

Defeat Debt

Credit Advisors Foundation

Volume 52, Issue 8

Winterize Your Budget

As the wind picks up outside your window, you know...it's time. Time to winterize! Preparing for winter is now and always has been about conserving your resources and using them wisely to see you through the long cold days.

Demands on our resources grow as the days get shorter. More of your budget will shift to increased costs for transportation, increased energy consumption, increased food expenses, preparations for the holidays, clothing allowance and emergency fund. If you are among the lucky ones in this economy and you are holding your own, you will be heading into the fall and winter with the same resources that got you through the summer. But soon the furnace will need to be on, the garden will be empty and walking or biking to work will no longer be an option.

Here are some suggestions that might help you with your winterization!

Make a list. As the season changes, if you are like most people, you will continue to

be reminded of those things you need to do, changes that will occur and tasks you want to accomplish before the turn of the year. Start a list and keep it handy. You are less likely to overlook something if you are tracking the changes that must take place. Break it down into related groups: weather related; transportation; household; holiday or emergency planning. Divide the items on your list into those you can complete on your own (check for drafts) and those that require outside help (have the furnace inspected). Prioritize the most important to the least. Estimate the cost of each item on your list.

Are you ready for the chill? Take a walk around your house or apartment. See if you can detect any drafts or cold spots. Your local home improvement store can help you decide the most economical way to keep out the cold and retain the heat. Caulking and weather proofing kits for doors and

windows are inexpensive and can create savings in heating costs and comfort levels.

Now is also the time to pull out all of your family's winter gear to determine what fits and what needs replacing. Before budgeting for new items, consider the amount of usage you will be getting. Quite often, children out-grow before they out-wear their winter and

sports gear. If the weather in your area means that snowsuits and boots would only be needed once or twice a winter, con-

sider organizing a stair-step system among friends and family where gently used winter and sports gear progresses from one child to another based on sizes.

Address your transportation issues. Reliable transportation is critical during winter months. Review your plan for getting where you need to be and make certain to have a back-up plan in case of adverse weather. If using your own auto, provide



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Winterize Your Budget

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regular maintenance as recommended in the owner's manual. If you have an older vehicle or limited back-up, you might want to consider membership in a roadside assistance plan. While this may not seem like the time to take on new expenses, the cost of a roadside assistance plan is less than the cost of calling a wrecker out to jump your battery or pull you from a ditch or snowdrift just once. Take a critical look at your driving habits. Limiting aggressive driving saves fuel. The amount of fuel savings you can realize by not speeding along with the amount saved by reducing your need to break and accelerate abruptly can make up for the additional fuel costs involved in warming and operating automobiles in the winter. Limiting aggressive driving is also safer on icy and snow covered roads.

Consider changes to the management of the household. If you have been taking advantage of the bounty from your own garden or a farmer's market, returning to reliance on a commercial market will probably increase your food bill. This is an excellent time of year to look to stretching your food dollar by cooking with foods that are in season. They will be at their most affordable and freshest. There are several resources available on the web that have great cook at home recipes that are in season such as <http://www.foodnetwork.com/in-season-now/index.html> or budget stretching such as <http://allrecipes.com/HowTo/Cooking-on-a-Budget-Fall-Edition/Detail.aspx>. Another high impact item for the fall and winter is energy usage. Think layers! It is estimated that 50% of home energy usage is directly attributable to heating and cooling. In the winter, every degree above 70 degrees on the thermostat for your central heating system will cause an increase in heating costs between 7% and 10%. So a thermostat set at 75 degrees will result in a heating bill that is 47% higher than it needed to be. A thermostat setting between 68 degrees and 70 degrees is ideal. At night or when you are out of the home try to reduce the setting to between 60 to 65 degrees. Change your furnace filter. A clogged filter makes your furnace work harder to distribute warm air. Don't forget to check the thermostat on your water heater. Not only will reducing the setting to 120 degrees save you 3% to 5% on your energy costs, it will also decrease the chances of being scalded and reduces corrosion in the heater and pipes.

Take a look at your budget. This may sound like a broken record but a budget should be a living thing. You should monitor it frequently so that you can adjust to the changes in demands on your resources that occur as the year rolls around. As always, take an impartial as possible look at where your money is actually going compared to what was projected. Review your actual expenditures with an eye to whether they are true "needs" or just "wants". There is nothing wrong with the occasional "want" but at this preliminary step it's important to make certain all the "needs" are covered with the newly reassessed amounts. Make adjustments as necessary.

