HIGH DESERT NEWS

February 2026

Scouting America
High Desert Council

AMERICA 250



- We need volunteers to help in program areas, including a one mile compass course, identifying animal prints, range assistance, knots and lashings as well as with set up and tear down.

- We welcome support from non registered parents who may only be able to commit to help for a few hours. (Note: This does not count towards two deep leadership requirements. All registered adult volunteers will have a discounted registration fee.

- **REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!!! CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!**

Important Info

Website:

https://www.scoutingamericahighdesertcouncil.org/

Newsletter Signup:

Go to our website (above) - and click “join our email list” in the upper right corner to ensure you get this newsletter directly each month!

Social Media:

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for the latest news and updates!

Roundtable - Council Wide

1st Thursday of every month starting at 7:00pm
Info here - Each session starts with general info and then breaks into separate “rooms” to discuss Pack/Troop/Crew/Commissioner/Special Interest Topics

Zoom Meeting ID: 851 4615 1346
Passcode: EJPQv5
(Meeting Code is good for next 3 years)

Scan or Click to enter Meeting

ABQ Metro Area Hybrid Roundtable for January is at St. Pauls’ United Methodist Church - 9500 Constitution Ave NE

Questions: contact Ruben Berumen r.b.berumen@gmail.com or Kym Maldonado kym_maldonado@hotmail.com

Upcoming Events

Check https://scoutingevent.com/573 for up-to-date Info

Date	Event	Location
Feb 7th	Scouting for Food - Weekend #1	All
Feb 7th	Top Popcorn Sellers Party	El Paso, TX
Feb 8th	Scout Sunday	All
Feb 14th	Scouting for Food - Weekend #2	All
Feb 16th	Offices Closed - President's Day	All
Feb 28th	Cub Klondike - White Sands	Alamogordo, NM
March 14th	Pi Day at IFLY STEM Camp	El Paso, TX
March 21st	Camp Tyler Francis Service Day	Sunland Park, NM
March 27th	First Aid/CPR	ABQ, NM
March 28-29	Wilderness First Aid	ABQ, NM
April 3rd	Good Friday - Scout Offices Closed	All
April 4th	NRA Basic Shotgun Course	ABQ, NM
April 11th	Cub Scout Archery Day	ABQ, NM
April 11th	Council Annual Awards/Dinner	Ruidoso, NM
April 17th	OA Conclave	Gorham Scout Ranch
April 18th	Cub Scout Range Master Training	ABQ, NM
April 24-26	2026 High Desert Council Camporee	Edgewood, NM
May 8-10	2026 SJM Area Spring Camporee	Arboles, CO

Items marked with an asterik are events coordinated/run by an organization other than the High Desert Council but may be of interest to our members

2 ..... Important Info
3 ..... Calendar
4 ..... In the News
6 ..... Scouting For Food
8 ..... Membership
9 ..... Training
11 ..... Advancement
13 ..... Awards
14 ..... Events
16 ..... Long Term Planning

In the News



2026 Inclusion Toolbox is now available!

(click underlined text to download)

Scouting is for Everyone!

Working with youth with special needs and disabilities often requires different approaches and techniques. The website https://ablescouts.org/ is developed and maintained by Scouting America's National Special Needs and Disabilities Committee. It provides guidance, insights and information to help Scouts and Leaders understand how they can help Scouts of all abilities have an amazing time in Scouting.

The Inclusion Toolbox provides information on a wide variety of topics for Leaders, Parents and Scouts. It covers everything from the unit's role in supporting a Scout with a disability to navigating Advancement requirements to information to understanding everything from Allergies/Food issues to Intellectual Disabilities to Physical Disabilities and more. Even if you do not need this information now - reviewing it will help make your unit more welcoming to those who may be joining you in the future!

For More information - check out the "No Scout Left Behind" Facebook Group





In the News

Registration Is Now Open for 2027 Treks at Scouting America High Adventure Bases



Now is the time for Scouts to book a once-in-a-lifetime adventure.

High adventure provides Scout memories that will last a lifetime. The four iconic high adventure bases represent a truly unique Scouting experience that keeps your Scouts engaged and active locally as they prepare for these future adventures.

Visit https://www.scouting.org/national-high-adventure-bases/adventure-treks/ to find out more about how Scouts in your area can benefit from the amazing experience.



