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Michael A. DeShazo



Tom Kurtz/Special to The Daily Transcript

President & CEO, Cabrillo Credit Union.

A regional occupation program in high school launched DeShazo's career working in credit unions. His hard work and innovative thinking — including the conception of Cabrillo Credit Union's nationally renowned PAL (payroll assistance loan) program for federal employees — resulted in his recent appointment as Cabrillo's president and CEO.

"It took a lot of hand shaking and speeches and presentations," said the San Diego native of his role at Cabrillo. "I manage the guidance of the credit union and make sure that we're profitable, financially sound and always looking to expand our products and services to our membership."

Cabrillo's PAL program, developed by DeShazo in 1998, has been a Godsend for those among Cabrillo's approximately 20,000 members who are federal employees compromised by government shutdowns. DeShazo estimates that approximately 8,000 active or retired Border Patrol agents are members of Cabrillo, which was started by the Border Patrol in 1955.

"In the event the federal government (employees) did not get paid, the credit union has a line of credit at zero-percent interest available for them to tap until the government starts to pay the employees again," said DeShazo of his brainchild. "When the government goes back to work and sends the check, we take that money and pay off your loan. So you don't go without on payday."

In addition to current and former Border Patrol employees, Cabrillo also boasts many employees of Sharp HealthCare among its membership. But DeShazo was quick to point out that almost anyone is eligible to join.

"Credit unions have changed over the years, whereas they take on community charters," he said. "So, if you live in any of the areas around (San Diego County), you would be eligible to join the credit union."

— Tony Lovitt