

Advancement News

APRIL 2013

Vol. 3, No. 3

Prepared. For Life.®

Previous issues available at: www.scouting.org/GuideToAdvancement/Advancement_News.aspx

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

New Advancement Educational Presentations Posted

Take a look—and lend a hand! You can find our new presentations for advancement administrators at www.scouting.org/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx. Presentations will be updated later this month according to the expiration date that shows on the title slide for each presentation. Note that several of the presentations are not yet outdated, but nonetheless, they will be replaced, and it is important never to use an expired presentation. Please take a moment to review the presentations and send any suggested improvements or corrections to advancement.team@scouting.org.

The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling Training

One of the new educational products available at our website gives councils a new tool for ensuring the administration of an effective merit badge program with counselors who function according to national procedures.

The “Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling” provides consistent instruction on the BSA’s merit badge program, and closely follows section 7, “The Merit Badge Program,” in the *Guide to Advancement*. Accompanying the PowerPoint slides is a presenter’s guide to help standardize the subject matter for all presenters across the country. Presenters should allocate 60 to 90 minutes for delivery, but more time may be needed, depending on the experience of the participants and the questions asked.

A team of volunteers spent many months reviewing existing merit badge counselor orientation programs, adding ideas contributed by task force members and other volunteers, and developing the findings into this comprehensive program.

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A series of field trials was conducted, which resulted in some important feedback that was then incorporated into the session. The product was then submitted to the national Advancement Committee for final review and approval.

Now you can put this new product to use in your council by going to the Advancement Resources page at www.scouting.org/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx, and clicking on "Advancement Educational Presentations" under "General Resources." As you put it to use, please let us know what you think and how it can be improved.

Philmont Conference for Experienced Advancement Volunteers and Professionals

Save the Dates: June 16–22, Philmont Training Center

If you are an experienced volunteer advancement administrator, consider taking your game to the next level this June at the Philmont Advancement Issues and Solutions Conference. Offered for the first time, this new case study–based conference is designed for unit, district, and council advancement coordinators, chairs, committee members, and staff advisors. Start making plans now to take advantage of this opportunity to share ideas with other committed advancement administrators at Scouting's premier destination—Philmont Scout Ranch.

Conference participants will not only learn about the latest updates on advancement issues, but more importantly, they will have a chance to analyze, discuss, and solve case studies similar to those regularly dealt with by the national Advancement Team and Committee and the Eagle Issues Task Force, which considers appeals and requests for extension of time to earn the Eagle Scout rank. The results will be a better understanding of the effective use of the *Guide to Advancement* and the confidence to handle difficult issues at the council level. To register, log on to MyScouting.org and select the "Event Registration" tab.

Hear It First on Twitter

If you want the news first, follow the national Advancement Team on Twitter. Topics cover the FAQs received at the national office, clarifications on policies and procedures, news on changes and new releases, and best practices in advancement.

If you already have a Twitter account, follow us at @AdvBSA or BSA Advancement Team. If you don't have an account, it's time to take the plunge. It's a quick and easy process to set up an account at www.Twitter.com. To limit incoming emails (tweets), you can select the Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

Philmont Mechanics of Advancement Conference Set for August

Revised Guide to Advancement 2013 to Be Covered

Can't make it to New Mexico in June? The Philmont Training Center also will be hosting a Mechanics of Advancement course for unit, district, and council volunteers and professionals from August 4–10. The revised 2013 editions of the *Guide to Advancement* and the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* will be distributed, featured, and covered in detail, and conference attendees will gain a more in-depth understanding of the essentials of advancement and an appreciation for the rationale behind the policies and procedures governing it. Presentations will come from members of the national Advancement Committee and its advisory panel. Group discussions will focus on effective ways to resolve advancement-related issues and challenges.

Of course, this conference also offers a prime opportunity to share the beautiful Philmont Scout Ranch with your family and new Scouting friends from across the country. Register now at MyScouting.org.

