



More Oscars & AGM Success For Roscrea Credit Union

The 35th Annual General Meeting of Roscrea Credit Union proved to be a very rewarding, enlightening and entertaining affair. After welcoming those in attendance to the meeting, Mrs Helen Fallon Chairman of the credit union announced details of yet another year of substantial growth and development for the credit union despite the economic turbulence and downturn we have been experiencing in recent times.

In light of the present economic climate, Helen stressed to the meeting the importance of not “Over-Borrowing” and putting themselves in financial difficulty. She also warned our members to be particularly cautious of credit card debt this Christmas, and not to fall into the trap of over indulgence, credit card bills always have to be paid back and for those who can not afford to, members should be reminded that credit card companies do not traditionally have much of what could best be described as “a sympathetic ear.”

On a more positive note the meeting was reminded that the credit union charges one of the lowest interest rates available on the market, made all the more competitive by the reducing balance rate. Members are also encouraged to avail of our Special Savings Account facility, with no “frills” attached. Quite simply Roscrea Credit Union offers the least complicated way of availing of this once in a lifetime government offer, supplemented by the very favourable interest rates on offer from your credit union. The scheme seems to be a particularly popular product for people interested in saving for their child’s education. The service closes at the end of April 2002, but we would urge all members to join as soon as possible.

Helen also advised the meeting that our system is fully Euro compliant and that our staff have undergone intensive training to ensure that they can cope admirably and professionally with the introduction of the new currency. A Euro newsletter specifically designed for Roscrea Credit Union explains how the Euro will affect all credit union activities, products and services. The newsletter is freely available at the credit union offices.

Our quarterly car draw has been an outstanding success and will go from strength to strength. Next year our prizes will be bigger and better than ever before and we will also see the introduction of many additional prizes such as televisions, videos, DVD players and holiday vouchers etc.

Helen concluded by thanking the staff, the board of directors and supervisors, without whom the continued growth in Roscrea Credit Union could not have been achieved.

Further Highlights:

Our Treasurer, John Gunnell announced a dividend of 3.5% once again for Roscrea Credit Union. He also announced that our board had recently met to discuss an increase in the Death Benefit Insurance cover. It was felt that the level of benefit @ £1000 was too low, with funeral expenses now costing on average £2000. It was proposed and passed at the meeting that the premium be doubled to £10.56 which would be collected by way of dividend as in previous years, and provide cover of £2000. (€2539.48)

Mattie Talbot talked on behalf of the supervisory committee and explained the wide range of checks that were carried out on procedures and controls to ensure that proper accounts and records are maintained. He also reported an excellent attendance by the CEO and directors at all board meetings.

Hugh Keane in his credit committee address expressed concern over the changing economic circumstances for the country. He did say however that while the credit union had concerns over the general slowdown, the credit union is convinced it has the strength and expertise necessary to support our members through these turbulent times.

Tom McCarthy gave an excellent insight to how the credit control committee operate. He thanked in particular the credit control officer Mrs Ena Macmahon and the CEO Mr Ray McCarthy, and reminded members that find themselves in difficulty to contact either Ena or Ray long before they have to contact them.

Patsy Treacy was given the role of explaining to our members the very busy year our social and educational committee had. The highlight of the year was “The Roscrea People Of The Year Awards” which continues to grow in popularity while enjoying the proud sponsorship of the credit union.

Patsy also informed the meeting that the national schools quiz was another fantastic event with 196 students participating. He also said that the poster competition continues to be eagerly contested each year and thanked all those involved for their support.

Patsy went on to talk about the success of our quarterly newsletter which can also be accessed through our website www.roscreacu.ie. He encouraged all students to open a credit union account and enjoy the benefits of credit union membership.

Finally he thanked Mr Brendan Wright for his involvement in our GAA sponsorship committee. Brendan has served as chairman of the committee since its inauguration almost two years ago.

Mr Liam Phelan Chairman of the membership committee demonstrated the credit unions continued growth and development by announcing some fascinating growth in membership figures over the year.

Liam informed us that in the last year Roscrea Credit Union has introduced 1,030 new members. This can be looked upon with great delight by every member of Roscrea Credit Union and is due in no small way to the high standards set by our management and staff. Liam took the opportunity to encourage all members of Roscrea Credit Union to introduce new members. He said “increasing membership is the way we all assure the future wealth and success of Roscrea Credit Union.”

Under the planning & development committee report, David Donnelly once again encouraged people to avail of our special savings incentive account scheme. He also reassured us that the credit union was confident of a hassle free introduction to the Euro and congratulated the staff once again on their ECDL success.

David also informed the members that in the technological area the credit union website www.roscreacu.ie, has been revamped. Members who have an account and a pin number can now view their SSIA accounts as well as their loan/savings account. If you do not have a pin number, then members are asked to contact the credit union at their earliest convenience.

As regards the new website for Roscrea & its surrounding areas, www.roscreaonline.com, work continues and we expect the site to be operational in early 2002. The credit union would urge people to support this initiative and use the facility, when available.

David concluded by asking Brian King to take the podium to make a very special announcement on behalf of the Credit Union.

