

Join Our Partnership for Scouting



The Great Southwest Council faces a financial crossroads. We need your help to maintain a successful Scouting program. Although our youth enjoy a Scouting experience that is the envy of many other councils, the gap between the cost of council services and council revenues is too large to sustain. We need a renewed partnership with our units to continue to deliver and grow Scouting.

The Great Southwest Council

The Great Southwest Council is one of 272 councils that comprise the Boy Scouts of America. Although subject to policies and procedures of the national BSA, each council is a stand-alone economic entity that is solely responsible for its own financial performance.

The Council is governed by an Executive Board of Directors. Our Executive Board consists of volunteers elected by each unit's chartered organization representative, council members-at-large and the current Executive Board at our annual business meeting held in January. Each registered adult in the Council is invited to participate in the annual meeting. The Executive Board is headed by two volunteers, our Council President and Council Commissioner. The Council President, Council Commissioner and other Board officers are also members of the Council's Executive Committee. The Executive Committee oversees the monthly operations of the Council and makes policy recommendations to the Executive Board.

All members of the Executive Board are volunteers who live within the council boundaries and nearly all are former unit leaders who have or have had sons active in Scouting.

Our Council is managed day-to-day by the Scout Executive, who is accountable to the Executive Board. The Scout Executive is a full-time, paid professional. Currently, our Scout Executive is Chris Shelby. Chris oversees a paid staff consisting of eight other full time employees: a Director of Field Service and Program, four District Executives, a

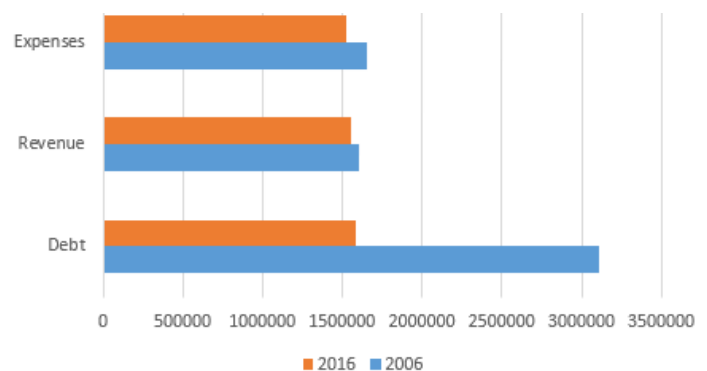


manager for the Gorham Scout Ranch, and two administrative assistants.

Council Finances Have Hit a Wall

While successful programmatically, our Council has been climbing out of a financial hole for the last 10 years. As of 2006, the Council had accumulated debt in excess of \$3.1 million. Since hitting that bottom, strong fiscal management, including tight control of expenses, has succeeded in reducing our total debt by nearly half to approximately \$1.6 million.

Expenses, Revenue and Debt



To achieve this debt reduction, the Council cut its expenses by 7.5%. Our slashing of costs was necessary, but painful.

The cuts have impaired the Council's ability to provide unit service, volunteer support and membership promotion.

Despite these savings, the Executive Board's cost control has not been enough to eliminate our debt and maintain a desired level of service to the units. Our debt reduction efforts have stalled. While we were reducing costs, the Council experienced a 3.1% decline in revenue. The revenue shortfall is primarily the result of a loss

of United Way contributions of 43.2% and a reduction of popcorn sales of 42% over the last 10 years.

Council Services to Units

Our Council exists to provide the following benefits to the youth and volunteers in our units:

- Scouting programs in 25 counties for more than 7,200 youth
- Camping experiences for over 2,000 youth
- Membership recruiting materials and support
- Basic and advanced training for youth and adults
- District Executives who provide professional guidance and support to more than 4,200 Scout leaders
- Administrative professionals providing program and administrative support to Scout leaders, including recordkeeping, registration and advancement, and re-chartering
- A Scout shop complete with all necessary Scouting apparel, equipment and supplies
- Maintenance and operation of Gorham Scout Ranch and Campbell Ranch, collectively consisting of more than 2,400 acres of property
- Camperships for youth who need financial assistance for camp
- Tour permits
- Unit accident and liability insurance
- National Scout Jamboree opportunities
- Background checks on all new registered leaders

Of course, the most important service the Council provides is the Boy Scout name and supporting infrastructure. Without the Boy Scout organization behind it, a unit is just a group of boys who go camping together. The Boy Scouts of America is universally recognized and respected as the leading youth organization in the country. Sustaining membership depends on youth wanting to be Boy Scouts. Obtaining Eagle Scout rank is the ultimate objective of most of our Scouts and achievement of this goal is not possible without the presence of the Council.



