

# Meet BSA Professional Kevin Nichols

## Sharing the Highlights from my Current Role

It is with high hopes and great honor to share this personal informational brochure with the Connecticut Yankee Council Scout Executive Selection Committee. This is a wonderful opportunity to share the Scouting successes and gained knowledge from my many years of service with the council leaders who are focused on selecting a Scout Executive who embodies the competencies, skills and traits defined in the position profile. I am eager to show you that I can be your next Scout Executive and partner in achieving the short-term and long-term goals of the Council and hopeful to be joining your team soon.

This personal brochure contains a small selection of the many points of pride from my current role as Scout Executive of the Mount Baker Council, headquartered in Everett, Washington. I have been serving as the Council's CEO since February 2018 and have been fortunate to lead the day-to-day operations for this council and its outstanding board. This Council and its dedicated volunteers have worked closely with me as we dedicated ourselves to the delivery of the values of Scouting in our service area. The last few years have had many new challenges for the BSA and I'm proud of the efforts of our volunteer-professional partnership to meet these head-on and with success.

Thank you for this opportunity to be considered one of your quality candidates. I wish you the best and Happy Holidays.



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## A Proven Leader in Popcorn Sales

In 2020, most Scouting Units and Councils were struggling to fund the adventures of our Scouts. In 2020, the units participating in an online sale generated \$346,00 for support of Scouting programs at the unit and Council level.

Through active guidance and continuous marketing efforts, the leadership of the Council focused on strengthening unit popcorn sales in 2021 and beyond through aggressive adoption of the Trail's End app, increased engagement of the Unit, District and Council volunteers, and education of the benefits of the sale for the strength of unit programs.

Working closely with our partners at Trail's End, popcorn sales have grown from the

\$346K in 2020 to over \$956,000 in 2023 with annual gains of 75%, 41% and 12% in those three years. Key highlights include:

- **#1** among Class 400 councils in 2022 and 2023 among Trails End sellers.
- **#26** in overall sales among all Councils in 2023 (top in Washington State) and **#5** in nation in Per Scout Average \$'s sold.
- Unit average sales grew from \$7,496 in 2021 to \$12,266 in 2023.
- 99% of the Scouts selling used the Trails End app—top among all Councils.
- 4 units among nationwide top 100 in overall sales including **#7** with over \$133,000 in sales.

*"Popcorn sales have grown from the \$346K in 2020 to over \$956,000 in 2023 with annual gains of 75%, 41% and 12% in those three years."*

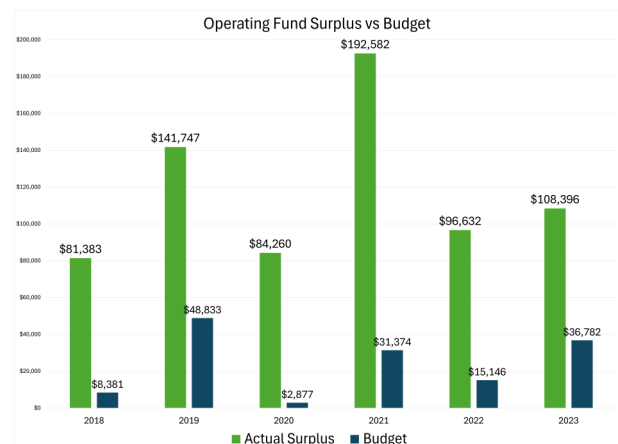
## Successful Management of Council Budgets through Effective Fiscal Stewardship

A Scout Executive must be able to help the Council Executive Board manage its council's assets to achieve a strong fiscal health foundation that will enable the council to have the cash flow necessary to achieve a life-changing program for its members. During my experience and service as a Scout Executive, I have relied on key fiscal health strategies that helped insure balanced budgets on a consistent basis including the past six years at Mount Baker Council. Those strategies are the following:

- **Strong Fiscal Capacity, Sufficient Revenue Generation, Good Governance, and**
- Utilizing the five financial indicators of a fiscally sound Council; **governance, cash flow, operating balance, accumulated debt and revenue generation.**

Using these strategies, the Treasurer, the Council Finance Committee and myself have led the Mount Baker Council to improve its fiscal health during my tenure, even during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021. Below are just a couple of the highlights:

- Led Mount Baker Council to six consecutive years of operating surpluses with a low of \$81k and high of \$192k with budgets between 1.7 million to 2.3 million.
- Managed and guided an increase in the operating fund cash balance from \$543k in 2018 to **\$1.09 million** by December 2022, doubling the year-end cash balance since 2018. Council goal is a minimum of \$750k in operating cash in December and a low of \$500k during the year.





*"This might be my favorite fundraiser!" - 2020 STRICTLY BUSINESS COUNCIL AUCTION*

## Innovative and Effective Fundraiser Strategies Encourage Donor Investment, Even Online

Fundraising is the lifeblood for Councils to achieve the mission of Scouting. Mastering innovative, effective, and creative fundraising strategies is essential to sustain and grow the mission of the BSA. I have had the honor to help lead the Mount Baker Council's innovative fundraising programs that have leveraged donor support and created unique marketing opportunities for the promotion of Scouting in our communities. A great example of creative fundraising is the 2020 Council Auction.

