

# Advancement News

June/July 2013

Vol. 3, No. 5

Prepared. For Life.®

Previous issues are available at [www.scouting.org/scoutsource/GuideToAdvancement/Advancement\\_News.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/GuideToAdvancement/Advancement_News.aspx)

**Layout Change.** Based on your feedback we have changed our layout so it will be easier to read on your screen. We have also moved production from the national office to our volunteer *Advancement News* staff. These changes give the *News* a new look, but we hope you will enjoy the content—same as ever.

## Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

### ***Guide to Advancement 2013 to Be Featured at Philmont***

The Philmont Training Center will be hosting a Mechanics of Advancement course from August 4-10 for unit, district, and council volunteers and professionals. The revised *Guide to Advancement 2013* 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.

## On Increasing Advancement

### **2013 National Scout Jamboree Offers Advancement Opportunities**

The first National Scout Jamboree at the Bechtel Summit Reserve is almost here. Excitement is in the air as Scouts are off to the adventure of a lifetime. As part of their preparation, Scouts have been advised that advancement opportunities will include merit badges and service projects.

Scouts will travel off-site for a day of service in one of the nine counties surrounding the Summit. Those who have their home troop Scoutmaster's permission, may use this day of service to fulfill the Star or Life service requirement. Previous national jamborees have had one central Merit Badge Midway. At the Summit, however, merit badge booths will be in a number of different locations, and boys can earn "partials" for some merit badges at adventure areas like Scuba, swimming, shooting, and archery. A list of the merit badges offered is found at <http://www.summitblog.org/merit-badge-madness-at-the-2013-Jamboree/>.

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A number of new merit badges are being introduced at the jamboree: Sustainability, Programming, and Mining in Society (prelaunch). To find more information about these, visit: <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/merit-badge-calendar>. Upon its jamboree release, the Sustainability merit badge becomes Eagle-required as an option to Environmental Science.

While jamboree Scouts will be participating in many activities unique to the site, those who wish to fulfill merit badge requirements have been advised to take signed merit badge blue cards with them. To assist Scouts returning from the jamboree, there are a number of things council advancement committees can do to help unit leadership tie up advancement loose ends:

- Work with the council's jamboree committee to ensure unit leadership is aware of the service project opportunities available to jamboree participants, as well as the guidelines for applying that service to rank advancement.
- Alert Scoutmasters that Scouts may be returning with partial merit badge completions so they are ready to recommend local resources for completion. Scoutmasters should also be ready for the new merit badges that Scouts will want to earn.
- Encourage unit leaders to check with returning Scouts in a pro-active way to make sure none of their advancement gets "lost."
- Finally, remind units to update records through Internet Advancement.

By working with unit leaders, advancement coordinators, and council jamboree committees; advancement committees can help ensure each Scout's Summit experience remains a "mountain top" memory long after he returns. Isn't that what we're all about?

## The Cub Scout Angle

### Webelos Scouts and Boy Scout Camporees

This time of year during annual program planning, Webelos leaders often have questions related to Webelos Scouts attending Boy Scout camporees. Most frequently asked: Can they attend or not? If they can, why should they, and what can they do while there?

Webelos dens might decide it would be a good idea to attend camporees to complete Arrow of Light Requirement 4, "With your Webelos den, visit at least one Boy Scout-oriented outdoor activity," or even Requirement 5, "Participate in a Webelos overnight campout or day hike." From an advancement view, camporee attendance seems to fulfill the "letter of the law" for the former, but probably not for the latter—unless the Webelos Scouts hike through the camporee on the way to their own separate campsite!

According to *The Cub Scout Leader Book*, a well planned Webelos-to-Scout transition program helps Webelos Scouts in many ways:

- By introducing them to Boy Scouting skills and future advancement opportunities.
- By giving them the opportunity to see youth leadership at work in the troop and sense their own potential as youth leaders.
- By allowing them to become confident and enthusiastic about the patrol method.
- By generating the desire for troop membership as the result of this gradual exposure to troop-oriented activities.
- By letting them make friends in the troop before becoming Boy Scouts.

There is little doubt these benefits would be experienced at a camporee, but the multi-troop setting may not go far enough in supporting them. This is primarily because a Scout troop involved in camporee events may not be focused on the Webelos visitors. Consider a similar scenario: When high school seniors visit a prospective college, the college will probably not want those visits to be during homecoming when students are caught up in their own activities. Instead, the college may plan special visit weekends where the focus can be on the potential freshmen.