Report From the Sea Base and the CEA

This past January, 32 Scouters representing 26 councils converged on the Florida Sea Base for the Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators. They reviewed the new advancement educational materials recently posted on the advancement resources Web page and began the process of developing the next wave of presentations. These will be completed during the 2013 year and rolled out at this same conference in 2014 from January 12–17. The four new topics under development are:

1. Eagle Project Coaches
2. Council/District Advancement Committee Organization, Membership and Education
3. Conducting Effective Eagle Boards of Review
4. Unit Advancement Committees

On Increasing Advancement

Orienting New Boy Scout Parents

It is the time of year when thousands of our Webelos Scouts leave the world of Cub Scouting and join the Boy Scouts. Along with these new Scouts come parents whose primary, if not only, experience in Scouting has

been with a pack. How would we like these parents to support their sons in this new experience? What should we do to make their transition from pack to troop as seamless and pleasant as possible? Well, a good beginning would be to help them understand the more independent role Scouts play in a troop and on the advancement trail in particular.

Consider the major differences parents and sons may discover in the transition between Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting:

- Individual Scout responsibility for setting and striving for his own goals
- An entirely different advancement program that relies more on the Scout's initiative and not so much on his parents
- The need for parental support in the Scouting adventure and awareness of the troop calendar with its camping opportunities and assorted activities
- The need for parental support in their sons' troop leadership roles or positions of responsibility
- The importance of serving on the troop committee and boards of review, or providing leadership to the Scouts as assistant Scoutmasters or Scoutmaster

Getting new parents involved in supporting the Scouting program takes place at the troop level. But a district or council advancement committee can do much to help units educate parents—especially on the mechanics of the advancement program. Here's a quick list of ideas:

1. Work with the council or district training committee to encourage all parents—not just those registering as adult leaders—to take Youth Protection training and "This Is Scouting" online training. Offer these courses or in-person, follow-up discussions immediately prior to district roundtables. Invite parents to stay and participate in the Boy Scout roundtable program afterwards.
2. Plan to hold training courses at summer camp that may be interesting to any new parents attending.
3. Put together a traveling "This Is Boy Scout Advancement" road show and offer to take it to troops for their parents.
4. Work with each troop committee to encourage them to recruit an advancement coordinator.
5. Write articles about advancement for the council newsletter.
6. Post articles about Boy Scout advancement on the council Facebook page.

Remember, advancement equals retention. The more parents support their Scouts in advancement, the longer the boys will remain in the program, thus giving us more opportunity to influence their growth in character, citizenship, and fitness. If we help parents understand

this, they will be more likely to become active. Isn't that growth why they want their boys in Scouting, and isn't that what we're all about?

Merit Badges—Enhancing Our Youths' Competitive Edge

Game Design Merit Badge Released

March 6, 2013, witnessed the launch of the BSA's newest merit badge. Requirements for earning the Game Design merit badge will bring Scouts through the process of analyzing games they enjoy, learning game terms, investigating related concepts, and progressing to the design and testing of a game of their own. For a complete list of requirements, visit www.scouting.org/meritbadges.aspx.

Merit Badge Midway at Jamboree Needs You!

The 2013 National Scout Jamboree will provide youth the opportunity to experience several new merit badges in the once-in-a-lifetime jamboree adventure. You can be a part of that adventure and experience the excitement by serving on the national jamboree staff. More importantly, you may be the person who introduces a Scout to his future through one of these new merit badges:

- Search and Rescue
- Game Design
- Chess
- Welding
- Sustainability



Visit the 2013 National Scout Jamboree website at <https://summit.scouting.org/en/Jamboree2013/Pages/default.aspx> for more information about registering for the national jamboree as a merit badge counselor. Do it today! Be a part of something great!

Awards and Recognition

Nova Awards and BSA Advancement

In 2009 the Boy Scouts of America was asked to take part in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) movement. With the help of ExxonMobil, participation has been made possible through the connection of our current program and the development of the Nova awards program. Many may ask, "How does STEM fit into my current unit activities?"

STEM is already incorporated in BSA programs through merit badges, Webelos activity badges, and Cub Scout Academics and Sports. It is seen in activities like shooting sports, camping, and water sports. Many of the basics from existing program areas can be used toward both rank advancement and in the Nova awards program. Other requirements are in place to help introduce our youth to the STEM world.

Recognizing that STEM may be of special interest to some, many units have created STEM dens, patrols, and even whole STEM Venturing crews. The idea of STEM is also being merged into day camp and resident camp programs. These activities can help foster a whole new group of volunteers and youth in units through both traditional and nontraditional activities.

The Nova awards are meant to enhance a unit's advancement program by providing a wide variety of activities and interest topics. Did you know it could be said that most merit badges involve STEM in some way or another? By keeping this in mind, a whole new world can be opened to youth members and volunteers, and ultimately the result will be increased advancement.