**2020 Council Auction's Unique Story**—In May 2020, the Council projected an \$800,000 shortfall due to the pandemic. It was necessary for Councils like ours to become creative in our fundraising to generate the funds to balance the budget and provide the adventures in Scouting even online. Past auctions had generated a net range of \$125,000-\$135,000 for the operating budget. Unfortunately, the Auction was an in-person event in the past and that would not be possible in 2020. That obstacle did not deter our resolve. With a focus on being strictly business, our team moved to an online auction (never attempted before) with a week-long Silent Auction and an Live Auction online that turned into a party for donors right in their living rooms. We even provided party packages to our strongest supporters. The 2020 Auction was a overwhelming success on many levels including:

- **\$61,000** in "raise the paddle" challenge grant sponsorships aided raising nearly **\$140,000** net in donations for the operating fund and scholarships. Also secured **\$35,000** in new corporate and individual sponsorships.
- The online Silent Auction raised **\$22,600** net, representing 50% above budget.
- The online Live Auction raised **\$65,900**, net 56.9% above budget.
- Overall in 2020, **\$241,372** net was raised for the Council, 42% above the budget.
- In 2021, additional improvements generated over **\$360k** net from the Auction.
- **Breaking News:** The 2024 Auction just achieved **\$325,000** net.

### Building Adventure with Capital Campaign Expertise

"Fundraising is a process, not an event." Edgar D. Powell

Nowhere is this truer than in the context of a capital fundraising campaign. A capital campaign can be a complicated and delicate process, but if you have a solid strategic plan as a foundation, a compelling need for support, committed leadership, a hard-working corps of volunteers, and competent campaign direction, it can be a transformational event for a council and its long-term vision.

I have had the opportunity to be a leader for some very successful capital campaigns during my various Scout Executive roles. As part of these campaign, securing significant lead gifts are a key to a successful campaign. I have had the honor of securing several large investment gifts to support the vision including a **recent one million dollar gift** for our latest visionary capital projects at Fire Mountain Scout Camp. This lead gift represented nearly 65% of the \$1.55 million dollar campaign and is allowing us to leverage that investment into more potential major gifts.

## Strictly Business Fiscal Recovery Plan

2020, with the onset of the pandemic, presented a huge challenge to our country and our fellow non-profits. The Mount Baker Council was fighting the same battle to continue its commitment to balance the operating budget each year.

Quickly, through oversight by the Council Finance Committee and management of the Council leadership and myself, the Council embarked on a "Strictly Business" campaign to balance the budget with a known drop of \$1.128 million in revenue. By changing the auction model, securing several donations, including a \$100,000 gift, running a special fundraising campaign with a \$60,000 challenge grant gift and securing a PPP loan, the Council surpassed its original net revenue by over \$50k.

The Council met the challenge head-on with creation of visionary programs, implemented tough expense reductions and fostered stronger relationships with our supporters to meet the needs of our Scouting families.

## Launching a New Recurring Giving Program

The FMSC Club is the Mount Baker Council's overall recurring giving campaign. This campaign was launched in 2021 in coordination the elimination of the Family Friends of Scouting's campaign when the Council Activity Fee for all members was adopted. Over \$120,000 in donations raise in first year.

Club Members have the opportunity to regularly support the Council, preferably as sustaining monthly donation or on a recurring annual basis.

In addition, one gift can go three ways! DONOR CHOICE!

- 85% to the FMSC Club goes to operating, which pays to keep your everyday programs alive!

The donor has the opportunity to designate the other 15% of their gift.

- All into the Operating Fund.
- Capital – to continue to build and improve Fire Mountain Scout Camp.

- Endowment – An investment in the future of scouting. Your gift is restricted, and the earnings help fund local Scouting forever. Your recurring donations will accumulate toward a "James E. West" award.

FMSC CLUB CARD – GOLD LEVEL  
\$120 A MONTH OR \$1,440 ANNUAL GIFT



[www.mountbakerbsa.org/fmsc-club/](http://www.mountbakerbsa.org/fmsc-club/)

## Recognizing Units as Team Players

Row the Boat is Mount Baker Council's unique unit recognition program that provides incentives for the Scouting units that are considered "team players." The Row the Boat theme is based on a popular team-building program based on Football College Coach P.J. Fleck. His analogy of using a rowing concept for the team helps define that we need everyone on the boat helping us paddle and in the same direction to reach our mission.

This unit recognition program can be considered a type of Quality Unit Award, similar to National BSA's current Journey to Excellence award, but focused on actions and objectives that will drive the Scouting program in our own Council. Units complete objectives in eight categories including growth, outdoor adventures, and funding their adventures. Units can receive special recognition for their achievements.

