

“Adventure On!”

29th GOVERNOR’S LUNCHEON FOR SCOUTING

Governor Eric J. Holcomb

December 18, 2024

Remarks as prepared for delivery

I am very grateful for that great introduction, Josh! I’m also grateful and proud that you’re part of our next generation of Hoosiers!

Ryan, I’m grateful for your remarks too, and for stepping up at this important time.

To the leaders of the Crossroads of America Council, to the many supporters here today (including the folks watching in Terre Haute) and of course to the Scouts in attendance, let me say one thing above all this year: thank you!

There are things I do as governor that sometimes draw down my energy and optimism, and there are other things that always build up those critical reserves inside of me. Joining the Crossroads of America Council each year for this inspiring event belongs in the second category.

It builds me up.

It builds me up for at least three reasons.

First, this event demonstrates how powerful our grass-roots communities remain in Indiana.

In this case, you bring Scouting alumni, all of the critical volunteers – businesses, church- and neighborhood-based groups – together, for the good of our young people.

Second, this event demonstrates that renewal is always possible.

Think of how scouting has changed in a few short years – not without difficulties – but always moving towards an even better future. I love the mission of Scouting America, the essential goals being set as part of this new commitment.

And third, this event demonstrates that our next generation of young women and men includes so many exceptional leaders, creators, do-ers and helpers in-the-making.

I am so happy that the tribute to my dear friend Jim Morris reminded us that he was (first and foremost) a helper, always ready to lend a hand, to the end of his life, among us. The new First Time Camper Fund is the perfect tribute to Jim.

Jackie Morris, I am so glad that you're here today to be a part of this!

So, thank you once again for building me up. I say that in full knowledge of the challenges that stand before the Crossroads of America Council.

You'll be making tough decisions and clearing hurdles. But your strengths remain abundant inside of you (as an organization), precisely in the form of the community support, resilience and a rising new generation I just talked about.

The theme of this year's Luncheon for Scouting could not be better: Adventure On!

It's perfect for the organization right now, and for me as Indiana's soon-to-be-former governor.

We're facing change, but we're reminded to face change like the adventure that it is.

Let me share a special fact about this event that means so much to me. I'm limited to two terms as governor – 8 years – but due to some special circumstances, standing in for my predecessor in 2016, I actually got to be part of this event 9 times counting today!

There is no other annual speaking opportunity that I've been able to do 9 times. Even my mandatory State of the State speech in January, there were only 8 of those!

Where the Scouts are concerned, I wish there were many more years for me to play this role as governor.

But I'm starting a new adventure. And yes, it has all of the marks of a real adventure, not entirely like setting out on a backcountry hike or an Eagle Scout project, but pretty close.

For one, I don't know exactly what the adventure is going to look like. I've sketched a map, but my destination could change, or I could take a different route.

Two, I'm sure that I'll be in for some surprises – detours, unexpected obstacles, or opportunities.

Adventures are not picnics in the park.

Things can go wrong, or they can go even better than you expect. Either way, it leads to marker number three of a real adventure: I will be tested.

Hopefully, I've learned the right things and packed the right equipment, but I'm going to need to solve problems along the way to get out of tough spots. I'll need to learn new things and maybe improvise with some new equipment or even with new teammates.

Finally, I know that my emotions will rise and fall.

Few things in life give you nonstop, giddy fun, and certainly not a real adventure. But when I'm not having giddy fun, I'll be focused, concentrated and trying to do better. And those are really good feelings, too.

That's what an adventure is like.

I'm looking forward to mine.

I hope that you, the Scouts in the room, the Crossroads of America Council, everyone here, is looking forward to your next adventures.

On this, my last time speaking here as governor, let me leave you with some calls to action (if I may).

To the great people of our great state of Indiana in this room, please continue to cherish the Crossroads of America Council and Scouting America.

Invest in it.

Support it with your ideas and time.

Keep on being the volunteers, the leaders and mentors, without whom there is no Scouting.

And to the Scouts (new and experienced Scouts alike) please embrace what Scouting America offers you.

Scouting's gift has never been more important, and harder to find.

Our great country needs to make its communities stronger, rebuild our relationships, and rediscover what citizenship means.

We can't do any of that without our young people, without you.

I was completely persuaded by a line in the video about Scouting America that we saw a few moments ago about the importance of being "social without the media."

Social, without the media. Turn off your screens as often as you can.

Put your phones down. Make friends in person. Don't "click" to like someone – speak the praise! Talk to your neighbors. Help your neighbors.

Commit to being a SCOUT FOR LIFE, which means being someone who is always trying to be better, always trying to make his neighborhood better, always lifting people up, always giving back.

And yes, always ready for an adventure!

Thank you all. May the Good Lord Bless your efforts and, please, please, Adventure On!

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