To learn more about the BSA's STEM initiative and the Nova awards visit www.scouting.org/stem.

Cub Scout Angle

Cub Scout Camping Opportunities

Even as "March came in like a lion," council and district plans were well under way for local Cub Scout day camps and Cub Scout resident camps before the month "went out like a lamb." Summer—and even spring—camping opportunities for boys should be designed to give them the experience of group living in an outdoor environment under the supervision of trained leadership.

In addition, day camp and resident camps should give boys the chance to participate in supervised activities outside the confines of their dens and packs. These camps may offer opportunities for:

- Shooting sports (only available through organized district- and council-approved activities)
- Hikes
- Outdoor cooking
- Swimming
- Horseback riding
- Nature awareness

While these activities should be planned to provide Cub Scouts with outdoor experiences, leaders should remember that advancement should come from program—especially from fun and exciting experiences. For example, a Cub Scout day camp station where the activity calls for boys to cook outdoors will also provide achievement 9g and elective 25f completion

opportunities for Bear Cub Scouts. At the end of a camp session, many camps provide pack leaders with a listing of the achievements and electives that were a part of the program for each Cub Scout program level.

District advancement committees are encouraged to support outdoor programs of the district (see the *Guide to Advancement*, 3.0.0.2, No. 6). Cub Scouts in the district will be well served if a few of the advancement committee members support that planning process. They may know volunteers who would be available to provide experienced staffing for the day camp, or they may be able to suggest Boy Scout merit badge counselors who have specific skills that would add value. Whatever support is given, it is the youth who will benefit from the introduction to the Scouting outdoor program.

From the Guide to Advancement

Eagle Scout Service Project Safety

Eagle Scout service project coaches, or anyone who reviews Eagle service project proposals or final plans, should help to ensure safety. Familiarity with the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 9.0.2.14, "Risk Management and Eagle Scout Projects," and also "Service Project Planning Guidelines" in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* will be helpful.

Although the adults present at the project must monitor safety, the Eagle candidate should include attention to safety in his planning. The unit leader and the project coach (if one has been provided) will want to review the Scout's plan, and they should encourage him to cover safety with respect to issues such as tool usage, site or weather hazards, wildlife and insect concerns, controlling horseplay, and general conduct during the project. A safety briefing should be conducted before work starts, and regardless of who conducts the briefing, the Eagle candidate should have a thorough understanding of the safety issues involved.

Most every Eagle Scout candidate should include a first aid kit appropriate for the work he is planning. One may be available on location, or the troop's kit may be taken to the site. These days it is almost unnecessary to suggest that a cell phone should be brought along to summon help if something more serious should happen.

It is important the Scout understands "Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations" (available at <http://ntl-sitecorepd.netbsa.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/680028.pdf>); that is, what tools may be used by a 14-year-old, a 16-year-old, or require an adult to operate. For example, all power saws are limited to adult use, and it is recommended that the saw operators be the saw owners. They are more likely to be familiar with the tool and how to operate it safely.

One risk Scouts may not consider is that related to chemicals. For paints, solvents, and cleaning products, the Scout should see that the package labeling is read, understood, and followed. In some cases, adult handling may be appropriate. When cleaning, sanding, painting, demolishing, or refurbishing any surface painted before 1978, the potential risks with lead poisoning must be considered. Similarly, pressure-treated lumber is no longer made with arsenic, but old lumber may be involved in the project, and even new lumber still has some special handling requirements. (Information is available from most pressure-treated lumber retailers and at www.naturalhandyman.com/iip/infxttra/infpre.html.)

Other common issues that should be considered are on-site risks ranging from buried utilities to plant or animal dangers (e.g., poison ivy, mosquitoes, ticks, and even bears, snakes, and alligators in some parts of the country). No matter where you are, weather, traffic, and sanitation issues should always be considered.

Many projects require some form of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as long sleeves or pants, work or protective gloves, closed-toe shoes or work boots, safety glasses, ear plugs or protectors, dust masks, etc. The candidate should understand the specific PPE needs for his project and have a plan to be sure the necessary equipment will be available and used properly.

Every Eagle Scout project should be carried out safely, but safety doesn't happen by accident. Thorough advance guidance of the Scout will go a long way in helping ensure an accident-free project. Some councils even provide links for safety information on an Eagle Scout page of their websites to help their Scouts to "be prepared" from the time they first meet with their Eagle project coaches and project reviewers until the project is safely completed.

