



Hi Everyone,

Happy New Year! Last summer you may have noticed that I didn't do much bragging about my garden. That's because it didn't do too well. I got enough tomatoes to make two cups of cream of tomato soup, that's it. I won't make any excuses. The reason my garden didn't perform is that I didn't take the time to properly manage it. But hey, there's always the next year and already I'm making plans and adjustments to boost production back up this summer.

My garden and its lack of production reminds me so much of the economy now. I have some big news for everyone. The way it is in this country is the way it's going to be. The current weak economic conditions are the new normal. I came to that conclusion after talking to folks who are a lot smarter on this stuff than I am. There is too much of a debt overhang and too much of the housing stock is underwater for there to be a turn around. Yes the economy will continue to marginally strengthen but it will not be robust. Period.

What does this news mean for all of us? It means that it's never been more important to live below your means. I know, you've heard it from me over and over but believe me. The message will never change from me. It's a new year. It's time for new thinking about your own circumstances. Increase your contribution to the retirement plan at work. Start a savings program. Here at the credit union our certificate rates are as high as you'll get anywhere. And you can open a certificate for as little as \$500. If you have a bunch of debt consolidate it here at the credit union. Our loan folks would love to show you how.

In a few short months the growing season will begin again. Maybe this year I'll get enough tomatoes for a whole pot of tomato soup.

Till Next Time,

Evan Clark, President and CEO

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