



### **Introduction:**

In 1910, the Boy Scouts of America was founded to help young people grow into responsible, well-rounded citizens. As a result, more than 100 million Americans have experienced the traditional, values-based program offered by the Boy Scouts of America. These values are best expressed by the

**Scout Oath:** 

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country and to
obey the Scout Law,
To help other people at all times,
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.

The Southwest Florida Council was chartered in July 1929, and based on membership and units, it ranks 46th out of 306 councils in the United States. The Southwest Florida Council is comprised of seven Florida counties which are divided into four districts. The Council served over 30,000 youth with the help of over 3,300 volunteers in 2006.

## **Long Range Planning:**

Southwest Florida Council's 2007-2014 Long Range Plan is a culmination of several processes. An audit of the Council was conducted in order to truly understand the current climate of the Council. The audit consisted of personal interviews with the long range committee members. These committee members were a cross section of volunteers from the seven Florida counties comprising the Council.

Interviewees were asked a series of open-ended questions to obtain their thoughts and vision of the future for the Council. Their insight includes: what strengths will help the Council achieve this vision, what weaknesses might deter the Council's mission, what needs to happen to maximize the potential of the Southwest Florida Council, and what are the most critical opportunities the Council should pursue.

Additionally, all adult volunteers in the Council were invited to express their opinions through an on-line survey. Brief interviews were also conducted with many chartered partner organizations to better understand the challenges they face, to understand their assessment of what comprises a top youth serving organization and how the Council can better serve the youth of their communities.





Following this data collection process a strategic long range planning session was held with the long range committee members. Issues and opportunities facing the Council were discussed and specific, measurable and result oriented goals were developed. Our mission remains unchanged, however, guiding our Long Range Plan is a new and exciting vision for the future.

### **Our Mission:**

The mission of the Boys Scouts of America, South West Florida Council is to prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law".

## **Our Vision:**

The Southwest Florida Council will provide a program that is fun for all eligible youth in our Council; and through the values of the Scout Oath and Law develops them into the future leaders of our communities. "Scouting is the best investment our Community can make."

## **Main Objectives:**

There are four primary objectives in this Long Range Plan. These objectives support the mission and vision of the Boy Scouts of America, Southwest Florida Council. They are: Membership - Every eligible youth has an opportunity to be involved in the Scouting program.

Program - The number of trained, engaged and dedicated volunteers is increased at all levels of Scouting.

Facilities - Enhance our camping program to serve the youth of the Council

Finance - The Southwest Florida Council will continue to remain fiscally sound.

# Membership - Every Eligible Youth has an Opportunity to be Involved in the Scouting Program.

In its original charter, the Congress of the United States charged the Boy Scouts of America to make its program available to all who are eligible, but recognized that young people must become members to derive the benefits available from the Scouting program. Those who administer the program must, therefore, serve the membership and also actively and purposefully recruit new members. True to that mission, our objective remains the same today.





#### Membership Goals - The Council will:

Increase the number of new traditional program members:

- Cub Scouts to 7,702 youth members
- Boy Scouts to 3,345 youth members
- Venturing to 5,342 youth members

Increase the market share and/or growth in our traditional programs:

- Cub Scouts from 11% to 18%
- Boy Scouts from 7.7 % to 12%
- Venturing from 3.3% to 10%
- Increase the number of Exploring Posts from 34 to 90.
- Increase participation in Learning for Life, the ethics based character education program offered to schools in the Council area.

#### **Tactics to attain the Membership Goals:**

- Develop new methods to invite participation through new school and unit action plans.
- Develop specific Scouting programs that address the diverse ethnic populations of Southwest Florida focusing on Hispanic/ Latino Americans and African Americans.
- Increase our adult participation in new unit teams and membership committees.

- Expand our recruitment programs and increase opportunities for our Scouts to invite their friends to join them in the Scouting program.
- Establish pro-active procedures for retaining our membership.
- Increase marketing and public relations efforts to parents and the community at large to communicate the benefits and values of Scouting.
- Continue to partner with other youth serving agencies to offer Scouting as an arm of their outreach.
- Explore after school program opportunities.

## Program - The number of Trained, Engaged and Dedicated Volunteers is Increased at all Levels of Scouting.

The success of the Scouting program depends on having enough engaged and trained volunteers who are responsive to the needs of the Scouting program.

#### **Program Goals - The Council will:**

■ Increase the quality of the Council and
District's training programs though the use of
technology and the selection of qualified and
experienced teachers to make the program's
presentation interesting and practical to its
participants.





### **Tactics to attain the Program Goals:**

- Establish the mind-set that untrained leadership is unacceptable.
- Provide more convenient training programs and individual coach counseling to meet the demands of our busy lives and provide earlier opportunities for training.
- Develop on-line training through the internet to include helpful hints, self training and how to forums.
- Develop a marketing plan to reach new adult volunteers.
- Enhance volunteer skills and support by better and more frequent communications opportunities.
- Elevate the status of volunteers who produce sustained results through enhanced recognition and increase the tenure of all volunteers.
- Continue to develop the Council's and District's Commissioner service by qualifying candidates for commissioner service and an emphasis on better personalized service to units.

