

VW fosters partnership between Chattanooga and German Boy Scouts

Monday, March 9, 2009



By:

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Alex Ferro always enjoyed studying about Germany's valleys and mountains in his geography class.

But soon the 14-year-old will know a lot more about the European country.

Alex will join other Chattanooga area Boy Scouts this summer on a trip to Wolfsburg, Germany, that is part of an new exchange program. Scouts from Chattanooga and Wolfsburg will form a sister unit relationship.

"Volkswagen is going to play a very large role in our community going forward and we felt that Scouting, because of our common message and goals, just allowed for a very easy blending, a way to introduce the cultures of Chattanooga and Wolfsburg together," said Kevin Martin, the Cherokee Area Council's international representative for the Boy Scouts.

A couple of weeks ago, members of local Boy Scout troops met with Frank Fischer, the plant manager for Volkswagen's manufacturing facility under construction at Enterprise South industrial park, to launch the exchange program.

PARTNERSHIP

Troops participating in the sister unit relationship:

* Pack 82 and Troop 82 from Harrison United Methodist Church;

* Pack 147 and Troop 147 from Ooltewah United Methodist Church.

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The Scouts presented Mr. Fischer with a jacket bearing the German flag, American flag and Scouting crest while Mr. Fischer presented the boys with gifts from Volkswagen in recognition of their contribution to the relationship between the two cities.

In May and June, Stefan Nardelli, a Scout in Wolfsburg, will serve as counselor at the Cherokee Area Council's Skymont Scout Reservation near Altamont, Tenn., the first exchange between both cities, Mr. Martin said.

Following his visit, a group of eight youths and two adults from Chattanooga will visit Germany and will travel to the German National Scout Jamboree later in the summer.

Alex said that, through the partnership, he hopes to learn about the differences and similarities between the Scouts and both countries.

"I would like to show them how we have our meetings, about our camping trips," said the eighth-grader, who will go on the summer trip to Germany.

"We'll just talk about merit badges, to see if they have them different in Germany than we do here," he said.

Mr. Martin said the Scouts also will use video conferencing in addition to more traditional forms of communications "to allow everyone to meet and share their cultures throughout the year."

Their goal, Mr. Martin said, "is to see as many youths as possible on both sides learn and understand and make friends with youth on the other side so they can understand each other and work together better."

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