Gorham Scout Ranch Caretaker Needed

Have you ever wanted to live rent-free at Scout camp? We are looking for a volunteer who is interested in a unique volunteer position. Camp Gorham needs basic caretaking skills for 2026. You can stay in the Ranger's house with all utilities paid and come and go as you please. We ask that you keep an eye on camp and handle some of the basic maintenance around camp. Handle basic needs at your own pace including pool upkeep, plumbing, and electrical. This will be a fun volunteer position that could lead to a full time Ranger position in 2027. If interested, please email stephanie.balmer@scouting.org.

Scouting for Food

ABQ Metro Area Information

HELP US FILL THE TRUCK!

Albertsons market

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

February 7th & 14th, 2026

Donations of non-perishable food will be collected from 9am-5pm at the following Albertsons locations:

Academy & Tramway
Candelaria & Eubank
Paseo Del Norte & Ventura



ALL DONATIONS BENEFIT: The STOREHOUSE New Mexico www.StorehouseNM.org

Last year's numbers:

- 6979 pounds of food
- $5979 in financial donations (online and cash)
- 35,767 meals for families in Central New Mexico
- 264% growth from last year!!!! (13,500 meals last year)
- 14 units participated
- 75 Scouts/31 Leaders

Can we do even better this year??

SCOUTING FOR FOOD
A National Good Turn for America

One last week to sign up - send an email to abqmetrosff@gmail.com and we will add you to the distribution list.

If not participating in a storefront - please encourage your units to collect/bring donations to one of the above locations!

Scouting for Food

South Area Information

Drop off Points

Dates to Know

February 7, 2026- Deliver Door Hangers to houses in your unit's designated neighborhood.

February 14, 2026- Pick up bags and take to drop off points between 9am-1:00pm!

Staffed by the local Chapter of the OA New Frontier Lodge

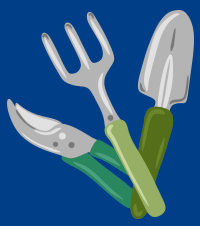
Wapaha (East El Paso):	**1700 George Dieter Dr., El Paso, TX**
Polaris (West El Paso):	**Kelley Center for Hunger Relief, 915 N. Florence St., El Paso, TX. 79902**
Mescalero (NE El Paso):	**Open Gate Church, 9821 McCombs Street, TX.**
Sunshine (Las Cruces):	**Morning Star Church, 2941 Morning Star Dr, Las Cruces, NM. 88011**
Geronimo (Deming):	**Kiwanis Club, 900 Silver Heights Blvd, Silver City, NM. 88061**
Cochise (White Sands)	**2401 Indian Wells Rd, Alamogordo, NM. 88310 ***Feb. 7th only***

- **Door Hangers** can be picked up at the High Desert Council Service Center South. Contact your Unit Commissioner or Scouting for food Chair for assistance and information.
- **Collection Areas** should be coordinated with your District Scouting for food Coordinator. This will help avoid overlaps of streets and neighborhoods for collecting cans of food. Each unit is requested to mark off an area on a city map. You should start your pick up early enough to make it to the drop off point before 12:00pm.
- **Uniforms & OA sashes** should be worn at all times during this community service event!
- **Service Hours** Please record your service hours.

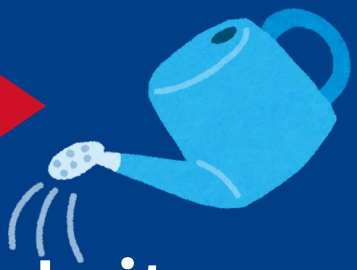
Scouting for Food Contact Info:

Wapaha-	**Rudy Garcia III**	**915-204-1642**	**rgarcia668@yahoo.com**
Polaris-	**David Leffman**	**915-845-6234**	**dleffman@txnmlaw.com**
Mescalero-	**Bill Johnston**	**915-487-5683**	**billjohn@billjohn.com**
Sunshine-	**Chris Miller**	**575-639-1421**	**cm289@yahoo.com**
Geronimo (Deming)-	**Logan Dunlap**	**575-534-3829**	**loganleedunlap@outlook.com**
Cochise (White Sands)	**Tom Feremczhalmy**	**575-921-8958**	**aztro.mot@gmail.com**

For More information - reach out to the contact person listed above for your District/Area



Membership



New Scouts BSA Membership Website

A new "Membership Corner" website has launched to help grow and strengthen units. While it is specifically targeted to Scouts BSA - many of the suggestions would also apply to Cub Scout or Venturing Units as well! Check it out!

https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/membership-corner/

New Membership Coordinator:

Every Unit should have a New Membership Coordinator. Do you want to know more about this position and how it can help your Unit with Recruitment and Retention? Check this link out:

https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/councils/new-member-coordinator/.

