the holidays. It's a type of savings account in which members make regular deposits throughout the year so they're available when the holidays roll around. Deposits can be made through direct deposit or manually, just like any other savings account at Ascend, and there's no minimum deposit required to start. Christmas Club funds can then be used for whatever helps to make the holidays merrier.

**How Digital Banking Can Help:** Our digital banking platform includes intuitive budgeting tools that help members track spending, set savings goals, and automatically allocate funds each month. With features like these, it's easier than ever to stay on track and build up holiday savings. By setting a monthly target now, you can relieve the stress of last-minute expenses and enjoy your holiday season to the fullest.

You can easily open any of the above accounts at [ascend.org](https://ascend.org), by phone at 800-342-3086, or in person at any of our Middle Tennessee branch locations.

The holidays are just around the corner. Start saving now to make it even merrier.

\*[Lendingtree.com/credit-cards/study/holiday-season-debt](https://lendingtree.com/credit-cards/study/holiday-season-debt)

# Get Prequalified for Your Auto Loan

Shopping for a new or used car is exciting, but before you head to the dealership, consider getting prequalified for an auto loan with Ascend Federal Credit Union and take the stress out of car shopping. Getting prequalified puts you in control of your car-buying experience, letting you know exactly how much you can afford before you start shopping, giving you the confidence to find the perfect car that fits both your needs and your budget.

When you're prequalified through Ascend, our team has already reviewed your credit and financial information and offered a loan amount, interest rate, and term. This gives you a clear idea of how much you can afford to spend and helps you set a realistic budget before you start shopping. With competitive rates, flexible terms, and no application fees, our auto loans are designed to fit your budget and your goals.

Getting prequalified also gives you more negotiating power. Sellers are more likely to treat you as a serious buyer when they know you're already approved for financing. It can also help you avoid being upsold on financing options at the dealership that may not be in your best interest.

At Ascend, we're here to help every step of the way. Our team will walk you through the loan process, help you understand your options, and make sure you're getting the best deal possible. Whether you're buying a new or used vehicle, we've got you covered.

For more information about financing your auto loan, visit [ascend.org](https://ascend.org) to apply online or call 800-342-3086 to speak with an Ascend Loan Specialist. ➡





# Celebrating Excellence

## Recognizing Our Award-Winning Ascend Team

### Ascend Receives Training Magazine's Apex Award

For the 11th year in a row, Ascend has been recognized in Training Magazine's APEX Awards list as one of the best in the nation for employee development. Ascend ranked 9th in the country, making it our third straight year in the top 10. We're proud to invest in our team and create opportunities for growth.



### Tosha Price Receives Rutherford ATHENA Young Professional Award

Ascend Business Development Manager Tosha Price received the 2025 Rutherford ATHENA Young Professionals Award, which honors rising women leaders within Rutherford County under 40 who thrive in their professions, give back to their communities, and inspire the next generation of women leaders.



### India Pennington Named Cookeville Chamber Ambassador of the Year

Cookeville Branch Manager India Pennington was recently honored as the 2024 Ambassador of the Year by the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce. Chamber Ambassadors are local professionals who volunteer their time at Chamber events and help foster relationships across the community.



### Voted Tullahoma's Finest Workplace and Mortgage Company

Ascend was recently named Tullahoma's Finest Mortgage Company and Workplace by the Tullahoma News. This recognition, determined through a public vote, was announced in the annual Tullahoma's Finest publication.