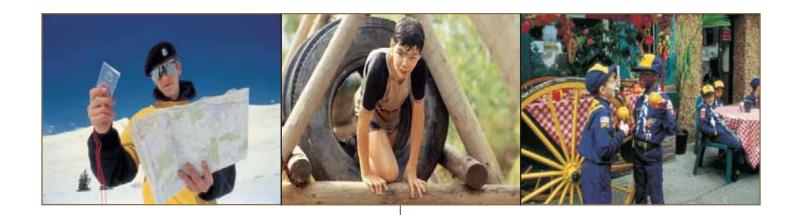
## Facilities - Enhance our Camping Program to Serve the Youth of Our Council.

As our membership grows, we realize that our current camping facilities may not be sufficient for the long term needs of our Council. The Council currently operates two camps. Camp Flying Eagle located in Manatee County and the Price/Sanders Scout Reservation (Camp Miles) located in Charlotte County. Both camps present challenges in the number of Scouts they can accommodate especially in relationship to our future membership growth plans and the need for facilities available to campers that overcome the logistics of the harsh summer Florida weather.

#### Facilities Goals - The Council will:

■ Enhance our Camping Program to Serve the Youth of Our Council by purchasing property that will provide a "state of the art" facility for the future enjoyment of all Scouts and Scouters in the Southwest Florida Council. This camp would most likely become the premier camping facility in the Council offering a myriad of programs including weekend camping, summer camp, Order of the Arrow events and opportunities for other organizations to participate with us in positive outdoor experiences.





#### Tactics to attain the Facilities Goals:

- Care will be taken in the selection of the property through a volunteer steering committee.
- This committee will ensure adequate buffers from the increasing development of home and golf course communities encroaching on Florida's rural lands.
- The camp property will be selected based on criteria developed to provide the full compliment of outdoor Scouting programs. This criteria will include healthy ecosystems, waterfront property and miles of hiking trails and outpost camping availability.
- Finally, an endowment program specific to the future maintenance and enhancement of the facilities will be developed.
- Our current camping facilities will continue to be evaluated for their best use to the Scouting program. As the future is always uncertain, we must constantly evaluate and make appropriate changes to provide continually viable camps for the Council's Scouting program.

# Finance - The Southwest Florida Council Remains Fiscally Sound.

Program objectives have a greater chance of being met when our Council has the resources to achieve them. Having a strong financial foundation allows the Council and District leadership to focus on program.

#### Finance Goals - The Council will:

Continuously position the Council to raise sufficient funds (Friends of Scouting) to fulfill our mission, and to manage these funds effectively and efficiently.

#### Tactics to attain the Finance Goals:

- Achieve a balanced budget each fiscal year.
- Increase the understanding of the Council's budgeting process to all volunteers by including district participation in the budget process and goal setting.
- Develop Web-based fund-raising to compliment the Friends of Scouting program.
- Complete a successful capital campaign to provide the necessary funding for a new Council camp and an endowment program to support the camp facilities.
- Increase our Council's Endowment Fund assets.





- Increase the number of volunteers involved in the Friends of Scouting program to secure new donors to the Scouting program. The Council will recruit ten new fund-raising volunteers, in each district, to expand the pool of prospects.
- Create a marketing plan that communicates Scouting's return on investment.

## **President's Comments:**

The Southwest Florida Council is an outstanding Council in many respects. Beyond the solid financial position, the Council excels in many programs, activities, national event participation and is thought of highly by its chartered partner organizations.

The Long Range Plan has been designed to build on the successes of the Council, to strengthen its weaknesses and to set an exciting course for the future. However, this plan is meaningless unless we work diligently as a team to fulfill the vision.

Our vision is fresh and clear, our mission remains unchanged. We are now prepared to face the challenges of the future. We invite you to join us as we make Scouting as relevant in the future as it has been in the past.

Bill Coen
President, Southwest Florida Council

## **Background Information:**

The Scouting Program is a year-round family- and home-centered program that provides an educational program for boys and young adults to build character, to train in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and to develop personal fitness. Scouting is made up of the following age appropriate programs:

Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouts, Webelos Scouts
Boy Scouting, Varsity Scouting and the coeducational Venturing Program.

#### Scout Law:

A Scout is: Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, Reverent.

The Learning for Life Program helps youth meet the challenge of growing up by teaching character and good decision-making skills and then linking those skills to the real world. Learning for Life is delivered in two methods:

- School based programs that utilize curriculum for grade K-12 as well as a component for Special Needs.
- Exploring is a work site based, coeducational program that gives high school aged youth hands-on career experiences.







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