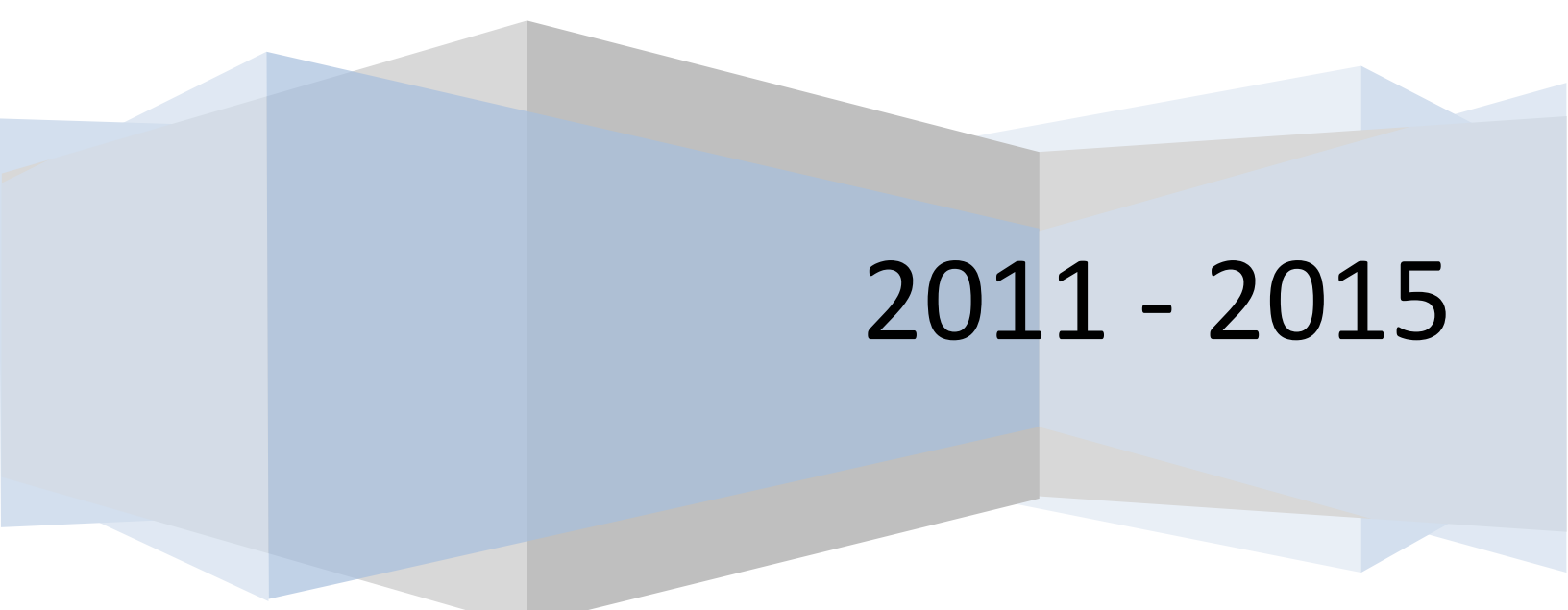


# **NORTHERN LIGHTS COUNCIL BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN**

**It is the mission of the  
Northern Lights Council  
to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices  
over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of  
the Scout Oath and Scout Law.**



**2011 - 2015**

## **2011 – 2015 STRATEGIC PILLARS**

- **Impact & Participation**
- **Resources & Finances**
- **Building our Brand**
- **Dynamic & Relevant Program**
- **Youth Advocacy & Strategic Relationships**
- **Leadership, Excellence & Culture**
- **Innovation & Technology**

## Impact & Participation Pillar

**Our Vision:** Scouting's programs reach and make a life-changing difference with kids of all backgrounds and communities.

**Objective 1:** **The Northern Lights Council will expand the number of youth we serve at all levels of our program through a robust and comprehensive approach to diversity. Strong Scouting programs will be available to youth from Native American reservations, rural areas, ethnic communities and other underserved groups.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Clearly identify our underserved in all communities and seek to increase participation in those communities.
- Develop innovative ways for youth in rural areas throughout the council to benefit from and participate in Scouting's programs.
- Ensure district committees and council executive board reflect the ethnic diversity of the geographical areas they serve.