Client Advisory Board Meeting

Tuesday October 20th

6:30 to 7:30 pm Central

1818 South 72nd Street

Omaha, NE 68124

In addition to general discussion of the Debt Management process our topic will be Holiday Budgeting. Come join us to provide feedback and share ideas on making this holiday season successful. If you cannot attend in-person, call our conference line at 1-866-285-7780 code 4425358.

Curtis Walter at Your Service!

Defeat Debt: How long have you worked at Credit Advisors? *One year and 2 months.*

Defeat Debt: How would you define your role as an Account Manager? *My role as Account Manager is to assist the client in becoming debt-free which requires assuming several different roles during the process.*

Defeat Debt: Typically, what affect does a Debt Management Program have on a credit score? *One's credit score decreases somewhat immediately after the initiation of a Debt Management program, but will then increase over the course of repayment as account statuses improve and payment patterns are established.*

Defeat Debt: What about the management of accounts would surprise most clients? *Most clients would be surprised at the sheer volume of people who are enrolled in our debt management program. They are definitely not alone.*

Defeat Debt: If you could let your clients know one thing that would increase the success of their program, what would it be? *That commitment and dedication to the completion of the program, along with acceptance that being free of debt does not occur overnight, is what creates success. Not only are these keys to success but wonderfully beneficial to one's self esteem.*

Defeat Debt: What have you personally learned about financial management during you time at Credit Advisors? *That financial management requires discipline and commitment. Without either success is akin to chasing the wind.*

Defeat Debt: You are quite the sports fan, what is your favorite sport to watch and why? *Vikings football because there is not now nor has there ever been a better team. SKOL!!!*

Fall Football Party Plan

Football parties are all about good plays, good friends and good food! All you need to remember to get your party underway is Go Team Go!

Game choice- Check the schedule for that away game that everyone wants to see but can't attend in person. Check for scheduling conflicts. We have heard rumors that this sometimes happens. Here in Nebraska people know better than to plan a wedding on a game day!

Optimize your space-take a look at your available space to see how you can stage it for maximum viewing pleasure. Do you need to raise the television for unobstructed viewing? Need additional seating? Will you need more flat surfaces for cups and snacks? Does Bob like to throw things at the refs? Remove all possible projectiles.



Transmission preparedness- Make certain that you can see the game! Double check the channel handling the broadcast and provider of the channel to beat any sign-up deadlines they may have for pay-per-view or premium channels.

E-vite everyone! Save time, paper and postage. Use an automated on-line invitation service to send invitations and receive responses. It's easy and will let you track how many people will be attending so you can plan appropriately. Since all responses can be seen by all attendees, if someone mentions they are bringing adult beverages then another might volunteer to bring the sodas.

Aim for a good balance- Just because a person does not bleed your team colors does not mean they wouldn't enjoy being included in the fun! Sometimes having a more temperate fan in the group can be a life saver when things aren't going well for your team. If at all possible make sure the person who asks a thousand questions about every play is seated next to the color commentator in the group. If they have each other, the rest of your guests are less likely to do them harm.

Menu planning- You don't have to be a football fanatic to enjoy football party food! It's all about what's spicy, creamy, hot and crunchy if it comes in a finger-friendly format. Think filling not fancy! Veggies and chips with creamy dip...chili with cheese and tortillas...something toasty in a crock pot that's hot and handy throughout the game...and virtually anything covered in barbeque sauce. If you are grilling, make it something quick like brats or kabobs so they are done by the end of half time. Always have non-alcoholic beverages available.



Game time! It's time to enjoy all of your preparations and the company of your friends and fellow fanatics. Cheer on your team and don't hold back. In some karmic, law of attraction, psychic, telepathic way, the players, staff, management and officials are counting on you to lend guidance and support.

Over? Clean up is no problem if you have thought it out in advance. Line that crock pot with an oven proof bag before filling -lift and pitch the bag when the party is over. Have a couple of larger trash receptacles with a supply of trash bags at key locations such as the entrance to the room or to the side of the main seating. If it's handy your guest will use them. Use disposable but biodegradable plates and cups. Have a recycling bin handy to receive glass and aluminum drink containers as the game progresses.

Credit Advisors Foundation

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Get Out of Debt with No Regret !!



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Credit Advisors

1850 South 72nd Street, Omaha, NE 68124

Please RSVP to attend as webinar

Call: 402-514-3341

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If you cannot attend in-person, call our
conference line at 1-866-285-7780
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