

DATE: April 28, 2009
TO: Volunteers of Blue Ridge Council
FROM: Russell Smart, Council President
RE: Financial Status of Council



This past weekend, one of our longtime volunteers told me that he had heard rumors that our Blue Ridge Council was “in dire financial straits and was on the verge of bankruptcy.” There is no truth to this rumor. Our council is in good financial condition.

Here are the facts. The 2009 operating budget for our Council is \$2.7 million dollars. About half of this money comes from our annual Friends of Scouting (FOS) campaign and the rest comes from the United Way support, other council fund raising events, popcorn sales, summer camp and activity fees, and a few other miscellaneous sources. We are nearing the end of our 2009 FOS effort and as of last week we have gifts and pledges totaling almost \$1 million. It has definitely been a tougher year to raise money – as ALL non-profit groups can testify – but we are working hard to complete our FOS campaign with results very close to our original challenging goal of \$1.3 million.

We should receive about the same contribution as in 2008 from the United Way. Our advance registration for summer camp is excellent. Although the other fund raising events and popcorn sales come later in the year, we believe that we will see at least as much income as last year from these sources.

Like most businesses in these tough economic times, we have taken various steps to control our expenses in 2009. For example, there was NO increase in compensation to our staff in 2009 over 2008. Mike Bernhard (our Scout Executive), the finance team members of our Executive Board and I recently met for several hours to discuss various alternatives to keep our budget balanced for 2009 in the event that contributions do not meet our expectations. We are prepared to take whatever steps are necessary as conditions warrant further action. Thankfully, we have managed to accumulate some reserve funds from previous year’s operations, and although we would prefer not to use these reserves to fund operations in 2009, we also have that option if needed. Indeed, that is why it is important that every council have some reserve funds available.

The Executive Board of your council consists of over 50 scouting volunteers and community business leaders who are committed to keep the Blue Ridge Council rich in program and financially sound. We meet regularly and all of the business of the council is openly discussed. If you or any other member of the Blue Ridge Council has specific questions or concerns about our operations or financial condition, Mike Bernhard and I will “do our best” to provide factual and pertinent information. Any volunteer who would like to attend one of our Board meetings as an observer may contact me and I will arrange for you to do so at your convenience. Our next meeting is in June.

I thank each and every one of you for your continued support of and service to our great Blue Ridge Council and please contact me if you hear other rumors and want the facts.