

Daydreaming about road trips with friends? Before you cruise around town, make sure you understand a few key tips to purchasing a vehicle. Also, talk to a Pocatello Railroad Federal Credit Union loan officer about how much you can afford to borrow and to get an idea of what your payments will be.

### **Consider your budget**

How much do you need for a down payment? What will monthly payments be? How much should you save each month for routine maintenance and unexpected repairs? What will be the cost of registration, license plates and taxes? Calculate what you can responsibly afford so that you're not strapped for cash later down the road.

### **View several cars in your price range**

Test-drive each car, possibly with someone who knows about cars. Take your parents, a friend, a mechanic; someone who is truly knowledgeable about cars. You want to make sure the car is right for you and in good working order.

### **Do your research**

Some people think that research stops with the Blue Book value of the car you are interested in. It does not. You need to compare maintenance costs, warranties and consumer ratings. You also should get a vehicle history report. Use publications like Consumer Reports. The more information you have the better.

### **Factor in fuel**

Think about how often and where you'll drive, and track your mileage to see what the cost of your commute and other activities cost you.

### **Insure your ride**

Depending on what type of vehicle you get, insurance costs may be higher than you expected. Factor this in when choosing a model that may be more susceptible to theft. Young drivers usually pay more for insurance, since they are initially more prone to accidents.

For additional information and resources check out our auto loans page.