### Specific Goals

1. Expand resources and activities available to Scouts in rural areas. Further develop and promote the Lone Scout program of the BSA to better serve Scouts in rural areas. December 2013.
2. Work with the best chartering organizations and community partners to expand service to Native American youth on reservations. Serve 15 percent of Cub Scout age youth on reservations. December 2014.
3. Identify underserved, low-income and ethnic communities within the council. Build community partnerships to help with funding and program delivery. December 2012.

**Objective 2:** **The Northern Lights Council will increase membership by retaining youth in the Scouting program longer.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Determine the drivers of retention.
- Capture "Best Practices" from across the council and throughout the BSA for improving program transitions. Share information with Scouting units and families.
- Develop stronger charter partners that embrace the full family of Scouting by chartering a Pack, Troop and Crew. Meet the needs of chartering organization through Scouting's programs.
- Engage community organizations in helping to provide resources to local Scouting units.
- Study the history of the longest tenured units in the Northern Lights Council where Scouting has transcended the volunteer leaders. Apply proven principles to build Scouting in communities that have been historically challenging.

**Specific Goals**

1. Increase retention rate in each district to 75 percent. December 2015.
2. Increase opportunities for leadership training and improve training quality. Have sixty percent of all direct contact leaders trained. December 2012.
3. Ensure each Scouting unit has an engaged chartering organization. Build strong relationships with existing chartering organizations. Upgrade to engaged chartering organizations where needed. December 2013.
4. Develop and implement strong transition plans for each level of the Scouting program. Eighty percent of Webelos will transition to Boy Scouts. December 2014.

**Objective 3: The Northern Lights Council will develop comprehensive, year-round, recruiting strategies specific to the various districts and communities throughout the council.**

**Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

- Employ the use of newly developed national recruiting strategies when those strategies meet the needs of the Northern Lights Council -- including the BeAScout.org website.
- Customize recruiting strategies to meet the needs of specific communities throughout the NLC.
- Engage volunteers at all levels to develop and implement a year-round membership recruiting plan.
- Council membership committee has sub-committees with specific focus on each program: Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venturing, and Exploring.

**Specific Goals**

1. Improve annual Cub Scout recruiting by continuing to build on Spring and Fall recruiting campaigns, development of a year-round plan for peer-to-peer recruiting, and recognizing Cub Scouts and Packs for year-round recruiting success. December 2012.
2. Improve market share for Venturing and Exploring to five percent. December 2015.
  - a) Engage a council Exploring committee to meet the needs of current Exploring units and grow Exploring membership. December 2015.
  - b) Engage council Venturing committee to provide support to Venturing units and identify community partners and potential chartering organizations to grow the Venturing program. December 2015.
3. Engage a Boy Scout committee in developing peer-to-peer recruiting plan for Boy Scout membership. Develop marketing plan aimed specifically at Cub Scouts and their parents to portray the new opportunities offered in Boy Scouting. December 2012.

## Resources & Finances Pillar

**Our Vision:** The Northern Lights Council, a dynamic comprehensive youth development organization, is financially sound through a balanced funding model. Lack of funding will not be a barrier to providing programs that fulfill our mission.

**Objective 1:** **The Northern Lights Council will meet the annual financial needs of this dynamic council through growth in diverse and sustainable funding methods.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Commit to an organized and disciplined fund raising campaign that includes new prospecting of individuals, businesses and organizations, evaluation and focused leadership and exceeds annual fundraising goals.
- Practice sound business principles to ensure fiscal responsibility and best use of donor's support.
- Develop new sources of revenue that will not rely solely on youth membership (ie: special events, direct mail).

### Specific Goals

1. Increase direct support revenue by a minimum of 5 per cent each year.
2. Convene a Major Gifts Committee to identify and cultivate ten new gifts to the council (\$2,500 plus) each year.
3. Research and recruit Scouting supporters from the Energy sector to serve on the Finance Committee/Executive Board. June 2012.
4. Conduct self assessment involving members of both Executive Board and Staff to evaluate current business practices and business model. Annual.

**Objective 2:** **The Northern Lights Council Endowment Fund will grow to \$10 million in assets and pledges by 2015.**

### Strategies to Support and Achieve the Objective

- Every board member accepts the responsibility for promoting and expanding the base of those that contribute to the Endowment Fund.
- Fully utilize the resources (staff and support literature) from the National Council to grow the endowment.
- Expand the pool of endowment candidates by prospecting Northern Lights Council alumni base.