Sources of Council Funding

Funding for our Council's services comes entirely from its membership and our community. A common misconception is that the Council is supported financially by the Boy Scouts of America. This is not true. The Council does not receive any money from the national BSA and, in fact, must pay the BSA for various services. The Council also receives no revenue from unit charter fees; these fees go directly to the national BSA.

Council operations are paid for by the following fundraising activities:

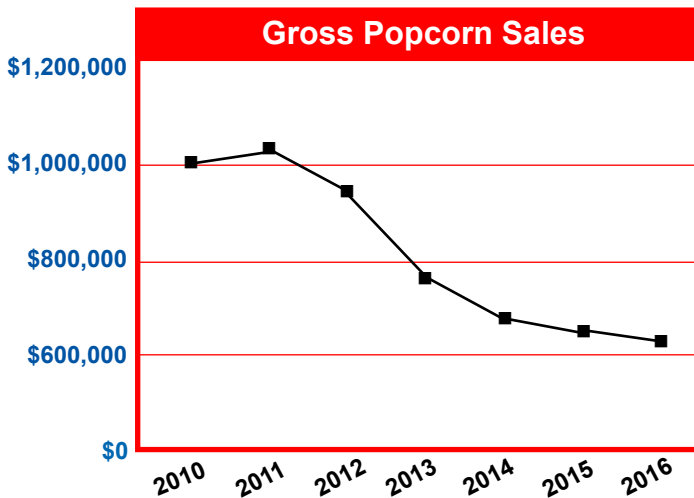
- **Friends of Scouting** – Direct donations to the Council from member families, individuals and local businesses and organizations
- **Product Sales** – Popcorn and other goods
- **Special Events** – Fundraising activities such as the sporting clays tournament, fly fishing at Philmont, Eagle Scout banquet, and online auction
- **Major Gift Giving** – Soliciting individuals and organizations to invest in Scouting

Not to be overlooked is the critical role our Council volunteers and professionals play in fundraising. Friends of Scouting, popcorn sales, special events, and major gift giving are organized and managed by our Executive Board, along with our staff. Moreover, the members of our Executive Board and staff themselves generously donate money to meet our Council's needs. Altogether, Executive Board-level fundraising contributed approximately \$220,000 to Council revenues in 2016.



The Gap Between Council Revenues and Council Expenses

For many years, the Council has asked our membership to participate in fundraising activities with mixed results — some units try to participate in everything, most participate in some of these activities, others do not participate at all. Unfortunately, this rather passive method of fundraising has resulted in perennial shortfalls. Popcorn sales in particular have declined dramatically.



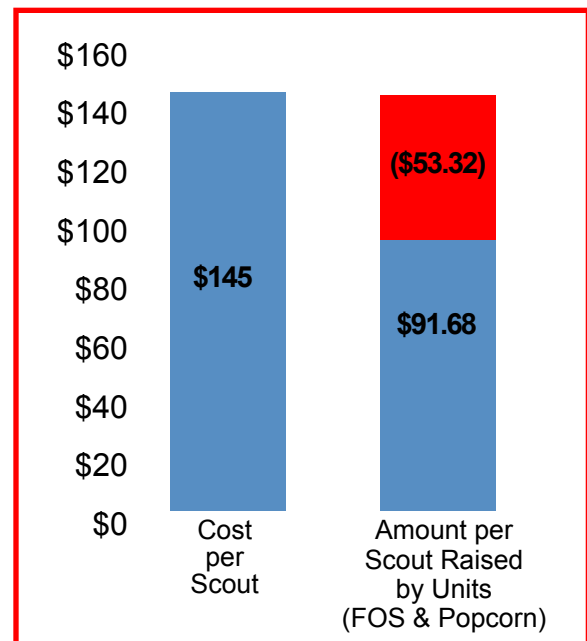
Without sufficient revenue, the Council must finance its debt obligations. This financing occurs through borrowings on our line of credit, a mortgage on the council offices, extension of credit terms from vendors, not filling office vacancies, and furloughs and pay reductions absorbed by the council staff.

