



Boy Scouts of America to Bring World-Class Scouting Venue to West Virginia

Project Comes on Cusp of the Organization's Centennial Anniversary; Governor Manchin and Stephen D. Bechtel, Jr. Lead Partnership Effort

GLEN JEAN, W.Va., Nov. 18 /PRNewswire/ -- In a room filled with hundreds of supporters and local leaders, the Boy Scouts of America today unveiled its plans for a world-class, national center of Scouting excellence in the New River Gorge region of West Virginia. The site will serve as a premier Scouting destination, offering a new high-adventure base and national leadership programs and will become the permanent home of the National Scout Jamboree.

The BSA's selection of the 10,600-acre site near Beckley was chosen after an extensive, nationwide process that lasted more than 18 months aimed at finding the perfect location for realizing the vision of a national center of Scouting excellence. The development of the site is made possible by a \$50 million gift, the largest in BSA history, from the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation.

The new site, to be named "The Summit: Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve," will help the BSA fulfill its mission of serving America's youth for another 100 years, providing character-building opportunities, a respect and appreciation for the outdoors, physical fitness, and leadership development. With its extensive and diverse program offerings, the site will become a pinnacle of the Scouting experience.

"Today is a great day for Scouting. Thanks to the generosity of the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, the development of The Summit: Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve will be a source of fun, adventure, and discovery for hundreds of thousands of Scouts and leaders for generations to come," said Chief Scout Executive Bob Mazzuca. "As we prepare to enter another century of service, this announcement demonstrates that Scouting is as relevant and vital today as it was when our journey began."

Area residents, Scouts, community leaders, and elected officials attended the unveiling celebration at the Glen Jean Armed Forces Reserve Center. Guests included Gov. Joe Manchin, D-WV; U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall, D-WV; Superintendent of the New River Gorge National River Don Striker; Fayette County Commissioner Matt Wender; and Stephen D. Bechtel, Jr.

"I commend the Boy Scouts of America, Stephen Bechtel, and all of the supporters for working so diligently with our state and local officials to bring this project to fruition. This partnership will reap tremendous benefits for young people across the country and the Mountain State for many years to come. West Virginia is proud to be a part of this new chapter in Scouting history," said Gov. Joe Manchin.

The vision to establish a permanent home for the National Scout Jamboree and a new high-adventure base evolved from an intensive, highly competitive site selection process that drew 80 proposals from 28 states. The New River Gorge Region in West Virginia was selected because of its outstanding natural beauty, its world-class high-adventure opportunities, and the availability of superior local infrastructure, including roads and public services. A nonprofit organization formed by the BSA, Arrow WV, recently signed the agreement to purchase the property, some of which is reclaimed mine land and is adjacent to more than 70,000 acres of National Park Service land.

"The story behind this project is one of true partnership," said BSA National Executive Board member and project leader Jack Furst. "This new site would not be possible without the Bechtel family, the State of West Virginia, Fayette County, 4C

Economic Development Authority, the National Park Service, and dozens of others who have played such an instrumental role in making today a reality."

The Summit: Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve will complement the BSA's existing three high-adventure bases in New Mexico, Minnesota, and Florida and help meet demand for new high-adventure activities not offered elsewhere. Annually, the BSA's three existing high-adventure bases serve more than 50,000 youth--with 20,000 or more regularly wait-listed to attend.

The site, located in the Glen Jean-Mount Hope area, will offer unique opportunities for high-adventure whitewater rafting, technical rock climbing, mountain biking, and other extreme outdoor sports. The beautiful backdrop of the New River Gorge serves as a living outdoor classroom, offering activities that build leadership skills and the strong principles rooted in the Boy Scouts' mission.

The New River Gorge property will require a large investment. The effort has already received a large boost with the announcement of the \$50 million gift from the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation.

"Scouting made a tremendous impact on my life," said Stephen D. Bechtel, Jr. "It's the source of some of my fondest memories. I'm proud to be a founder on this project, and I'm thrilled to know that it will be a part of the Scouting legacy future generations will enjoy."

Construction of the project will be based on the BSA's long-standing commitment to "leave no trace." Strict stewardship of the New River Gorge environment will be enforced throughout site development and reinforced daily when the property opens for use.

"In order to maintain the natural beauty of the New River Gorge, we rely heavily on the creation of strategic partnerships, such as the one we are developing with the Boy Scouts," said Don Striker, superintendent of the New River Gorge National River. "Collaborative efforts like these are essential to carrying out the Park Service's mission to protect our nation's natural and cultural heritage."

"Thanks to the vision of the Boy Scouts, the significant contributions by the Bechtel family, and the coordinated efforts of local, state, and federal partners along with dozens of other individuals and organizations, the development of the New River Gorge site represents a remarkable opportunity for our country's youth and the State of West Virginia," said Congressman Nick J. Rahall.

Detailed plans for the site will be finalized soon, with construction scheduled to begin in the spring of 2010. It is expected to take approximately three years to have the site ready for a full array of Scouting activities.

About the Boy Scouts of America

Serving nearly 4.1 million youth between the ages of 7 and 20, with more than 300 councils throughout the United States and its territories, the BSA is the nation's foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training. The Scouting movement is composed of 1.2 million volunteers, whose dedication of time and resources has enabled the BSA to remain the nation's leading youth-serving organization. For more information on the BSA, please visit www.scouting.org.

More information about 100 Years of Scouting can be found at www.scouting.org/100years.

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