I took the position specific training online – less than an hour and filled with great ideas for welcoming new Scouts and their families. I suggest you take all three classes plus the introduction. Great tips and tricks (tools) for Recruitment and Retention! There is also a New Member Coordinator Facebook group, and you can order your own special uniform items from ScoutShop.org. Very affordable!



Keep watching for more "Growth Tools" each month. Check the High Desert Council webpage, Facebook, and newsletters for information that is relevant to growing your Unit! Thank you for all your efforts.

Questions: Contact Karen Zenger (karenzenger@yahoo.com) Growth/Membership High Desert Council.

Training Trail



First Aid/CPR/AED Training

LOCATION: Albuquerque

There are two upcoming opportunities to complete First Aid/CPR/AED training or renew your certification.

27 March 2026 - Register here

26 June 2026 - Register here



Wilderness First Aid March 28-29, 2026

LOCATION: Albuquerque

This 16-hour course covers first aid assessment and treatment in remote environments where advanced medical care is not immediately accessible. Participants learn to assess, treat, and manage emergencies within their training scope.

Open to participants 14 years or older or registered Venturers. This two-day course requires attendance on both days.

Training Trail





IOLS/BALOO
May 2-3, 2026

LOCATION: El Paso Area

Save the Date!

More Information Coming soon about this important training opportunity for both Cub Scout and Scouts BSA Leaders!

Advancement

January is already gone…

Do you remember all the things your Scouts did?

Remember to document your unit's monthly activities - yes - some things are documented in handbooks - but those can get lost or damaged. Things like:

- Fun events
- Youth/Adult Attendance at Meetings
- Meeting Topics
- Rank/MB/Cub Scout Adventure Requirements
- Hikes/Campouts/Service Projects (documented via Activity Log in Scoutbook+)
- Leadership position start/stop dates
- Boards of Review
- Adult Training

Scoutbook+ is the official record but as the systems transition - it can be confusing or difficult to use so a secondary method (spreadsheet/notebook/calendar) can be a good idea. Some of the biggest problems that come to the Advancement Committee for resolution are caused by a lack of data regarding requirement completions.

Indian Lore Merit Badge officially renamed the American Indian Culture Merit Badge



On Monday, January 12, Scouting America Indian Lore Merit Badge officially become the American Indian Culture Merit Badge. This change reflects an intentional step forward—one grounded in listening, learning, and honoring the living cultures, histories, and voices of Native American communities.

No requirements have been changed. Only the name and the badge design have been changed. Scouts can replace the prior version of this badge on their sash with the new version if they prefer. The new "Medicine Wheel" design Merit Badge will appear in Scoutbook for all Scouts who have completed this merit badge

For More Information - visit https://www.scoutshop.org/blog/why-scouting-america-updated-the-american-indian-culture-merit-badge.html



Advancement



Aquatics Committee Volunteers Needed!

We need a High Desert Council Aquatics Committee to proactively deliver a SAFE, FUN, and EXCITING program.

We need volunteers to build this committee!

We will use mostly asynchronous communication (email, Google docs, Google sheets) and limit meetings to only when necessary.

Committee Focus items:

- Increase adult volunteer training opportunities
- Understand and communicate new merit badge counselor requirements
- Build a team that units can turn to to ask questions about aquatic activities

A strong core of aquatics-confident adult volunteers will help units integrate aquatics into unit programming and we'll end up with aquatics-confident Scouts.

Ready to help? Email Meghan Ripple; mripple17@gmail.com

Advancement Questions?

GO TO OUR COUNCIL WEBSITE

HTTPS://WWW.SCOUTINGAMERICAHIGHDESERTCOUNCIL.ORG/

- Find “Resources” on the top of the first page and click on it
- Find the box labeled “operating Committees” and choose “Advancement”
- A document will open with information about advancement and the Eagle Scout program. On the second page, will be a list of contacts in your area on the HDC Advancement Committee. Email them and they will help you find answers to your questions.
- Back up plan - Email the advancement committee chair - Lois Capien at LOCAIPEN@AOL.COM

Awards

SAVE THE DATE!

THE HIGH DESERT COUNCIL'S

BIG SATURDAY!