# Protect Yourself (and Your Money) from Scammers

We live in an increasingly digital world and while accessibility helps make activities quick and convenient, having so much of our personal information online leaves us vulnerable to cyber criminals. Here are a few things you can do to boost your financial security:

- **Beware of spoofing:** One of the most common tactics scammers use is spoofing, where they appear to be a trusted organization, such as a financial institution or a government agency, on your caller ID or email and ask you for important personal or account information. Remember to never share your private information until you can verify the legitimacy of whoever is contacting you. If you are an Ascend member and receive a suspicious message or phone call that appears to be from Ascend, call 800-342-3086 to confirm the validity of the message before responding.
- **Watch what you share:** It's important to limit the personal information you share on social media. This includes answers to common security questions, such as your mother's maiden name or the make and model of your first car, your address, and images of sensitive documents like your driver's license or passport.
- **Be skeptical of unrealistic promises:** Be cautious of offers that sound too good to be true, like guaranteed loans, prize winnings, or investment opportunities. Scammers often use these tactics to lure you into sharing sensitive information or sending money.
- **Monitor your accounts:** Regularly monitor your bank and credit card accounts for unusual activity. Set up account alerts inside Ascend Digital Banking so you're notified of transactions right away, and report anything suspicious immediately. Furthermore, Ascend Digital Banking also allows you to receive free credit monitoring through SavvyMoney, notifying you when new accounts are opened or when credit inquiries are made.

Protecting your money starts with staying informed and cautious. By being proactive and skeptical of unexpected requests, you can outsmart scammers and keep your finances secure.



If you think fraud has affected your Ascend account, please contact us immediately at **800-342-3086**. ➡



## We Can Help With Your 401(k) Options

Changing jobs? What should you do with the 401(k) money you've accumulated? You may have up to four options (and may engage in a combination of these options): leave the money where it is, roll it over to your employer's new plan, roll it into an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), or cash it out.

**Call an advisor to learn more or to schedule a consultation.**



Randall W. Harris, ChFC® CFP®	VP, Wealth Management	931-454-1307
Lee Baker	Financial Advisor	931-454-2925
Stephen Yun	Financial Advisor	931-454-2915
Josh Wells, CRPC®	Associate Financial Advisor	931-461-8779
Kristy Harris, CRPC®	Associate Financial Advisor	931-461-8749

\*Securities and advisory services are offered through LPL Financial (LPL), a registered investment advisor and broker-dealer (member FINRA/SIPC). Insurance products are offered through LPL or its licensed affiliates. Ascend Federal Credit Union and Ascend Retirement & Investment Services **are not** registered as a broker-dealer or investment advisor. Registered representatives of LPL offer products and services using Ascend Retirement & Investment Services, and may also be employees of Ascend Federal Credit Union. These products and services are being offered through LPL or its affiliates, which are separate entities from, and not affiliates of, Ascend Federal Credit Union or Ascend Retirement & Investment Services. Securities and insurance offered through LPL or its affiliates are:

Not Insured by NCUA or Any Other Government Agency	Not Credit Union Guaranteed	Not Credit Union Deposits or Obligations	May Lose Value
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Ascend Federal Credit Union ("Financial Institution") provides referrals to financial professionals of LPL Financial LLC ("LPL") pursuant to an agreement that allows LPL to pay the Financial Institution for these referrals. This creates an incentive for the Financial Institution to make these referrals, resulting in a conflict of interest. The Financial Institution is not a current client of LPL for advisory services. Please visit [www.lpl.com/disclosures/is-lpl-relationship-disclosure.html](http://www.lpl.com/disclosures/is-lpl-relationship-disclosure.html) for more detailed information.

# 74th Annual Meeting

March 29, 2025



## Opening Remarks

Chairman Mark Rigney welcomed attendees to Ascend Federal Credit Union's 74th Annual Meeting. On behalf of Ascend's Board of Directors, Chairman Rigney expressed his sincere appreciation to our more than 250,000 members for their continued trust and loyalty to Ascend, and expressed his gratitude to the more than 600 employees who continue to put the members' needs first.

Chairman Rigney noted every decision made at Ascend is guided by the mission — to be a trusted partner in the members' financial journeys and a force for good in the communities served. Ascend continued to put that mission into action through new checking products that provided over \$4 million back to members; small-dollar, short-term loans; and competitive rates on deposit and loan products. Ascend also helped members strengthen their financial health by providing hands-on workshops, one-on-one financial counseling, and free credit monitoring tools. Additionally, Ascend established partnerships with local schools to provide age-appropriate financial literacy curriculums to more than 30,000 K-12 students across Middle Tennessee.

