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LAFCU earns national recognition as finalist for Credit Union Times Luminaries Award

Innovative 'Shields Up!' cybersecurity campaign educates employees and strengthens fraud prevention

LANSING, MI – LAFCU has been named a finalist for the Credit Union Times Luminaries Award in the category of Innovation in Tech – AI/Cybersecurity/Mobile Banking, recognizing the credit union’s cutting-edge efforts to protect its operations and members from the ever-evolving threat of cybercrime.

Patrick Spyke, CEO of LAFCU, has championed a proactive approach to cybersecurity. “Cybersecurity is a critical factor in the financial sector, and it’s essential that our team remains vigilant,” said Spyke. “Our Shields Up! campaign was designed to not only educate but to engage employees in a fun and memorable way.”

LAFCU’s Shields Up! campaign educated and informed approximately 160 employees on the importance of safeguarding against cybercriminals and fraudsters. The campaign, inspired by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the famous “Shields up!” command from *Star Trek*, was a two-phase internal educational initiative.

- **Phase One:** The 12-week campaign focused on cybersecurity awareness, featuring humorous videos from LAFCU’s IT department. Each week, employees received eblasts linked to 2-minute videos covering different cybersecurity topics, delivered in a lighthearted yet informative way. The mantra “Shields Up, LAFCU!” became the rallying cry for vigilance.
- **Phase Two:** Building on the success of the first phase, Phase Two focused on fraud and loss prevention. Employees signed pledges to stay alert to potential threats, received shield-shaped stickers and other goodies, and participated in a video series highlighting real-life stories from LAFCU’s Fraud Fighters—employees who successfully averted fraud attempts.



LAFCU CEO Patrick Spyke with the signature shield from the Shields Up! cybersecurity campaign, which helped LAFCU earn finalist recognition for the prestigious Credit Union Times Luminaries Award. The innovative campaign empowered employees to protect against cybercrime and fraud.

The campaign's effectiveness was demonstrated through quantitative data from a post-series quiz. Employees achieved an impressive average score of 93% on the Phase Two quiz, showing a strong grasp of the cybersecurity and fraud prevention topics covered in the series.

“Our Shields Up! initiative not only educated our team but empowered them to be our first line of defense against cyber threats,” said Emily Jannereth, LAFCU’s chief technology officer. “The 93% average score on our post-series quiz demonstrates the dedication and awareness our employees have shown. This is a critical part of our ongoing mission to protect our members and the credit union.”

The Credit Union Times Luminaries Awards aim to spotlight the individuals, teams, projects, and organizations that are driving impactful change within the financial services industry nationwide. The awards are divided into four themes, covering 35 nomination categories. A record number of submissions were received for the 2024 competition.

Winners will be announced and honored with awards at the 3rd Annual CU Times Luminaries Awards dinner at Disney’s Yacht Club Resort in Orlando, Florida Nov. 7, 2024.

About LAFCU

Founded in 1936, LAFCU (pronounced laugh-cue) is a not-for-profit, member-owned credit union open to all who live, work, worship or attend school in Michigan, and to Michigan businesses. LAFCU serves more than 74,000 members and holds over \$1 billion in assets. With a particular focus on serving people of modest means, LAFCU is committed to enhancing its members' financial well-being and creating long-lasting positive change across generations. Awarded the prestigious Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Community Service Award, LAFCU is known for its people-helping-people mission, which has led to award-winning financial literacy programs for all ages. Twice honored as a national ‘Best Credit Union to Work For’ and recognized globally for its diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, LAFCU stands out for its commitment to creating an inclusive workplace. Learn more at www.lafcu.com.



Employee giveaways like Shields Up! stickers, popcorn, and cork coasters with the reminder, ‘Life is better when both coffee and passwords are strong.’ helped energize LAFCU employees during Phase Two of the award-nominated internal cybersecurity campaign. LAFCU's innovative approach to fraud prevention and cybersecurity education earned the credit union finalist recognition for the Credit Union Times Luminaries Award in the Innovation in Tech category.

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