

## Credit Union Leaders Engage MPs on the Hill

On November 20, leaders from across the credit union system were on Parliament Hill hosting cabinet ministers, MPs, senators and government officials. Again this year, Credit Union Central of Canada (Canadian Central) organized and hosted a



From Left to Right: Canadian Central Chairperson Mike Tarr (BC Central) and Canadian Central Board Member Daniel Burns (BC Central) speak with Finance Minister Jim Flaherty

Parliamentary Reception, along with Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and Le Conseil Canadien de la Coopération (CCC). More than 80 MPs and Senators joined credit union and co-operative leaders in celebrating the co-operative sector's role in communities throughout the country. The evening was successful and was the focal point of a busy week in



From Left to Right: Dale Ward, Legislative Affairs Committee Member (Manitoba Central) and Canadian Central Board Member Garth Manness (Manitoba Central) speak with NDP MP Bill Blaikie (Elmwood Transcona, MB) and NDP MP Judy Wasylcia-Leis (Winnipeg North, MB).

Ottawa for Canadian Central's Board and Legislative Affairs Committee.

During the Parliamentary Reception, Board Chairperson Mike Tarr, announced that Canadian Central has renewed its sponsorship of the Parliamentary Internship Programme to \$15,000 for 2007/2008. The Programme allows young Canadians from across the country to come to Ottawa and work on Parliament Hill, in the offices of both government and opposition MPs. This funding announcement was met with enthusiastic applause from MPs as Mr. Tarr noted in his welcoming remarks, "Canada's credit union system believes in supporting programs that foster future leaders."



From Left to Right: Pam Skotnitsky Legislative Affairs Committee Member (SaskCentral Central), Canadian Central Board Member Gordon Lightfoot (SaskCentral) and Michel Rouleau, CCC Chairperson speak with NDP Leader Jack Layton, MP

## Bill C-27, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (identity theft and related misconduct)

On November 21, the Government introduced legislation designed to deter and prosecute identity theft. The proposed legislation will make it an offence to obtain, possess or traffic in other people's identity information if it is to be used to commit a crime. Currently, the misuse of another person's identity information, generally referred to as identity fraud, is covered by offences in the *Criminal Code* such as "personation" and forgery. However, the

preparatory steps of collecting, possessing and trafficking in identity information are generally not captured by existing offences.

If passed, the legislation would create three new “core” offences, all subject to 5-year maximum sentences: **obtaining and possessing identity information** with the intent to use the information deceptively, dishonestly or fraudulently in the commission of a crime; **trafficking in identity information**, an offence that targets those who transfer or sell information to another person with knowledge of or recklessness as to the possible criminal use of the information; **unlawfully possessing or trafficking in government-issued identity documents** that contain information of another person.

Additional *Criminal Code* amendments include: (i) creating a new offence of fraudulently redirecting or causing redirection of a person's mail; (ii) creating a new offence of possessing a counterfeit Canada Post mail key; (iii) creating complementary forgery offences such as trafficking in forged documents, or possessing forged documents with the intent to use them; (iv) renaming the offence of personation to “identity fraud”; (v) clarifying the meaning of “personating a person”; and (vi) adding the offence of possession of instruments for copying credit card information, in addition to the existing offence of possessing instruments for forging credit cards.

Moreover, a new power would also be added permitting the court to order, as part of a sentence, that an offender be required to pay restitution to a victim of identity theft or identity fraud where the victim has incurred expenses related to rehabilitating their identity, such as the cost of replacement cards and documents and costs in relation to correcting their credit history.

The legislation includes two exemptions to ensure that document issuers who make false documents for covert government operations can do so without fear of prosecution for forgery, and to ensure that public officers (i.e., law enforcement personnel) can create and use covert identities in furtherance of their duties.

Canadian Central will be preparing a submission to the House Justice Committee.

## House Finance Committee Pre-budget Consultations

On November 19, the House Finance Committee announced its revised schedule of pre-budget hearings.

The Committee extended the focus of the pre-budget consultations to include the impact of the appreciation in the relative value of the Canadian dollar in addition to the previously announced focus on the Canadian tax system.

The week of November 19 was devoted to hearings on the significant rise in the relative value of the Canadian dollar. The week of November 26 will focus on the theme of the tax system. The final week of consultations beginning December 3 is as follows: December 3, Victoria, British Columbia; December 4, Calgary, Alberta; December 6, Halifax, Nova Scotia; December 7, Montreal, Quebec.

Given the compressed nature of the hearings this fall and scheduling challenges, Canadian Central will not appear before the Committee, but rather, will meet with individual Finance Committee MPs. Credit union system recommendations for Budget 2008 have been tabled with the Committee and will be reflected in the Committee's annual pre-budget report.

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