### Specific Goals

1. Organize a board level committee for endowment development. June 2012.
2. Each Executive Board Member will prospect 3 individuals for cultivation. Annual.
3. Develop a prospect list and cultivate individuals specifically interested in the long term maintenance of camps. June 2013.
4. Organize and conduct training sessions for Endowment Promotions Committee Members. Annual.
5. The annual fund performance of the Northern Lights Council Trust Fund will exceed the \*established blended benchmark. Annual.

**Objective 3: The Northern Lights Council will leverage resources to generate additional revenue and contain operating costs.**

**Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

- We will promote our current facilities and programs to non-Scout groups.
- We will baseline current usage and increase income producing utilization of Camp.
- We will expand our appeal to alumni base.
- Determine potential shared services and cooperative purchases and bartering.

**Specific Goals**

1. Update Camp Wilderness business plan for off-season offerings and support. Identify constituency groups for off-season use and communicate availability of camp to them. December 2012.
2. Develop opportunities and programs for alumni to re-engage and utilize council-owned property. June 2013.

**Objective 4: The Northern Lights Council is committed to the highest standards of stewardship, governance and transparency.**

**Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

- Ensure the Executive Board has the personnel capable of helping the council succeed.
- Enhance governance understanding and fully participate in financial management training.
- Fulfill land stewardship obligation at council-owned properties.

**Specific Goals**

1. Expand membership in the Audit Committee to include an experienced professional accountant and thus ensures compliance with AICPA Standards. December 2011.
2. Expand membership in the Council Investment Committee with individuals that have experience in modern portfolio management. June 2012.
3. Conduct an annual board self assessment and participate in board governance and fiscal management training. Annual.
4. Expand membership in the Council Risk Management Committee to include a corporate component. December 2012.
5. Research and participate in a conservation management program titled Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) at Camp Wilderness. CSP is a program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service Division of the United States Department of Agriculture. December 2012.
6. Update the current forest management plan at Camp Wilderness to fulfill land stewardship obligation and generate revenue from logging. December 2013.
7. Review ownership interest in western North Dakota mineral rights to ensure good stewardship. Annual.

\* Blended Benchmark as suggested and tracked by Wells Fargo Trust:

39%-Barclays Capital Intermediate Gov't/Credit Index, 14%-S&P 500 Index, 10%-  
MSCI EAFE Index, 5% Russell Midcap Index, 5%-MSCI Emerging Markets Index, 3%-  
Russell 2000 Index, 3%-NAREIT Index, 4%-NCREIF Property Index, 5% Dow Jones UBS  
Commodity Index, 5%-HFRX Global Hedge Index, and  
7%-Lipper Long/Short Equity Index.

## Building our Brand

**Our Vision:** The Northern Lights Council, a dynamic comprehensive youth development organization, uses its brand as a tool for recruitment, retention, funding, and community leadership.

**Objective 1:** **The Northern Lights Council will establish the message that Scouting is cool with youth.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Leverage new technology and communication channels to reach current and prospective youth members and their parents.
- Collaborate with corporate and community partners that mutually benefit each organization's mission.
- Utilize innovative marketing tools to imbed Scouting and its ideals in the youth culture through message consistency, clarity, and repetition.

### Specific Goals

1. Facilitate and lead social media messaging between youth across the council. December 2012.
2. Build awareness inside and outside of the Scouting family through on-line engagement and social media. December 2012.
3. Develop a youth targeted media campaign that significantly improves youth awareness and youth attitudes of Scouting. June 2013.
4. Establish a community service program in which each unit works with its chartered partners, community organization, and local community schools and churches to participate in community service projects which increase the visibility of Scouting across the council. Ongoing.

**Objective 2:** **The Northern Lights Council will broaden the understanding of the Scouting brand by creating a better community awareness of Scouting that makes it easier to attract and retain Scouts, volunteers and donors.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Educate the public and engage in community awareness campaigns concerning Scouting and council programs. Target key audiences with methods for each campaign differing by key audiences.
- Establish and deliver consistent brand messages to the community, both those engaged in Scouting and not involved Scouting to help connect with Scout alumni, volunteers, donors, businesses, and the community.
- Develop a brand placement strategy that brings Scouting's image and ideals into the mainstream.
- Create a program for "marketing ambassadors" who fully articulate the council's Scouting message to different populations.
- Establish a timeline for delivering the Scouting messages and press releases.

