



October 26, 2018

To the Members of the Great Southwest Council,

The Great Southwest Council plays a critical role in delivering scouting to the youth of our communities. We are proud to offer to our units outdoor adventure and the infrastructure required to support a scout program in this area. For us to continue to offer these services, however, the Council must improve its fundraising. I am writing to ask for your help.

Increased fundraising is particularly critical to our council because, as most of you already know, for several years we have struggled to balance our budget. The Council has taken several measures to turn around our finances. To bring in revenue, we have refined and expanded our three annual fundraising events (Eagle Scout Banquet, Sporting Clays Tournament, and on-line auction), increased the number of campers at the Gorham Scout Ranch (particularly from out-of-council troops), launched the Partnership for Scouting, and stepped-up our efforts to support popcorn sales by our units. Through these efforts, we have managed to slow the decline in our revenues.

To cut expenses, we have reduced the number of professional staff, consolidated our districts, and paid down a portion of our long-term debt. As a result, our expenses have declined from \$1,515,004 in 2015 to a projected \$1,263,061 in 2018.

Despite our best efforts to align revenues and expenses, we still have a long way to go. Total revenues have decreased from \$1,514,004 in 2015 to a projected \$1,455,673 this year. The great majority of our long-term debt still needs to be paid-off. Our United Way contributions have declined from \$106,906 in 2015 to \$51,882 this year. More challenges loom in our immediate future. The Great Southwest Council is one of the ten councils in the country most affected by the recent decision of the LDS Church to withdraw from the BSA. Traditionally, we have relied on the Church and its families for about 50% of our donations, membership and volunteers.

Looking at the long term, the Council would eventually like to do more than simply match our revenues with existing expenses. We want to increase our revenues so that we can restore some of our staff cuts and enhance the Gorham Scout Ranch. Such investments would, among other things, drive increased membership and allow us to offer even better scouting experiences to our youth.

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When I discuss fundraising with the members of our Council, I often hear that we place too much of the burden of Friends of Scouting on council families and that we do not do enough to pursue “corporate” money through our community FOS campaign. Let me first say that the Council has never ignored corporate support. We are fortunate to receive regular donations from General Mills, Sandia Corporation and Los Alamos National Security, among other companies. Although many councils in larger communities receive substantial support from corporate sources, this has always been a challenging proposition in New Mexico. It will not come as a surprise to anyone that New Mexico is a relatively poor state without a highly developed economic base. No Fortune 500 companies are headquartered here. Much of the economic activity in New Mexico is generated by the federal government, which is not a potential source of FOS dollars. There is no doubt, however, that we can do better.

Our Board of Directors is committed to bolstering the community FOS campaign. In doing so, we do not want to overlook any possible source of donations. *To that end, I ask each of our members to let us know if you are aware of potential scout supporters in the community, whether they are private companies or individuals. We will require from you names and contact information. We will also need you to make an introduction to these sources on behalf of the Council.* Cold calls are not productive. If you can provide us with an introduction, our board members and staff will solicit support from the contacts you provide.

Fundraising is relationship-based. We cannot significantly boost our community FOS campaign without your assistance.

Please provide the contact information for your leads to Chris Shelby (chris.shelby@scouting.org) or Randy Saunders (randy.saunders@scouting.org) at the Council office. We will follow-up with you about arranging the introduction and a FOS presentation.

Thank you for your continued support of the Council. If you have any other suggestions for improving our fundraising, please send them to me.

Sincerely,

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