

# Cumming sees scouting as building leadership

*Scoutmaster says program teaches respect for one's self and the community*

By **JANICE AUSTIN**  
For The Salinas Californian

John Cumming, scoutmaster for Boy Scouts of America Troop 101 in King City, sees the organization as a training ground for leaders.

"It's tough enough to find adults who are good leaders," said Cumming, who with his brother, Andrew Cumming, co-owns King City-based grower/shipper Metz Fresh LLC. "It's great to see a boy and know he'll one day be a good leader. I really respect the kids that stick to scouting. Nowadays there are so many directions for kids to go, so many ways that they're being pulled. Being a Boy Scout is a commitment."

Cumming himself joined the Boy Scouts as a sixth-grader in Greenfield, and remained active in the troop for six years. Then, in 2000, Cumming's son, Royce, now 12, brought home a flyer from Del Rey Elementary School in King City about joining Cub Scouts, the division for boys up to fifth grade. Boys in sixth grade and above become Boy Scouts.

"He became a Tiger Cub Scout," Cumming said. "I observed as a parent as he went to his next level in 2001. By 2002, I was an active leader."

In April 2005, Cumming and assistant scoutmasters Danny Reyes and Joe Sturgill formed Boy Scout Troop 101. Their sponsoring organization is Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6747 in King City.

"They're a great group of people," Cumming said. "When you get a bunch of young men around war veterans, it's really great."

The troop began with 10 boys



SCOTT MACDONALD/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Scoutmaster John Cumming of Troop 101 in King City is pictured Nov. 16 at Metz Fresh LLC where he works.

and now has 12 active members, ranging in age from 11 to 14, who earn merit badges and learn camping, hiking, first aid, swimming and citizenship in the community.

"Scouting teaches the basic responsibilities of being a young man," Cumming said. "It teaches self-respect, involvement in the community, a

sense of family and a sense of purpose.

"I tell the boys the importance of the bond that they'll have. They'll be able to go anywhere in the United States and talk to people, regardless of their status or position in life, and have something in common if they were both once in scouting. Scouting shows ini-

## **JOHN CUMMING**

■ **AGE:** 47

■ **YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:** Scoutmaster, Boy Scouts of America Troop 101, King City.

■ **WORK:** Managing principal and one of the founders of Metz Fresh LLC, a spinach producer.

■ **EDUCATION:** King City High School, class of 1977; B.S. in Agricultural Business Management, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, 1982.

■ **PERSONAL:** Lives in King City with wife, Connie; son, Royce, 12; and daughter, Brenna, 9.

■ **INFORMATION:** For MORE information about Boy Scouts in South County, call John Cumming at 386-1015.

*'Watching the kids progress through the ranks brings a lot of gratification.'*

— **John Cumming**,  
scoutmaster of Troop 101 in King City

tiative and the ability to stick with something to progress through it."

Royce is now senior patrol leader for the troop.

"Watching the kids progress through the ranks brings a lot of gratification," Cumming said. "It teaches responsibility and leadership."

In addition to running Metz Fresh, Cumming operates a cattle ranch with his brother.

He looks at his volunteer involvement in scouting as a long-term commitment.

"I've seen people go like a Roman candle and burn out," he said. "I pace myself. I have a family and run two companies. I make time for scouting."



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