



Legislation Text

File #: 23-1707, **Version:** 1

Supervisor Hidahl and Supervisor Thomas recommending the Board:

- 1) Find that a public benefit is derived from supporting funding towards the Boy Scouts of America AdventureFest Recruitment event, which is being put on by troops 645 and 454 from El Dorado Hills and 460 B and 460 G from Diamond Springs; and
- 2) Approve and authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to sign a funding agreement, consistent with the County's standard form and upon the approval of County Counsel, authorize payment of the \$2,500 community funding contribution to the BSA Troop 645.

FUNDING: General Fund.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

Since the start of COVID, there has been a tremendous impact on Scouting. Multiple Cub Scout Packs and Boy Scout Troops have folded, some after decades of continuous operation. There was hope that many would come back naturally after the end of the pandemic, but this has not occurred, and unless something is done to reverse the decline the future of Scouting in El Dorado County is increasingly uncertain.

Part of the problem is that these units operate on what is effectively a “conveyor belt” type process, with boys and girls coming into a Pack or Troop at one age, and then leaving a few years later. What the lock-down and gathering restrictions did, when continued for several years, was to cut off effectively all recruitment of new Scouts and Scouter Adults into these units, producing a “gap” in membership. As the last of the Pre-Pandemic Scouts are now nearing the age where they (and their families) will age out, there are very few to take up the torch, hence the threat to the continued existence of these organizations. This slow-motion delayed impact was both unforeseen and unforeseeable even as recently as the end of 2022, when there was still hope that the system would bounce back on its own.

However, this is more than about the delayed impact of County or State Policy on a group of volunteer organizations that are woven into the fabric of El Dorado County communities, this is also a financial issue for our communities. Scouting is a **very** service intensive activity, with the typical Scout performing dozens of hours of volunteer community service per year. A few examples

- Troop 645 alone performs hundreds of hours of Service every year in El Dorado Hills just on picking up Christmas Trees
- Eagle projects provide long-lasting benefits to communities at no cost, from school gardens to Life preserver racks at Browns Ravine, where even the materials cost of the project is covered by fundraising by the Eagle Candidate
- It isn't just the Scouts themselves: when Service Projects are underway the norm is to see friends, parents, grandparents, and others pitching in to help. When the El Dorado Hills CSD needed help distributing bags to residents to help the transition around SB 1383, the remaining Troops in the area mobilized to help. In just over one-week Scouts and their families delivered over 5,000 bags to homes, with 80 hours of work by Scouts, and another 45 hours of work by their friends and family

With over a thousand Scouts active in El Dorado County, this equates to tens of thousands of Service Hours completed in our communities at no cost to local or County government.

What is being requested is a \$2,500 contribution to help support a recruitment/rechartering event planned for this Fall called AdventureFest. AdventureFest is a group entertainment and recruitment event for both Boy and Girl Troops in Scouting BSA from across El Dorado County, including Troop 645 in El Dorado Hills, Troops 460 B and 460 G from Diamond Springs, and Troop 454 from El Dorado Hills. We are looking to hold an event for prospective Scouts and their parents to help get the kids excited about Scouting, and to let parents know that there are still wonderful options that engage and uplift... and don't require wi-fi, batteries, or recharging. These funds, which are only designed to cover a portion of the costs, will help multiple Packs and Troops get the word out about Scouting.

We could go on forever about the benefits to the kids of being in Scouting, but we all know about that already. I could go on just as long about the disproportionate impact that Scouting has on the leadership of our communities: for the relatively modest number of kids who go through Scouting look at how many of them end up as local leaders, but I'm sure that you are aware of that as well. Instead, I am asking you to consider this from a purely public Policy perspective.

What is the impact, financially, to communities throughout El Dorado County if Scouting fades from the scene? How many dollars of public funds need to be spent to replace even a portion of the hours that Scouts regularly spend in our Community? The impacts of Eagle projects beautify and improve our community, helping to maintain and even raise property values. What is the property tax revenue over time of these many projects?

The proposal before you is not fuel to run our organization, it is starter fluid to get the engine running again that was stalled by well-meaning but devastating COVID policies. It is a catalyst to try and keep an engine going that has provided enormous benefits to the County of El Dorado, both financially and otherwise. Comparing the just the economic differential between the potential demise of Scouting and the benefits of having Scouting continue and even grow in El Dorado County this is the best money you could ever spend.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could choose not to approve the funding request, and no funding would be provided in support of these efforts.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Boy Scouts of America

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Board of Supervisors allocated \$75,000 in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget in General Fund - Other Operations (Department 15) to be available for community funding requests supported by the Board. Approval of this item would allocate \$2,500 from this amount. There is no additional impact to the General Fund due to the approval of this agreement.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

CONTACT

Supervisor Hidahl 5650