A Webelos Scout daytime visit to a camporee is encouraged, as mentioned in the *Cub Scout Outdoor Program Guidelines* ([www.scouting.org/scoutsources/CubScouts/resources/CubScoutOutdoorProgramGuidelines.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/scoutsources/CubScouts/resources/CubScoutOutdoorProgramGuidelines.aspx)). However, the boys should not compete in the activities designed for Boy Scouts. To return to our previous analogy, those visiting high school seniors would not be able to take classes for credit during their college visitations. Help in determining whether an activity is oriented to Boy Scouts or Cub Scouts, can be found at [www.scouting.org/scoutsources/BoyScouts/Age-AppropriateGuidelines.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/scoutsources/BoyScouts/Age-AppropriateGuidelines.aspx). Most importantly, though, Webelos Scouts cannot spend the night at a Boy Scout camporee.

So much for "letter of the law." What about intent? As noted above in the *Cub Scout Leader Book* excerpt, the point of the Boy Scout visit and joint activity is to help with the Webelos transition into a troop. This can best be accomplished at a special troop Webelos Scout welcoming event, rather than at a camporee.

# From the *Guide to Advancement*

## Merit Badge Emphasis

### Quality Merit Badge Programs

One of the persistent challenges in Scouting is offering a quality merit badge experience for youth members. The *Guide to Advancement* 2013 features several changes that address certain aspects of this issue; however, many of the best solutions begin with unit best practices.

### Leverage Parents as Advocates

Scoutmasters should hold parent meetings focused on the merit badge program—at least annually. This is a great way to help parents understand that merit badges are an opportunity to explore various topics with knowledgeable adults, and that requirements must be completed as written. Parent meetings are also an opening to identify new merit badge counselors using the Troop Resource Survey ([www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34437.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34437.pdf)). And though parents who become registered and approved counselors may counsel their own sons, the revised *Guide to Advancement* 2013 provides Scoutmasters the authority to limit the number of merit badges Scouts in the troop may earn from one counselor—as long as the limitation is the same for all the Scouts in the unit.

Additionally, unit leadership can remind parents that their sons must have a discussion and obtain a blue card from the Scoutmaster before enrolling in merit badge events. A quick conversation with the Scoutmaster might reveal whether the event is a good program or one that has generated complaints. Most parents want a quality experience for their sons, and they can be important advocates if they understand BSA procedures and the reasons behind them. Though the *Guide to Advancement* 2013 reviews a number of methods for strengthening merit badge group instruction, there will continue to be opportunities for improvement.

### Unit Merit Badge Counselor Lists

While council or district advancement committees maintain lists of registered merit badge counselors, some units also keep a roster of counselors for the badges most often pursued by its members. It is best, however, if unit counselors will also agree to assist other Scouts in the district or council. Regardless, all counselors must be registered, and approved by the council advancement committee. The *Guide to Advancement* 2013 also describes the revised procedure for issuing a blue card to a Scout interested in challenging a merit badge. The Scoutmaster, in this process, instead of “approving” that a Scout may begin working on a merit badge, has a discussion about what goes in to earning it and provides at least one registered and approved counselor.

### Feedback

Maintaining a merit badge counselor list requires feedback. When the Scout turns in a completed blue card, a few moments of feedback can be a key part of building the unit list, assuring the counselor has done a good job and followed BSA advancement procedures. Ask the Scout about the experience. How long did it take to earn the badge? Did he have fun? What was difficult and what was easy? Would he recommend the counselor to his friends? Through these kinds of questions the unit leader can determine if the badge was actually *earned*. If it can be established beyond a doubt that the merit badge could not possibly have been earned, then the *Guide to Advancement* 2013 provides a method of limited recourse.

### Training

Troops may identify parents or other family members who can serve as merit badge counselors. All merit badge counselors must complete Youth Protection training and be registered and approved by the council for each merit badge counseled. Training to help them become better counselors is strongly encouraged. The presentation, “Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling,” provides a good working knowledge of quality counseling techniques as does sharing tips and ideas with fellow counselors. A well-trained counselor is a better counselor!

### 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 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 eight or nine issues of *Advancement News* annually, but we're flexible. It will go out when there is something important to say. Feedback, suggestions, and letters are welcome at [advancement.team@scouting.org](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org). Districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication.