APRIL 11, 2026

Celebrate our First Year as a New Council

Join fellow Scouters near beautiful Ruidoso at the Inn of the Mountain Gods for a day full of recognition, fellowship, and Council Business.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DAY

District Recognition Lunch - Awarding District Award of Merit
Council Annual Dinner - Honoring Silver Beavers
Annual Business Meeting - Electing 2026-2027 Council Officers
New Board Member Orientation
Council Board Meeting & Training

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

National Commissioner,
Devang Desai



Scouting America
High Desert Council

Full details and registration available early 2026

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
DON'T MISS OUT!

Events

(Click graphic for more information)



Cub Klondike Feb 28th 2026

LOCATION: White Sands National Park

Cubs, get ready for some frosty fun–New Mexico style! The Cub Scout Klondike at White Sands brings all the excitement of winter games to the desert dunes.

Scouts will work together in challenges, build team spirit, and "play in the snow" made of sand. This is a perfect family-friendly event full of laughter, creativity, and Scouting adventure.

REGISTER AS A UNIT!! https://scoutingevent.com/573-98641

Pi Day at IFLY March 14, 2026

LOCATION: El Paso, TX

- Experience the thrill of indoor bodyflight with a 1-minute skydive!
- Rotate through hands-on STEM activities and physics demonstrations
- Learn about air pressure, terminal velocity, and flight science in action
- Start earning the "Up and Away!" NOVA Award, with guidance on how to complete it
- This program is designed for Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturers, and siblings (ages 3+). It's educational, exhilarating, and aligned with the Boy Scouts of America's NOVA STEM initiative.
- Cost: $60 per participant with Patch



- Registration is currently full but if we have enough names on the waitlist we can open another session!
- For more Information - https://scoutingevent.com/573-102043

Events

(Click graphic for more information)

Camp Tyler Francis Day of Service



LOCATION: Sunland Park, NM
8:00am - 12:00pm
March 21, 2026

Join fellow Scouts and Scouters in giving back to our local camp! During the Camp Tyler Francis Day of Service,

Volunteers will take part in painting, cleaning, organizing, and beautification projects around the property. It's a great way to help maintain a space that so many Scouts enjoy throughout the year. Bring work gloves, water, and a cheerful attitude as we make a difference together.

Scouts are not allowed to use power tools

Cub Scout Archery Day April 11th, 2026



LOCATION: ABQ Council Office

Save the date! Cub Scouts from Tigers - AOLs are invited to earn their archery Adventure pin or belt loop! This event will also be open to prospective Cub Scouts who are interested in seeing how much fun they can have in Cub Scouts!

Spots will be limited - Registration Information will be coming soon!

Long Term Planning!



All Scouts BSA units are invited to join the Ute Chapter of the OA in the San Juan Mountain District for a Spring Camporee - May 5-10 at Navajo State Park.

More information coming soon!

Save the Dates!

More information coming soon!



Long Term Planning!



Brownsea 22

- When: June 7-13, 2026
- Where: Gorham Scout Ranch
- Cost: $375
- Registration will be open soon and will be open till April 30th
- Brownsea 22 is a great program for any Scout; however, it is most beneficial for Scouts that are in the first 1-3 years of their Scouting career and are First Class or lower in rank.
- Registration Info Coming soon!



Wood Badge 2026

- When: August 28-30 AND Sept 12-13 (MUST ATTEND BOTH WEEKENDS
- Where: Gorham Scout Ranch
- Staff and Participants Needed
- For more info - reach out to Luke Arnold, 505-999-9733 laarnold@hotmail.com

Long Term Planning!



Operation Arrow is looking for youth and adult members to serve in various roles – most critical is the OA Service Corps, providing support to complement Jamboree program staff and other critical operations.

Serving as Jamboree staff is also the cheapest way to experience the Jamboree.
Check out the pricing options:
Full Session: $650 / $1060 (over 30)
Half Sessions: $400 / $700 (over 30)
(does not include travel expenses)

For more information, visit https://oa-scouting.org/program/events/jamboree

POLAND 2027
World Scout
26th Jamboree
Scout Mondial

- The World Scout Jamboree is held every four years around the world. The next Jamboree will be held in Gdansk, Poland in the summer of 2027 and will have approximately 45,000 Scouts and leaders from over 140 countries in attendance. Participants must be between age 14-17 at the start of the Jamboree on July 30, 2027. Anyone older than that can apply to be a unit leader or on staff. Anyone younger than that will have to wait for the 2031 Jamboree in Denmark. Here are two key websites:
- The World Scout Jamboree website: https://www.jamboree2027.org
- The US Contingent website: https://wsj2027.us