- Expand mailing list of council newsletter to include major donors, media outlets, school superintendents, and selected community organizations.
- Create a new “Report to Stakeholders” community newsletter.

#### **Specific Goals**

1. Organize a council marketing committee which includes youth members. January 2012.
2. Organize district marketing committees in all districts. December 2012
3. Conduct annual training for marketing committees and volunteers. Ongoing
4. Develop and implement a specific marketing plan to educate volunteers and the community about the five key elements of the Scouting brand – leadership, achievement, character, service to others, and appreciation of the outdoors. June 2012
5. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of the council’s marketing efforts by measuring public perceptions and awareness. Ongoing annually.
6. Refresh the council website and keep it current so that, in addition to other functions, it will be a vehicle for attracting new Scouts, volunteers and donors. Ongoing.
7. Develop and implement a marketing internship program. January 2013.

**Objective 3: The Northern Lights Council is positioned and recognized as a trusted advocate for youth.**

#### **Strategies to Achieve Objective**

- Develop consistent council and district messages that “Scouting Builds the Leaders of Tomorrow.”
- Identify and promote key areas of Scouting.
- Create support materials for outreach across the council.

#### **Specific Goals**

1. Develop an email welcome packet for new parents and new leaders. December 2011.
2. Implement a marketing plan to promote and council and district activities. June 2013.
3. Create and distribute new marketing resources. June 2012.
4. Work with universities across the council to develop and implement an internship program for marketing, youth mentoring, service projects. January 2013.

## Dynamic & Relevant Program

**Our Vision:** Scouting's programs are exciting, culturally relevant, and appealing to today's youth; attracting them at an extraordinary rate and retaining them longer.

**Objective 1:** **The Northern Lights Council's programs match what today's youth both want and need.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Provide consistent advancement opportunities at all day camps.
- Promote instant recognition within Packs.
- Include Cub Scout advancement at district camp ceremonies.
- Continue to add Venture Crews and Explorer Posts for older Scouts to transition into.

### Specific Goals

1. Provide information to parents and leaders about advancement opportunities at Webelos camps and resident camps. Spring 2012.
2. Expand Webelos Pin Weekend through joint district events.
  - a) Identify joint district as pilot. December 2012.
  - b) Conduct pilot program. December 2012.
  - c) Conduct council-wide for outlying areas. December 2013.
  - d) Have each district work with the Order of the Arrow to promote Chapter and Lodge events to strengthen the Pa-Hin Lodge. December 2012.
3. Camp Wilderness to partner with Northern Tier High Adventure Base for summer programs. December 2012

**Objective 2:** **The Northern Lights Council is known as the premier outdoor program provider and educator.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Provide information to parents and leaders about advancement opportunities at district camps and summer camps.

### Specific Goals

1. Promote Boy Scout advancement during district camp ceremonies. December 2012.
2. Provide information to all troops about reporting advancements having occurred during out-of-council summer camp attendance. Fall 2012.

**Objective 3:** **The Northern Lights Council builds tomorrow's leaders through comprehensive youth leadership development curricula.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Promote a winter or holiday camping party as a winter activity to promote day camps, Webelos camps and resident camps.
- Promote National Youth Leadership Training to Boy Scouts and Venture Scouts.
- Recruit outstanding summer camp staff at Camp Wilderness and at day camps.

**Specific Goals**

1. Work with the Order of the Arrow to help with camp promotions. December 2012.
2. Make sure units are giving Scouts the opportunities to hold a leadership position. December 2012.

**Objective 4: Adult volunteers and youth leaders in every unit, district, and council are sufficiently trained and actively engaged in providing an outstanding Scouting program.**

**Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

- Encourage Scout community service reporting by asking each unit to identify one adult leader to collect and report activities and hours. A reporting form for council-wide reporting will be developed.
- Continue to add training opportunities to camping weekend programs at Camp Wilderness, Heart Butte, and district events.
- Cub Scout leaders are the lifeline of the Scouting program. Cubmasters and den leaders will be trained within three weeks of taking a new position.
- Provide information to all troops with method of reporting out-of-council long-term camp attendance.

