

Aug. 20, 2024

## **Education Credit Union to cut ribbon on Badger \$mart branch serving AC**

Amarillo College and Education Credit Union are pleased to invite the community to a celebratory ribbon-cutting and grand-opening event for ECU's new Badger \$mart Branch on AC's Washington Street Campus.

The celebration is from 3-5 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 27 and will feature a DJ, pizza and sodas, some giveaways, and a ceremonial ribbon-cutting that is slated to take place at 3:15 p.m. ECU's Badger \$mart Branch is located at 512 SW 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave., a block east of Washington Street and directly north of AC's Dutton Hall.

The fun-filled event signals fruition of a partnership long since committed to establishing a student-run ECU branch at the College. The full-service retail branch will provide the same financial services to ECU members that all branches offer, but outside of a few management-level ECU team members, all other employees at the Badger \$mart Branch will be AC students. The branch officially opens to the public on Aug. 15.

"We are excited to open the Badger \$mart Branch and further our commitment to the Amarillo College community," said Marcus Smith, CEO of Education Credit Union. "This branch represents our dedication to supporting education and providing students with real-world experience that will benefit them throughout their careers."

In addition to affording employment opportunities for career-minded AC students, ECU also will offer financial literacy workshops and money management bootcamps to the entire AC community. In fact, the first such workshops have already been scheduled: Sept. 10 & Nov. 5, each from 11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m., in the Badger Corner at the College Union Building (CUB).

"Similar to our AmTech Branch and Buff \$mart Branch in Canyon, we will be providing Amarillo College students hands-on experiences through internships," said Jen Ufford, Senior Vice President of Member Experience at ECU.

"Additionally, the Badger \$mart Branch reflects a partnership that enriches the lives of AC students, faculty, and the surrounding community with financial tools to set our members up for success in their financial journey," she said."

As part of the partnership that was formally approved by AC Regents in August of 2023, ECU leased and renovated an existing campus building, and the made-over structure now features drive-up windows, a full lobby, and offices.

AC students who are interested in applying for ECU internships, starting at \$15 an hour, will be able to do so through an online recruiting platform called *Handshake*, which is currently being installed and is expected to be accessible to the AC community by Aug. 26. New internships will be available at the start of each new semester.

“We are excited about ECU's presence on campus,” said Dr. Frank Sobey, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives at AC. “It will provide selected students with work-based learning opportunities to gain experience in the basic principles and practices of the financial services industry, training in the basics of teller operations and member services, and other skills required by the credit unions for their professional staff.

“Additionally,” he said, “ECU will provide financial literacy workshops that may prove invaluable for our students who soon plan on entering the workforce.”

This partnership marks the second time ECU has established a presence on the Washington Street Campus in the past year. Last October, upon receipt of a \$500,000 gift from the ECU Foundation to endow STEM scholarships at AC, the College joyfully christened one of its vital labs the *ECU Foundation STEM Lab*.