Our situation is now critical. The Council has reached the limit of its borrowing capacity. We simply cannot sustain our operations on the present basis. If fundraising does not increase immediately, council services to units will need to be significantly curtailed.

We Seek a Partnership With Our Units

To turn things around, the Executive Board is embarking on a new program we call a “Partnership for Scouting.” This program asks every unit to equitably share the cost of the council services they receive, in a manner of their own choosing. Currently, hardly any units support the expenses incurred by the Council for each scout and most units fall far short of this break-even point.

The cost of council services per scout is calculated by taking the Council’s total expenses and subtracting from these expenses program fees, camping revenue, United Way contributions and fundraising by the Executive Board. The resulting figure is then divided by the number of youth members at the time of unit re-chartering. For 2015, this cost per scout was \$145. In 2015, unit fundraising in the form of Friends of Scouting and popcorn sales contributed \$91.68 per youth, leaving a deficit of \$53.32 for each scout in the Council.



The Partnership for Scouting asks every unit to support the Council with \$145 per youth member. This contribution may be realized through Friends of Scouting, popcorn sales, other unit fundraisers, or a combination of all three methods.

The Partnership for Scouting recognizes that different units prefer different methods of fundraising. Thus, consistent with council policy, each unit is free to decide how to raise money within their own unit. Units should select whatever fundraising activities are best suited to their abilities and resources. Within a unit, at the unit leadership’s discretion, individual members can also select between these funding paths depending upon their circumstances.



Become a Partner Unit

Units that support our council's services with contributions of at least \$145 per Scout will be eligible for recognition as "Partner Units." Partner Units must annually satisfy three requirements:

1. Contribute to the Council \$145 per youth member through Friends of Scouting, popcorn sales and/or an alternative fundraiser
2. Achieve Gold, Silver or Bronze medal in Journey to Excellence
3. Attend Gorham Scout Ranch or a district day camp within a three year period

In return for satisfying these requirements, Partner Units will be eligible for the following benefits:

- 10% rebate for day camps and Gorham Scout Ranch fees
- Free Eagle Scout presentation kits
- Free cloth and card advancement
- Free use of Gorham Scout Ranch in the off-season
- 10% off camping gear at High Desert Scout Shop
- Free basic training for all adult leaders
- 10% off Wood Badge, Brownsea and NYLT training
- 5% bonus commission for take order popcorn sales
- Free Journey to Excellence patches

What if the Partnership Does Not Succeed?

The Partnership for Scouting depends on units recognizing the shortfall in support for council services and stepping forward to pay for their fair share of these services. If our units do not voluntarily contribute, the Executive Board will reluctantly have to consider making unit contributions mandatory. Other councils around the country have already imposed such fees. Mandatory fees would require denying re-chartering to every unit that does not provide adequate support to the Council. A mandatory approach is, however, an option the Executive Board would very much like to avoid.



Support Our Vision for the Future

A sustainable level of funding would greatly enhance the Scouting program by allowing us to (1) fully staff the Council office and district offices and keep them open on Fridays and Saturdays, (2) update equipment and facilities at our camps, (3) create additional programming and (4) eliminate our debt, thus saving the Council thousands of dollars in interest payments. These positive steps will, in turn, reduce the costs we need to raise through the Partnership for Scouting. A better program would not only make good on our commitment to the Scouts, it will boost youth retention and recruiting. Our units will benefit from greater membership and enthusiasm. The Council's vision for the future is increased youth participation in Scouting and a dynamic and exciting program for all our units.

Please confirm now that your unit will contribute its fair share of \$145 per youth member. Together we can ensure a bright future for the Great Southwest Council. Make your commitment online at www.gswcbsa.org/partnership. Thank you in advance for your support.

~ Executive Board, Great Southwest Council

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