**Specific Goals**

1. Identify troops and make specific contacts with those that consistently do not attend long-term camps. December 2012.
2. Promote a troop mentorship program with neighboring troops to encourage joint camp attendance. December 2013.
3. Provide outdoor skills training for adults at Wilderness and all district camps. December 2013.
4. Work with commissioner staff to identify new adult leaders and opportunities for them to take training either online or in person. December 2012.

## Youth Advocacy & Strategic Relationships

**Our Vision:** The Northern Lights Council is recognized as an advocate for health and fitness for all youth and adults. The Northern Lights Council takes a leadership position as an advocate for education, youth leadership, community service, environmental stewardship, and strengthening families.

**Objective 1: Improve the Learning for Life and Traditional Scouting programs.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Strengthen our position as a leading practitioner of informal education working with local, state and federal agencies.
- Develop a council-level Exploring and Venturing Committee.

### Specific Goals

1. Meet with Department of Public Instruction, State School Boards Association, Council of School Administrators and State Education Association to share and update them on the Learning for Life, Exploring and Scouting programs. December 2012. Develop and strengthen relationships with top 50 school districts.
2. Establish or strengthen relationships with State, Local and Federal agencies. December 2012.
3. Recruit a team of top level volunteers who lead Exploring growth. Conduct an Exploring Cultivation event. Annually.

**Objective 2: Strengthen current relationships with traditional chartered partners and build relationships with new partners through innovative alliances and youth advocacy. Encourage current chartered partners to sponsor the full family of Scouting units.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Support district plans for utilizing the full family of Scouting. Provide districts with guidelines and tools for reaching out beyond traditional chartered partners to establish new partnerships.
- Conduct one type of council-wide chartered partner event each year.

### Specific Goals

1. Conduct an annual chartered partner Dinner on Scouting each year with our five major Chartered Partners. Convene a team of staff and volunteers to host a major event annually for one of our largest chartered partners. December 2016.
2. Recognize partners that have a full family of Scouting. Annually.

**Objective 3: Strengthen youth leadership groups to advocate at a youth level on Scouting in the council**

- Emphasize the change that the Order of the Arrow is now the honor society of the Boy Scout division replacing the honor camping program.
- Start an Explorer Officers Association and training program.
- Improve council Exploring and Venturing Officer's Associations.

**Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

- Have quarterly meetings of each of these groups and programs.
- Market Venturing, Exploring and Order of the Arrow groups internally and externally.

**Specific Goals**

1. Work with a team of volunteers to serve as advisors to the youth leadership groups to help youth advocate the Scouting program. December 2012.
2. Develop a marketing campaign on the youth leadership groups in the council. December 2013.
3. Develop a social media outlet to let youth leaders share with other youth across the council what Scouting is all about. December 2013.

**Objective 4: Develop a council staff and/or volunteer organizational structure to give leadership to Scouting's youth advocacy initiatives. Focus our advocacy efforts on these youth issues:**

- \* Health, wellness and fitness
- \* Environmental responsibility
- \* Education, leadership and service
- \* Strengthening families

**Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

- Develop the new "Scout Strong" program as a platform to increase national awareness of the BSA's programs and effectively position the BSA as an advocate for health and fitness.
- Incorporate a focus on nutrition, exercise, mental health, youth protection, and safety into existing program content.

**Specific Goals**

1. Incorporate National BSA initiatives with national alliances with First Lady's Let's Move initiative and President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition into council programs. December 2012.
2. Seventy-five percent of units in the council will participate in Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) by December 2013.

## Leadership Excellence and Culture Pillar

**Our Vision:** The Northern Lights Council will be recognized as an organization that exemplifies leadership excellence in youth, volunteer leaders and employees.

**Objective 1:** **The Northern Lights Council will increase the number of engaged, accountable volunteers at all levels of the organization.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Boost volunteerism by building and expanding relationships with alumni.
- Ensure that all districts and council have the training and resources necessary to engage additional volunteers.

### Specific Goals

1. Develop and implement web-based training for unit leaders on best methods of recruiting parents. December 2012.
2. Develop, implement and track an alumni re-engagement program. December 2013.
3. Fully implement the district nominating committee process in each of the ten districts. December 2012.

**Objective 2:** **First Class leadership and position specific training will be available to all volunteers and professionals.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Utilize all available methods for training.
- Training staff will be given opportunities to hone training skills.
- Adequate resources will be acquired to enhance the leadership training experience.
- Identify the best of the best to share their best methods.