Beyond the financial services offered, Ascend continued to serve and uplift communities by giving time and resources. In 2024, Ascend contributed over \$1.4 million back to local organizations and invested in the next generation by awarding \$42,500 in scholarships to members and local students pursuing higher education.

Ascend remains a financially stable institution, and the members' satisfaction reflects that. In 2024, the average Net Promotor Score (NPS) was 74.5 — far exceeding the consumer banking industry average of 33. In addition, Ascend experienced strong financial growth, increasing assets by more than \$158 million in the past year. These numbers are a testament to the trust members place in the credit union and the value Ascend continues to provide.

Prior to officially calling the meeting to order, Chairman Rigney reminded meeting attendees of the door prizes being presented following this meeting.

## Call to Order

The annual meeting was called to order by Chairman Rigney on March 29, 2025, at 1:04 p.m. in the Apollo conference room of Ascend in Tullahoma, Tennessee.

## Introduction of Officials

Chairman Rigney began by introducing the officials in attendance as follows:

## Board of Directors

Mark Rigney, Chairman  
Janet Marshall, Vice Chairman  
Andy Platt, Treasurer  
David Elrod, Secretary  
Pat Eagan  
Valerie Molette  
Tonya Quarles  
Anthony Taylor

## Supervisory Committee

Josh Johns, Chairman  
Anthony Taylor  
Jenni Barnett  
Greg Born

## Unable to Attend

Ray Guzman  
Valarie Molette

In addition, Chairman Rigney recognized Ascend President & CEO, Matt Jernigan. Mr. Josh Johns, Supervisory Committee Chairman, reported a quorum was present and in attendance for this meeting.

## Approval of Minutes

Chairman Rigney announced the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on April 6, 2024, were distributed in the summer issue of Possibilities. The floor was opened for questions and/or comments. There being none, a motion was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Ms. Marshall to approve the minutes dated April 6, 2024, as written. The motion carried unanimously.

## Reports of Chairman, Treasurer, and Supervisory Committee

Chairman Rigney directed meeting attendees' attention to the 2024 Annual Report where the officials' reports could be found, noting copies of the 2024 Annual Report are available at this meeting, online at [ascend.org](https://ascend.org), and at all Ascend financial centers.

**Old Business** None.

## New Business

Election Results - Chairman Rigney reported there were no qualifying petitions received this year; therefore, in accordance with the credit union's Bylaws, the nominees presented by the Nominating Committee were elected by acclamation. Officials elected for a three-year term were Ms. Valerie Molette, Ms. Tonya Quarles, and Mr. Mark Rigney.

## Adjournment

The floor was opened for questions and/or comments. There being no questions or further business, Chairman Rigney asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:07 p.m. A motion was made by Ms. Quarles and seconded by Mr. Taylor to adjourn the 74th Annual Meeting of Ascend Federal Credit Union. The motion carried unanimously.

## Closing Remarks

Chairman Rigney expressed his appreciation to Ascend's staff and management for their hard work and dedication to Ascend. Chairman Rigney noted Ascend's staff continues live up to the core values — integrity, respect, excellence, generosity, relationships, and service — each and every day. In addition, Chairman Rigney expressed his appreciation to Ascend's Board of Directors. Last year, the Board elected to return \$3.5 million to the members in the form of bonus dividends and loan interest refunds. Combined with the \$4 million distributed from the checking products, over \$7.5 million was put back into the pockets of Ascend members. Since 2005, Ascend has returned more than \$116.5 million to members, demonstrating the ongoing commitment to share the success of the credit union with the member-owners.

On behalf of the volunteers and staff, Chairman Rigney thanked everyone for their attendance, support, and membership.

Members were excused from the meeting. ➡



# The best place to bank isn't a bank.

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**800-342-3086**

memberservice@ascend.org  
800-342-8663



P.O. Box 1210  
Tullahoma, TN 37388

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All loans subject to credit approval.

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