Q-Mark Success

The special announcement Brian had to make concerned the Q-Mark from Excellence Ireland, a fantastic quality award for excellence that Roscrea Credit Union was successful in obtaining just a short while ago. Brian informed the audience that last year Roscrea Credit Union had been the first credit union in the country to receive the ISO 9000 quality award, and that Roscrea Credit Union was indeed one of the very few credit unions in Western Europe to hold ISO Certification. However it was decided during the year that in the credit unions continuous pursuit of Business excellence, Roscrea Credit Union should pursue another quality award. It was also decided that the award should be distinctly Irish, should provide new challenges and should convey to its members, that Roscrea Credit Union is without any shadow of doubt a quality organisation, continuously searching and exploring for new, innovative ways to enhance its future growth and development.

Brian told the audience that the only award left that was indeed big enough and challenging enough for Roscrea Credit Union was the Q-Mark from Excellence Ireland.

Those in attendance were told that the Q-Mark is one of the best known and most sought after quality standards in Ireland, and has helped over 500 companies such as Superquinn, EBS, Dairygold, Glanbia etc to initiate and improve their quality efforts. He said the main advantages of having Q-Mark certification for Roscrea Credit Union would be as follows:

- Ÿ It will increase and develop the management controls already in place
- Ÿ It will force the credit union to pay even more attention to the member, to identify member needs and to meet those needs through the provision of superior customer service.
- Ÿ The Q-Mark will improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the credit union
- Ÿ The Q-Mark will allow Roscrea Credit Union to build upon the very impressive strategic and continuous improvement plans already in place.
- Ÿ It is hoped that the Q-Mark should keep everyone associated with the credit union motivated, and demonstrate to its members the professional manner in which all credit union operations take place.
- Ÿ The power of the Q-Mark logo which most people seem to be familiar with, will hopefully mean that Roscrea Credit Union will get all the public recognition it deserves for what has been to date a tremendous success story.

In what proved to be a very entertaining and uplifting speech, Brian said the most important ingredient in any organisation's success was teamwork. He said not only did teamwork require co-operation, but that it required structures, leadership and to use the analogy of a good hurling or football team, a solid backline, a creative midfield and some flamboyant and prolific forwards.

He said every backline needed strength, vision, and people who can see things and react to things better than the opposition. He said Roscrea Credit Union had a very solid backline of Directors from all walks of life who are both diligent and progressive in their attempts and efforts to enhance the current and future success of Roscrea Credit Union without any financial reward, benefits or special privileges.

Next Brian turned his attention to the creative midfield who he said represented the management of Roscrea Credit Union. Led by Ray McCarthy, they are the ones who ensure that the business of the credit union is conducted as smoothly as possible and that the credit union's prolific forwards, i.e. its counter staff have all the confidence and ammunition necessary to deliver the exceptional products and services on offer by Roscrea Credit Union in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Brian went on to say that it would have been impossible for Roscrea Credit Union to have achieved the ISO or Q-Mark awards, without the countless endeavours of the credit union staff that members meet at the different counters on a daily basis. He said all our staff offer the members of the credit union the professionalism demanded by management and the respect deserved by its members. He reminded all members that the one thing they could nearly always be assured in Roscrea Credit Union, was a warm and more often than not a unique welcome.

After thanking Mr Ken Lawless quality consultant and Mr Tony Clarke quality products manager with Excellence-Ireland, Brian concluded by reminding us all, that just as every great team needs its supporters willing them on, wanting them to do better, "every credit union needs the support and goodwill of its members or its fans if you like, egging us on and encouraging us to do better. He said everything that was done in Roscrea Credit Union was done with the best interest of the members at heart.

He asked members in return, for their support. He said no-one expected members to go around wearing credit union scarves or jerseys. He did ask members for their co-operation with credit union initiatives etc, and reminded us all that by working together we could ensure that in the fullness of time history will record that Roscrea Credit Union was one of the best, if not the best credit union, this small country but this great nation ever produced.

Brian then called on Sean Conlan, chief executive officer of Excellence Ireland who like Tony Clarke travelled a long way to be with the credit union in their hour of glory, to say a few words and to present the chairman of Roscrea Credit Union, Mrs Hellen Fallon with the Q-Mark for excellence award.

Conclusion:

In conclusion its worth reminding members and non-members of the credit union that from its humble origins as a chamber of commerce initiative in 1967 Roscrea Credit Union has been at the forefront of community activities. The Credit Union has constantly strived to serve its members and to serve its community. We have seen this through the Credit Union's involvement with local enterprises and through its continuous involvement with local school initiatives etc. Non profit means just that as far as the Credit Union is concerned. Each year a considerable percentage of Credit Union income is ploughed back into community activities. Therefore everyone benefits, everyone gets a piece whether they are a Credit Union member or not. It is this generosity, this willingness to share, which makes the Credit Union a pillar in what is essentially a money grabbing, power hungry, modern day society. Your Credit Union represents everything that is still good about the world we live in today. The Credit Union is for the people and is driven by the people, allowing them to share their views and initiatives, providing an excellent forum and basis for communication and continued growth and development. It is against this background of people power not corporate or multinational power that your Credit Union will continue to beat adversity and remain Roscreas premier financial institution and always at the cutting edge of community activities.