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## Vermont VA's 'Mortgage Tree' Wins CU Members Mortgage Latest Marketing Achievement Award

*CU Members Mortgage presents Vermont VA FCU with its fiscal Q3 Marketing Achievement Award for the credit union's mortgage tree idea, prompting members to inquire about lending.*

**DALLAS, TX – August 11, 2011** – To help increase its loan portfolio, Vermont VA Federal Credit Union (\$20 million; 2,738 members; White River Junction, VT) creatively transformed its Christmas tree that stands in its lobby each holiday season into a marketing mortgage tree to enhance the visibility of its home loan services. Vermont VA's members are now abuzz about the redecorated tree laden with wooden houses hanging from its branches, which has prompted them to ask about the credit union's mortgage services. As a result, this fun and informative campaign has garnered Vermont VA CU Members Mortgage's Marketing Achievement Award for fiscal Q3 2011.

"Because of this tree we have had more activity with our mortgage products than we've ever had," states Vermont VA's CEO, Sandi White. "So we've certainly gotten their attention with this tree, as it leads members to ask about our lending products at the teller window. This inquiry presents the opportunity for the member to apply for a home loan, which is great for both parties. Now, because of the tree, our members are tuned in to knowing that we do all types of lending."

White adds that it's still too early to track mortgage application results, as those numbers should materialize in time over the next few months. But she says activity is definitely up.

Vermont VA's mortgage tree got started from the credit union's Christmas tree being remodeled into the annual Easter Tree, St. Patrick's Day Tree, Memorial Day Tree, and even a tree depicting the local rainy weather in Vermont: a tree full of flowers with an umbrella hat perched on top.

“The members keep coming in to see what’s up with the tree,” White says. “They love it. They even come in and take pictures of it.”

In keeping with that theme, the credit union created two money trees with fake money and stretchable \$1.00 bills attached to it showing how members can “stretch their money as far as it can go.” These trees have also prompted numerous lending questions from members.

“Overall, the trees have been a win for both the credit union and members,” White adds. “It’s a great morale booster for our staff creating the new trees, as it’s really created a strong bond between them. For our members, again, they’ve been asking about what we’re up to next with the tree and it really brings a smile to their faces when they walk through the door and first see it.”

“What a fantastically creative idea – and cost effective, too,” states Linda Clampitt, Senior Vice President of CU Members Mortgage. “To repurpose their Christmas tree into a mortgage tree among its other holiday and seasonal ideas is such a ‘why didn’t I think of that’ campaign, we had to give the award to Vermont VA. It’s such a simple, yet very effective, way to get the members talking about your services, creating a buzz that spreads. We can’t wait to hear about the results when they come in, too. Wonderful idea!”

### **About CU Members Mortgage**

Founded in 1982 as a division of Colonial Savings, Dallas-based CU Members Mortgage provides comprehensive mortgage services to more than 1,000 credit unions, CUSOs, and leagues nationwide. CU Members Mortgage originates more than \$2 billion in FHA, VA, and conventional loans each year. With a portfolio of \$14 billion, it is one of the largest servicers of mortgage loans in the United States. Advanced technology, including a dedicated website with an online mortgage application that delivers confirmation in minutes, makes CU Members Mortgage one of the industry’s leading resources for mortgage services. The company is privately held and has branches located nationwide. For more information, visit: <http://www.cumembers.com>.

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