In closing, it must be noted that although a Scout is expected to be concerned with safety on his project, Scouts are minors. Adult leaders must take the responsibility for safety and they must be available and free to intervene if necessary. An Eagle project is defined by the BSA as a unit activity, and unit leaders have the same responsibility for health and safety during Eagle projects that they have with any other unit event. Additionally, property owners of a project site also have a responsibility for safety. For example, if digging is involved, the property owner must be forthcoming with information on the location of underground utilities and identification of any hazards specific to the site that the Scout or the unit leader may overlook.

Advancement Committee Mechanics

The Patrol Method Applied to Organizing an Advancement Committee

Through our training and regular reading—including *Advancement News*—and through our experience, we know districts are charged with achieving the local council's goals in four key functions: membership/relationships, finance, program, and unit service. We also know there are four key elements within the district's program function: training, camp promotion and outdoor program, activities and civic service, and advancement and recognition. Section 3 of the *Guide to Advancement* cites 18 specific council advancement responsibilities, which can be grouped into five essential categories: (a) helping unit leaders with advancement procedures, (b) monitoring unit advancement progress, (c) recruiting merit badge counselors, (d) approving Eagle Scout service project proposals, (e) convening or attending Eagle Scout boards of review (depending on how your council manages this process), and (f) recognizing youth and adults for special awards.

Previous articles in *Advancement News* have provided insight into some of the operational aspects of advancement only—just the first five items above, (a)—(e). This is because the News is published by the national Advancement Team and the national Advancement Committee, which have authority to administer to advancement, while the national Youth Development Team is responsible for awards and recognition that are not related to advancement. These past News articles have covered such concerns as specific committee positions, procedures for selecting summer camp merit badges and counselors, unit visitations, and general advancement promotion. But what does the overall "profile" of the advancement committee look like? Who is in charge? Who reports to whom? How do committee members stay in touch? How long does one stay in a position? How do committee members interact with the other district or council committees and commissioners? How are new members found and what characteristics should be sought? Finally, should the role of the advancement committee be one of "law enforcement," or one of education and encouragement?

Here's the good news: If we follow the patrol method, we'll have a successful committee—one that could be the pride of the district.

The committee's chair—hopefully an official member of the district committee who is vetted through the district nomination and election process—operates like the senior patrol leader. Each committee member responsible for a specific area is like a patrol leader and has other members of the committee in his or her "patrol," with a possible slight departure in that some committee

members may be in more than one patrol. Like any good group of patrols, all members will have different roles to play.

This simple and proven structure immediately makes other aspects clear. Tenure is an example. All positions in Scouting are for one year, that is, charter to charter—there are no “tenured for life” positions. Just as a patrol leader can be voted out of office, so can our committee “patrol leaders” change from year to year. In this way, knowledge and experience can grow and cross-pollinate. New “patrol members” can be recruited and coached by their peers, and committee “patrols” can specialize in Cub Scout advancement, Venturing and Sea Scouting, merit badge counselor identification and recruiting, etc.

There are other advantages to employing the patrol method. It means more people are involved and that “deliberations” and “consensus” become bywords. The chances, then, of a single “Eagle-project czar” emerging are greatly reduced, and perhaps eliminated. Moreover, advancement committee members become the allies of the district’s other committees, for example, by promoting skills reinforcement and advancement opportunities at camporees and other district events. The advancement committee also helps the district achieve its Journey to Excellence goals by serving as consultants, as needed, to the commissioner staff for unit service.

Finally, what should one look for in a new advancement committee member? An understanding of the ways in which the youth members of each program area advance will be essential, but a fundamental belief in the value of the patrol method also becomes essential.

Most importantly, does the person we’re considering “get it”? Does he or she understand we are all here to help units develop youth into participating citizens and not to create arbitrary barriers to personal development? Get this one right and everything else drops into place! As any human resources expert will advise: “Hire for attitude first; knowledge and skills can always be taught.”

And by the way, if you were wondering, our role is one of education and encouragement.

About *Advancement News*

Advancement News is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America national Advancement Team and the national Advancement Committee. Its intent is to support and clarify procedures found in the *Guide to Advancement*, announce various changes and updates in advancement, and to assist advancement committees in making decisions that can help increase the rate of advancement. The plan is to distribute *Advancement News* monthly, but we’re flexible. It will go out when there is something important to say. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at advancement.team@scouting.org. Districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication.

