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**ASCEND FEDERAL CREDIT UNION WINS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD**

One of Middle Tennessee's largest companies has been honored for its recycling efforts.

On Thursday Cintas Document Management awarded Ascend Federal Credit Union with an Environmental Award.

"Ascend is recycling roughly a ton-and-a-half of paper a week," Cintas Operations Manger Mark Rose said. "That's impressive. In past years, that would have gone straight to a landfill."

Cintas performs secure document shredding services for the credit union. Once the documents are shredded, they are taken to a secure recycling facility and converted into recycled products. According to Rose, Ascend's recycling efforts have saved 1,258 trees, 28,120 gallons of oil and 518,000 gallons of water.

Ascend Security Officer Missy Cleveland said the credit union is honored to receive the award.

"I'm glad our partnership with Cintas has had such a positive impact on the environment," she said. "It's great to know that secure document destruction and recycling can go hand-in-hand. I believe our members will appreciate this, too."

She said Cintas helps with Shred Day events like the one planned for 9-11 a.m. on June 21 in the parking lot of Ascend's Tullahoma financial center.

"When members participate in events like this, they will know they're not only securely disposing of their personal documents, but they're helping the environment as well."

Ascend President and CEO Caren Gabriel said recycling is just one way Ascend works to help the environment and its members.

"For many years, we have encouraged members to take advantage of free and secure online bill payment and online statements offered by Ascend," she said. "According to a recent study by Javelin Strategy & Research, if every U.S. household stopped receiving paper bills and statements, they would save 687,000 tons of paper every year."

Gabriel said the credit union is offering its members a financial incentive to go "green" with an auto loan promotion beginning July 1.

"We are incorporating a new auto loan policy that allows members to get a .25% rate discount when they purchase a qualifying new or used environmentally-friendly vehicle," she said. "This is an easy way people can help the environment and save money at the same time."

Ascend Federal Credit Union is a full-service financial institution with 15 locations in Middle Tennessee. Federally insured by the NCUA, membership is limited.

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