### Specific Goals

1. Develop a council training plan for implementation in each of the ten districts. June 2012.
2. Develop and provide a variety of training options to meet the needs of today's volunteers. December 2013.
3. Provide training for each district in how to conduct web-based training. June 2012.
4. One hundred percent of direct contact volunteers will be basic leader trained. December 2013.
5. Formalize immediate training and mentorship program for new den leaders. September 2012.
6. An Executive Board orientation and training in governance and fiscal policies will be held annually.

**Objective 3: The Northern Lights Council attracts, recruits, develops, rewards and retains talented individuals who provide excellent professional leadership, support services and management to Scouting.**

**Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

- Develop and groom a pool of qualified candidates from camp staff and alumni that see professional Scouting as a viable career choice.
- Reward excellent performance with compensation and recognition.
- Provide opportunities for professional development and mentorship.

**Specific Goals**

1. All new district executives will be paired with an Executive Board mentor. June 2012.
2. All council employees will participate in annual professional and personal development training.
3. The council will promote opportunities for wellness and healthy living resulting in a more enjoyable and productive work environment. December 2012.

**Objective 4: The Northern Lights Council will create a culture where all volunteers, districts and employees are members of one team with a common vision for Scouting's future.**

**Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

- Promote and encourage open dialog and opportunities for discussion.
- Ensure timely communication and feedback at all levels of the organization.

**Specific Goals**

2. Conduct a volunteer satisfaction survey to baseline areas of satisfaction and needs. Develop initiatives as necessary to address problematic areas. Annually.
3. Conduct fireside chats in each district. Annually.
4. Develop a council report card that is shared with all registered membership. December 2013.

## Innovation & Technology Pillar

**Our Vision:** The Northern Lights Council uses innovation and technology to support the strategic pillars and to increase the impact and potency of the Scouting movement. All members of Scouting are connected with the right information and technology tools anywhere, anytime, to any device.

**Objective 1:** **Adult volunteers, parents, youth and employees are provided with innovative technology tools and resources that enhance the overall Scouting experience and help them do their jobs more effectively.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Identify, track, and, as appropriate, employ technologies being used by today's youth and parents.
- Make resources and tools accessible and easy to use by focusing on usability and the needs of the Scouting community.
- Enable volunteers, employees and youth to communicate, collaborate, and share best practices and innovative ideas to enhance Scouting and its services.

### Specific Goals

1. Continue to expand the opportunities to train adult volunteers by the Internet and other available technology. Annual.
2. Implement the uses of distribution lists for Scouters to "opt-in" or "opt-out" of lists depending their needs. December 2013.
3. Increase the services that are available online for unit leaders to do their jobs more efficiently. (ie. event information and registration, training, reports, etc.) Annual.

**Objective 2:** **The Northern Lights Council implements the use of current technology in the new Center for Scouting and, in the Grand Forks, Bismarck and Minot service centers and Camp Wilderness to meet the ongoing business needs of the organization.**

### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

- Available technology is implemented to improve communication and shared resources between the council's four service centers.
- Technology is in place at council service centers to assist customers and engage volunteers.

### Specific Goals

1. Wireless internet is available at the Center for Scouting. December 2012.
2. As financial resources permit, each of the four service centers are linked by VPN. Council staff will have remote access to the council network. December 2015.

**Objective 3:** **The Northern Lights Council continues to implement the use of current technology to improve communication among our membership and to communicate our message and brand to the public.**

**Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

- Use of innovation and technology to provide consistent, timely communication of council events, programs, activities, etc.
- Use of social media is expanded, where appropriate, to communicate a positive Scouting message and to provide important updates and information to our membership.
- Expand the use of current technology and social media to attract new members to Scouting.

**Specific Goals**

1. The council has one staff member charged with insuring council communication is consistent at all levels of the program (unit, district & council). December 2012.
2. Council issues a regular electronic newsletter for volunteers and Scouting families. December 2012.
3. Up to the minute updates are provided, as necessary, to volunteers by email, texting, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media outlets. December 2013.

**Objective 4: Regular review of information & technology (regular review)**

The council engages an "Innovation & Technology" committee that meets regularly to review the business and technology needs of the council and makes recommendations to the Scout Executive as to what might reasonably be done to use current technology to meet those needs.