NEED TO KNOW: CREDIT

- Credit is a contractual agreement in which a borrower receives financial resources, goods or services when needed and agrees to repay the lender at a later date - generally with the cost of interest.
- Credit also refers to the creditworthiness of an individual or company, known as a credit history.
- The most common form of credit is buying on credit. This is usually done with credit cards.

**TYPES OF CREDIT**

- **Revolving credit**: the most common type of credit that can be borrowed from freely. It does have a credit limit. Typically refers to credit card and home equity loans.
- **Installment credit**: refers to loans for a set amount of money with a fixed, regularly occurring repayment schedule. These loans are usually student loans, auto loans, personal loans and mortgages.
- **Open credit**: refers to accounts you can borrow from up to a maximum amount but which must be paid back in full each month. Open credit is generally associated with charge cards and is often not listed on credit reports.

**I'M A SENIOR, WHY DO I NEED TO CARE ABOUT MY CREDIT?**

- Downsizing/moving locations
- Getting the best credit card (low interest rates)
- Embarking on a second career
- Entering assisted living/nursing home care
- Major work/utilities

**ACCESSING YOUR CREDIT REPORT**

1. You can access your credit report three times a year for free from one of the three nationwide credit bureaus - Experian, TransUnion and Equifax
2. Call 1-877-322-8228 or visit annualcreditreport.com
3. Provide your name, address, social security number and date of birth to verify your identity and choose which report you would like.
4. Print them out if you can.
5. Make sure all identifying information on your report is correct including your name, phone number and address.
6. Make sure you recognize all the accounts listed on your report and that they are correctly opened or closed.
7. Make sure your accounts have correct current balances and credit limits
8. Make sure all debts are listed correctly, paid or unpaid

**CHECK FOR IDENTITY THEFT!**

- If there are accounts listed on your credit report that you have not opened, dispute the error by contacting the credit reporting company and the credit bureau.
- If it is a case of identity theft be sure to put a credit freeze on your account by visiting www.ftc.gov
- Report the case to IdentityTheft.gov