



Girl Scouts®

News Release

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Girl Scouts Strengthen Through Realignment

Odessa – Girl Scouts of the Permian Basin has joined with Girl Scouts of the Rio Grande and Zia Girl Scout Council to form one high-capacity Girl Scout Council serving 12,000 girls in West Texas, Southeast and Southwest New Mexico. The new council will be known as the Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest – Southern New Mexico & West Texas. This realignment is a part of a national initiative to create councils that are better equipped to meet the needs of girls in today's fast-changing world.

To facilitate the formation of the combined organization, a Council Realignment Committee has been appointed with equal representation from each area. Twelve members make up the committee with Cindi Wiehle, Laurie Johnson, Cathy Herzog and Cindy Shelton of the Permian Basin Council joining Janet Aguilar, Rosemary Neil, Elizabeth Dahl and Rosie Maynaz of Rio Grande Council and Ron Flury, Misty Hendricks, Marsha Smith and Linda Bentley of Zia Girl Scout Council to manage the merger. The planned completion date of the merger is May 1, 2009.

"This is a great opportunity for our three councils to combine our strengths in order to serve more girls with more programs and activities," says Cindi Wiehle, Co-chair of the Realignment Committee and past chair of the Permian Basin Council. "This realignment is an important initiative of Girl Scouts of the USA because it ensures that we remain the best leadership development program for girls ages 5 to 17 for years to come. The mission of the Desert Southwest – Southern New Mexico & West Texas council is to be the premiere organization that empowers girls with the moral fiber, critical thinking, and leadership skills for a successful life journey."

Girls and volunteers in the Permian Basin, Rio Grande and Zia Councils will experience minimal, if any interruption of services during the realignment process. "The Council Realignment Committee and its sub-committees are working hard to ensure a seamless transition into the council," said Rosemary Neill, Co-chair and Board Chair of the Girl Scouts of the Rio Grande. "We are excited about the opportunities and resources we will gain by joining with the Permian Basin and Zia councils."

On August 26, 2006, Girl Scouts of the USA's (GSUSA) national Board of Directors voted to endorse a plan to realign 310 councils into 109 high-capacity, community-based councils. The new structure will make the most effective use of resources to better serve the local community and create more opportunities in Girl Scouting for even more girls.

"The new council will encompass 92,000 square miles encompassing more than 120,000 girls ages 5 to 17. As we merge the three councils, we also plan to preserve the personalities indigenous to each region," said Linda Bentley, CEO of ZIA Council and Co-chair of the realignment committee.

In conjunction with the Girl Scouts of the USA's 95th birthday, Girl Scout councils across the country began a historic transformation to modernize the iconic organization and focus on leadership for girls in the 21st century.

Renewed Girl Scout Leadership Development Program

The national Board of Directors also endorsed a more contemporary leadership program model for girls, and renewed an organizational commitment to develop girls' leadership skills based on the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law. This leadership philosophy is captured by the new mission statement – Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Girl Scouting has identified some core tenets of its leadership philosophy – discover, connect, and take action – that will form the basis of all Girl Scout activities beginning in October 2008. "The ideas of discovery, connection, and action reflect the Girl Scout view that leadership extends beyond holding a position of authority," says Kathy Cloninger, GSUSA's CEO. "In Girl Scouting, leadership is about self, others, community service, and philanthropy. You can't lead well unless you really understand yourself and have your set of values very well in place.

"Girls tell us they need Girl Scouting to personalize their leadership experience in a way that's fun and relevant to their lives. "As a national movement, we've defined the framework for such an experience."

About Girl Scouts

GSUSA is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls, with 3.7 million girl and adult members worldwide. Founded in 1912, Girl Scouting is the leading authority on girls' healthy development, and builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. The organization serves girls in every corner of the United States, including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, as well as destinations abroad.

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