## Adventure at Camp is Year-Round

Adventures at Scout Camp are year-round is our philosophy. Many councils have outstanding summertime programs for the Scouts but those occur in a short window of time during a year. Most Scout camps are generating 90% or greater of its annual income in a 2 to 3 month window yet it occurs nine more months of expenses to keep it maintained.

Part of the goal of the past capital campaign at Fire Mountain and the recently launched **\$1.55 million capital campaign** is to enable year-round programs for our membership and generating new revenues from seasonal programs. The Council has secured ongoing support to hire a full-time Outdoor Program Director who oversees our summer and year-round program offerings at the facility.

Through visioning of our Outdoor Program committees, our Director and myself, the Council has added several new seasonal programs such as Night Hike, Merit Badge Madness, Haunted Camp, Dragon Egg Hunt, Winter Outdoor Skills training, Akela Leadership Seminars and more. We are working toward a goal of 225 days of program annually.

# Membership Growth Data - 2021-2023

## 2021-2023 Total Members



## 2021-2023 New Youth Recruited



*“our Council focused a campaign to bring back the adventure in the outdoors for our Cub Scout age youth and families.”*

## Leading Growth after Latter-Day Saints Partnership conclusion and COVID

As with many Councils serving the Latter Day Saints in the West Region, Mount Baker experienced a loss of nearly 40% of its membership and Scouting units from our rosters in early 2020. Within a few weeks of those losses, the country began its long pandemic shutdown. After providing online support for our Scouting units the best we could for the rest of 2020, our membership team of volunteers, staff and myself began to plan for a positive return in 2021, especially with our Cub Scout Packs.

With my leadership, our Council focused a campaign to bring back the adventure in the outdoors for current and future our Cub Scout age youth and families. We have continued that focus through 2022 and 2023. Focused camps and events include:

- Free Cub Scout Adventure Day in early October—750 plus attendees.
- Two new Family Camps held on Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. Over 250 combined attendance annually
- A special girl-only day for Packs and Troops.

- Haunted Camp for families. Over 500 families attending regularly.
- A Council Hike-a-thon to help raise funds for summer camp experiences.

Our Council Cub Scout membership has grown steadily since 2021 with this focus. Results include:

### 2022 Highlights

- 9 straight months of year-over-year growth (April-Dec)
- **14.36%** growth in Cub Scout in October (charter renewal)
- **36.3%** growth in girl members
- 8.23% overall growth in October

### 2023 Highlights

- 8 straight months of growth
- **8.62%** growth in Cub Scouts in October
- **23.19%** growth in girl members
- .80% overall growth in October

Continued focus on the growth of Pack membership, with good retention, will have long-term positive impact in Scouting.



Cub Scout with first caught fish at Fire Mountain during Cub Scout Adventure Day.

### Legendary Scout Camping Experience

It is the primary goal of Mount Baker Council to provide every Scout, Scouter, parent or guest who comes to Fire Mountain Scout Camp a LEGENDARY SCOUT CAMP EXPERIENCE while they are participating in our life-changing programs! We are committed to providing the best facilities, programs, and leadership that will constantly exceed the expectations of all who enter through our camp's gates. For more, visit <https://www.mountbakerbsa.org/firemountain/>

## On the Forefront with Camp Marketing

What does summer camp marketing look like for Scouting? For our team at Mount Baker Council, it's not just local council pack and troop presentations or monthly communications with the past several years of attending units. It's about varying the message and broadening the market for our life-changing facility.

During the past several years, the Mount Baker Council has conducted a capital campaign for Fire Mountain Scout Camp that invested \$1.5 million in funds and another \$1 million in donated labor and time to build 17 new structures and upgrades. The Council will be finishing a \$150,000 Anniversary Plaza facility this spring, funded by a short-term capital campaign. The Council Board just approved a new \$1.55 million capital campaign in June, 2023 to provide new roofs on 4 facilities, \$500,000 in dining hall upgrades and a new iconic Fire Watch Tower/Zipline Line in our camp core. We have secured a \$1 million lead gift to launch the campaign. These efforts have created an opportunity to market Fire Mountain as a destination camp for units across the nation.

With so much to offer at Fire Mountain, our Council secured **\$15,000** to sponsor a sub-camp at the **2023 Jamboree**, a unique marketing effort. Scouts and Leaders from the Jamboree were able to get a special rounder and patch if they visited our website and answered a few questions. Over 2,500 patches were sent to those that filled out the questionnaire.



## 2023 NATIONAL SCOUT JAMBOREE SUB CAMP C2 SPONSOR PATCH

You are now the proud owner of a Fire Mountain Scout Camp - Sub Camp C2 sponsorship rounder patch. If you would like the complete two patch set by adding the center patch, go to the Fire Mountain Scout Camp webpage via the QR code below and answer a few questions. The Subcamp C2 center pocket patch will be mailed to your home following the Jamboree.



“It's about varying the message and broadening the market for our life-changing facility.”