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From the Field

“I Did It Myself”

Cub Scout day camp is a great place to see the advancement program in action. One very popular activity is to build a birdhouse (Bear achievement 5). It was a weeklong project involving sawing lengths of wood, using the buddy system during the nailing, attending to detail with sanding, and applying a final coat of paint. At week’s end, the Cub Scouts had their finished products ready to take home and share.

One boy walked with pride down the path to where his dad was waiting. As he surveyed the birdhouse, an onlooker could see that the sides were not completely square, there were many, many dents where the hammer had missed the nails, and it was obvious the paint had pooled in places. Yet here he was, holding his birdhouse with pride. When he saw his dad, he held it up triumphantly and beamed with accomplishment exclaiming, “Look what I did all by myself.”

Yes, he had accomplished so much. He fulfilled Bear achievement 5. He used hand tools, he worked with a partner, and he created something to share with wildlife in his backyard. From his point of view, he made something important. Looking at his accomplishment, we also see that he experienced the core value of perseverance, he accomplished a goal, he cooperated with others, and we know his confidence and his character were affected by his success. It was a good day at Cub Scout day camp!

We also know that this Cub Scout will probably be able to build something else with wood, a saw, and a hammer and nails, that his next trial will be better, and that he may remember the experience and share it with his son when the time comes.

(C.P. from Washington)

Have you seen an impact on a boy or a young man as a result of his experience with the advancement program in action? Please send your story to advancement.team@scouting.org. Provide your name, email, and general location so we may contact you if we have questions. No guarantees, but you just might see your story here.

What Do You Think?

Survey for April 2013

Earning Merit Badges at Camp

The national Advancement Committee will be seeking your input regarding delivery of merit badge instruction at camp. Some say that camps offer the absolute best merit badge programs, and others claim camps “give the badges away.” Where do you stand? Our survey programmers are working overtime right now processing the thousands of responses from people like you who are letting us know what you think through the Voice of the Scout program. They will be reviewing and programming our April *Advancement News* survey in a few weeks. We will send it to you in a separate mailing.

From the Archives

November 2011: Active Participation and Applying the “Third Test”

The *Guide to Advancement*, in topic 4.2.3.1, takes a new approach in determining whether a Scout has been “active” to the extent required for rank advancement. Three sequential tests are set forth.

The first two require a Scout to be registered and in “good standing.” For the third test, a Scout is evaluated against his unit’s reasonable expectations that refer to a level of activity. If he does not meet these expectations, however, he may still be considered active for the purposes of advancement. In summary, here’s how it works:

First, a board of review must agree that Scouting’s values have taken hold and been exhibited. The *Guide to Advancement 2011* expands on this on pages 21 and 22. If such agreement can be reached, then one of the following must be established:

The unit’s reasonable expectations that refer to a level of activity have not been met due to other positive endeavors in or out of Scouting. For example, activity with the Order of the Arrow, his religious institution, school, sports, or clubs that also develop character,

citizenship, or personal fitness, may be considered and “counted.”

OR

The unit’s reasonable expectations that refer to a level of activity have not been met due to noteworthy circumstances that have prevented a higher level of participation. These may be medical, educational, family, or other issues that for practical purposes limit the Scout’s ability to participate. If it can be established that the Scout would have been more active if he could have been, then he is deemed “active” for the purposes of advancement.

It is important to note that it is up to a board of review to make the determination. The Scout’s level of activity should be discussed at the Scoutmaster conference, along with considerations of Scout spirit and reasons why the Scout has not been more active. As a result, it is possible the Scout may decide he is not ready for advancement, or perhaps that the Scoutmaster may support the Scout’s view that he should be considered active in spite of unit expectations. Regardless, the Scoutmaster does not have the authority to hold back a candidate for rank advancement. There is no requirement that a Scoutmaster conference must be “passed.”

A Peek Ahead

Opportunities for Advancement

Administrators: Advancement Issues and Solutions Conference at Philmont; Advancement Educational Videocasts

On Increasing Advancement: Reviewing the Publication “On Increasing Advancement”

The Cub Scout Angle: The Role of the Pack Committee

Advancement Committee Mechanics: Maintaining Merit Badge Counselor Lists

What’s the Procedure?: The Appeals Procedure

Merit Badges—The Competitive Edge: Merit Badge Improvements—A Continuing Process; Welding Merit Badge Videos on YouTube

What Do You Think?: Earning Merit Badges at Fairs and Midways

