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SUMMIT CREDIT UNION BUILDS 'INSPIRATION BRANCH' TO HELP MEMBERS VISUALIZE GOALS, AMBITIONS

MADISON, Wis. — Visualizing your dreams is important to achieving them. With this in mind, Summit Credit Union has created a first-of-its-kind "Inspiration Branch," which is full of 3-D visualizations of various dreams and goals to inspire and motivate people to action.

Summit's Fitchburg branch, located at 2939 S. Fish Hatchery Rd., has been transformed into a virtual "stage" for people to find and identify their ambitions or goals, and inspire them to take action on their dreams. Flowing from one true-to-life scenario to another, the settings inside the branch include:

- A segment of a home, featuring a breakfast nook and girl's bedroom
- A 3-D "snapshot" of the Shambles, a historic street in York, England
- The Leaning Tower of Pisa
- A replica of Bascom Hall, University of Wisconsin's emblem for higher learning
- A section of a life-sized airliner, featuring real doors and seats from a former working aircraft

- A beach scene, complete with beach chairs, an umbrella and a real sailboat

"When we are young, we dream big dreams and sometimes, as we age, they fall by the wayside of our busy lives," said Kim Sponem, CEO/president of Summit Credit Union. "We have re-imagined what's possible to support our members' financial wellness. In a dramatic, cost-effective and innovative way, we've brought dreams to life in our new Inspiration Branch to remind people of their dreams and to energize and inspire action."

Sponem began brainstorming the ideation for the "inspiration" concept more than two years ago with Becky Gerothanas, senior VP of operations, on how they could make the idea come to life for Summit's membership. In addition to showcasing quintessential 3-D images of common dreams including home ownership, education and travel, the branch was designed with an open and informal concept – there are no traditional teller lines – which provides a fun, innovative environment for members.

The Fitchburg location was chosen to pilot this concept in part because it was scheduled for its first capital improvements since it was built in 2000. The inspiration façades have been designed by Strang Architects, and built by general contractor Findorff in collaboration with a talented team of theatre professionals. The facades are completely removable, like a stage set, and do not affect the structure of the branch. Because the project leaves the existing structure and walls of the branch intact and uses theatre-set building materials, it is a cost-effective way to remind members of their dreams and inspire action.

In addition to being a fun, inspirational environment, the branch will also continue to offer all of the financial services and transactions of a traditional branch. In the new setting, members have an option to meet with Summit advisers in more casual, open areas, such as an English pub setting, complete with chairs from a real pub in

England, or a breakfast nook, where they will be visually reminded of their dreams and goals.

Private meeting spaces were also designed with the inspiration theme in mind. For example, members can meet with their financial advisor inside the airliner replica, which, in addition to real airplane passenger seats, also includes captain's seats, headsets and a flight simulator designed to occupy and entertain the children of members during meetings.

"As a member-owned cooperative, we believe we have an obligation to try new things to support our members' financial wellness," said Sponem. "We know that visual reminders of goals and engaging environments support commitment & stimulate new thinking and action. The inspiration branch helps to build cooperative value for all our members as they envision and realize their dreams."

A three-day celebration will be held on Tues., Jan. 29-Thurs., Jan. 31 to introduce the new branch to members and the community. During the Fitchburg branch's normal business hours, Summit will give away prizes and treats from local businesses. A three-day loan & deposit promotion will also be held at all of Summit's branches.

About Summit Credit Union:

Established in 1935, Summit Credit Union is a member-owned financial cooperative open to anyone in Wisconsin. Summit holds $1.8 billion in assets and has more than 125,000 members with a total of 23 locations throughout the Madison and Milwaukee areas. For more information, visit www.summitcreditunion.com or call (608) 243-5000 or (800) 236-5560.

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Editor's notes: High-res images and logos can be found at: http://www.summitcreditunion.com/press_room_library.html.

The Fitchburg branch hours of operation are:

Lobby Hours:

8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Mon. – Thurs.; 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Fri.; 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Sat.

Drive-up:
7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Mon. – Fri.; 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Sat.