

Welcome to the StellerVista Newsletter!

We've built this newsletter as a window into some of the important things going on at your credit union. This will be updated and sent out quarterly, and we'll even try to keep a few printed copies on hand in the branches, just in case ;)

Be sure to subscribe to get this information dropped right to your email inbox.

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If there is any topic you'd like covered in an upcoming newsletter, let us know by emailing info@stellervista.com – with the subject line “Newsletter”.

THE FIRST HOME SAVINGS ACCOUNT (FHSA) HAS ARRIVED!

A name that leaves little to the imagination, the FHSA is exactly what it claims to be – the perfect tool to help save for your first home! To simplify, this account is like a superhero blend of an RRSP and a TFSA, allowing people to save up to \$40,000 towards a first home with some fantastic perks.

Most notably, contributions are tax-deductible, meaning that, much like an RRSP, you can lower your tax bill now while saving for your future. And like a TFSA, when it's time to buy that home, withdrawals are tax-free! That's right, no taxes on the money you take out to make your home-buying dreams come true. This makes the FHSA a better option than the RRSP Home Buyers Plan, which was the primary registered option before the creation of this new account. Plus, the FHSA offers flexibility – it's designed to work for you, whether you're saving steadily, or you need to catch up.

So, if you're dreaming of a place to call your own or know someone who is, the FHSA is the perfect tool to help make it happen. Share the love and spread the word – because we believe everyone deserves a chance at homeownership.



Learn more about the FHSA or get started on opening one at:
<https://www.stellervista.com/firsthome>

HELLO, WHO'S THIS?

Possibly not who you think... unfortunately.

With the recent landslide of artificial intelligence (AI) software development, and broad global access – there are ever more elements that each and every one of us now needs to consider in our day to day lives – no matter if you use these new tools or not. And yes, we definitely get it... some people don't know much about AI, and some people, plain and simple, don't want to know. But here's the thing – understanding AI capabilities is crucial, even if you don't want to use it yourself, because it can still be used on you. One of the latest threats we're seeing is AI-powered voice fraud, and it's important to stay informed because this happens over the phone – no computer even needed on your end.



Picture this: You receive a call from someone who sounds exactly like a family member, close friend, or colleague and they are asking for urgent help. The voice you're hearing, while it may belong to them --- is no longer theirs. It has been processed by an AI tool that now allows scammers to call and talk to you in their voice. Scary, yes? Reality, yes! This type of fraud is increasing rapidly, and we unfortunately, expect it to continue as such.

So, how can you protect yourself? First, always verify the caller's identity through another channel before acting on such a request. A simple text or call back to their known number can save you from falling victim. While the voice emulation is new, the scam is fairly old – the people on the other side of the call are going to be asking for unusual information or to do unusual things. As always – if something seems off, it probably is.

Yes – the development and use of AI is overwhelming to say the least. But ignorance is not bliss, and even if you want nothing to do with it, staying informed can be your best bet in staying safe out there – because knowing how AI can be used against you is just as valuable as knowing how to use it.

Visit: <https://www.stellervista.com/personal/banking/staying-safe> to learn more about staying safe online.

IMPROVING LIKE WE WORK HERE.

Coming out of 2023 was a breath of fresh air for the team at StellerVista. While we were excited to bring our two legacy credit unions together last year, we knew the scope of technical changes would be large. Much of the year was spent managing and adapting systems to ensure full alignment across our organization. Well into 2024, we are back to the core of what we do and have placed a strong focus on member service and improvement. With more staff and resources, as a merged StellerVista, our team has been able to dedicate time to gather member input and deliver solutions to key issues and requests. While there will always be more to do, we've made significant strides this year, with some recent key improvements including:



- **New Mobile App:** We successfully launched a new mobile app that offers a much more user-friendly experience with enhanced features such as personal messaging.
- **Online Banking Platform:** Our upgraded online banking platform is also now live, providing a seamless and secure way to manage your finances.
- **USD to CAD Self-Serve Transfers:** Members can now easily transfer funds between USD and CAD accounts with no fees, anytime, through online banking.
- **ATM Bill Payments:** We've addressed the ATM bill payment issue, and now all branches offer this function at their ATMs.

And it's not all digital. In Elkford, Castlegar and Greenwood, we have undertaken some key interior and exterior renovation projects. From adding offices and ATM vestibules to major building renovations – we know it is just as important to invest in our traditional channels as the digital ones. We are especially excited to share the Castlegar project, as this location is going to become the first branch designed as StellerVista. You learn more about this specific project at <https://www.stellervista.com/Castlegar>.

We value your feedback as we continue to improve. Please let us know your thoughts through our member feedback portal at the [StellerVista Contact Page >](#)

MEMBER REFERRALS ARE BACK.

In recent member surveys, we've seen hundreds of members indicate that they would refer us to friends or family who needed some banking done – and this... well this got us thinking. We should probably be rewarding the members that bring new business to the credit union!



So, for a limited time, members of StellerVista can earn up to \$1,000 by referring a mortgage. If you know someone looking to buy a house, or even just looking to move their mortgage for a better deal – then you definitely need to take advantage of this offer! Plus – if the person you refer gets that new mortgage with us, they too are eligible for some generous cash back! It’s an oh so rare “win-win-win”.

All you need to remember is that mortgages of all types = StellerVista. The banks will do some, and brokers will do some others – but we are the true local lender, with the experience and willingness to do it all. Mobile homes, land, construction, cabins – you name it, we know how to make it work.

That said, this section is starting to sound a little bit like marketing – which really is not the intent. Instead, we wanted to let the members who were asking to know that, yes, referral bonuses are now available!

If you have any questions or need more info, please don’t hesitate to reach out to us at info@StellerVista.com or visit StellerVista.com/mortgages for the full terms and conditions.