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Girl Scouts Begin Cookie Program and Announce New Cookie Locator App

It's Girl Scout cookie time! This year the Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council is premiering the new Cookie Locator app, an application for smart phone users that will make finding nearby Girl Scout cookie activities just a tap away.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is going mobile as part of a national pilot program in the Ohio market. Cookie lovers soon will be able to use their smart phones to find the nearest cookie booths and a list of dates and times when those booths will be open.

Girls will be taking orders for cookies from January 15 through 31 and will deliver those cookies in March. During March, they also will sell cookies at booths at public locations. The new Cookie Locator app will assist users to find those booth sales in March.

"It's best to order in January to ensure you get the types and quantities of cookies you want," explains Barb Leman, director of Product Sales at the Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council. "People often underestimate the number of Girl Scout cookies they want to order, however, and end up wishing they'd ordered more. We can help you locate troops in your area to order cookies now, but if you miss ordering in January, you still can buy cookies at our booths in March. You can check our website at www.gsooh.org or use the newly released Cookie Locator app to find a booth near you."

Ohio's Heartland Council is one of only 21 councils in the country piloting the new Cookie Locator app. It is for use with iPhone and Android smart phones, and is available by calling **GSCOOKIES (**472665437) from a smart phone, or by visiting the iPhone App Store or Android Marketplace. The new app is free of charge. It works by locating nearby cookie booths using the phone's GPS system or the user can enter a ZIP code, city or state to find a booth. A web-based version of the app for Blackberry phones is available as well.

The new Cookie Locator app also supplies cookie nutritional information, a discover your cookie personality quiz, and can add booth location information to a calendar and send e-mail alerts when cookies are available nearby. Users also can post the information they receive to their social networking sites and send to others via e-mail.

The theme of the 2011 cookie program is “Starting Today,” meaning that Girl Scouts are ready to start learning key business and leadership skills by selling cookies. The program is an essential part of Girl Scouting’s Business and Economic Literacy initiative for girls ages 5 to 17.

“Girls manage inventory, set goals, learn money management, and develop marketing skills,” said Leman. “Essentially, the girls run their own business. The entire troop sets a goal and follows a plan leading toward that goal. The troops use proceeds from the cookie activity to fund service projects, plan trips, attend camp, and so much more. Many successful women have credited their business skills to the Girl Scout Cookie Program.”

The cookies cost \$3.50 per box and there are eight varieties: Thin Mints, Samoas®, Tagalongs®, Do-si-dos®, Trefoils, Dulce de Leche, Lemon Chalet Cremes™, and Thank U Berry Munch™.

All proceeds from cookie activities support local Girl Scouting. The program also helps fund programs all year, keeping costs low for girls to attend day and residential camps, and participate in programs related to leadership and service, the arts, sports, health and fitness, science and technology, nature, and more.

Founded in 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA is the premier leadership development program for all girls from kindergarten through high school. The mission is to build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. Through activities in science and technology, business and economic literacy, and outdoor and environmental awareness, Girl Scouting provides girls with opportunities for fun and friendship, while fostering the development of leadership skills and self-esteem.

Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council, headquartered in Columbus, serves more than 34,000 girls and more than 9,000 adult volunteers in 30 counties: Adams, Ashland, Coshocton, Crawford, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Gallia, Guernsey, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Knox, Licking, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Muskingum, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Richland, Ross, Scioto, Union, Vinton, Wayne and Wyandot.

To find cookies, visit www.gsooh.org or call 800-621-7042.

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