# Advancement Committee Mechanics

## Maintaining Up-To-Date Merit Badge Counselor Lists

One of the key responsibilities of a council or district advancement committee is maintaining a merit badge counselor list (see *Guide to Advancement* 3.0.0.2, item 8 and also 7.0.1.5). Most councils and districts do not need to start afresh; they have been maintaining lists for years. How to keep them current is the important question. Is there a preferred method, or does one way work better than another? The answer is there is no “ultimate” method, but there are definitely some that may work better than others. This will depend on your council’s or district’s organization, capabilities, and resources.

The US Postal service can work well, and is probably the most accurate, but it can be expensive. When First Class postage is used, it provides for the return of unknown addressees, suggesting some research may be necessary, or that some people could be dropped. When you use a First Class return envelope or card, you also increase the chances of getting a return confirmation that the individual will continue as a merit badge counselor, along with verification of the contact information.

Email is a no-cost method that can provide accurate results, and like First Class mail, non-deliverable messages are usually returned. One disadvantage, of course, is that you must have a listing of all the counselors’ email addresses! Other disadvantages may be that counselors may not check their email boxes often enough, or the messages may be screened as “junk mail.”

A third alternative may be a “phone-a-thon” approach, where all merit badge counselors are telephoned to verify contact information, merit badges counseled, and so forth. One advantage here is that phone numbers are instantly verified. This might seem labor-intensive, but by making the contacts on a “rolling” basis, so that in any month one-twelfth of all counselors are called, the task is spread out. Even with as many as 1,000 counselors, this would mean just 80 calls a month, and only 10 if divided among eight committee members. The added value is the personal contact that provides the opportunity to thank each counselor.

Your council or district might have a different method from any of these three, or may have a hybrid method that you’ve found to work. If so, we’d like to hear about it. You can write directly to us at [advancement.team@scouting.org](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org).

## Merit Badges—

## Enhancing Our Youths’ Competitive Edge

### Robotics Merit Badge Support

Carnegie Mellon’s *Summer of Learning* initiative is providing a unique opportunity for Boy Scouts. Counselors and boys interested in programming robots, designing games, and animating stories, while having a chance to win prizes, should visit <http://boyslife.org/about-scouts/merit-badge-resources/robotics/19264/robotics-resources/> and click on the link to the Carnegie Mellon Robotics Academy. There is an abundance of free information and instruction available for Scouts and Scout leaders alike. Remember, as with all online activities, keep in mind the tenets of [BSA’s Cyber Chip award](#). Enjoy the *Summer of Learning* with Carnegie Mellon.

### Sustainability To Be Released at National Jamboree

When the 2013 National Scout Jamboree begins, the newest Eagle-required merit badge will officially become part of the advancement program. The Sustainability merit badge, an alternative to Environmental Science, will help Scouts discover ways they can personally contribute to ensuring that our natural resources will last from generation to generation. Even more, this new badge will help Scouts educate their families in finding ways to reduce their consumption of water and energy, and to waste less food.

As Scouts work their way through the requirements, they will learn how each of us can contribute to a more sustainable way of life within our families and communities. We consumers purchase a lot of “stuff” every day; the question is, how much of it relates to a “need” as opposed to a “want?”

The word “*sustainability*” may be new to some, but the concept is not. It builds on the common Scouting practices of being thrifty and conservation-minded, and the BSA has taught many of the sustainability principles throughout its history. This means anyone with a strong Scouting background may be able to serve as a merit badge counselor, but those with knowledge of our environment, civil engineering or architecture may be especially strong candidates.

## Councils Receive Welding Merit Badge Support

The BSA national strategic plan calls for us to offer new and relevant programs to attract and retain Scouts and their families. Welding is a great example of doing just that.

Lincoln Electric, the primary contributor to the development of Welding merit badge, recently donated a welding kit to every council, and continues to provide support. Last fall each Scout executive received a packet containing planning sheets on how to get started, a DVD with several program support videos, and other materials. These custom videos are currently available at:

[BSA Welding Merit Badge Intro](#)

[Tech Tip: FCAW-S and the Boy Scout Welding Merit Badge](#)

[Tech Tip: GMAW and the Boy Scout Welding Merit Badge](#)

[Tech Tip: SMAW and the Boy Scout Welding Merit Badge](#)

[Tech Tip: FCAW-S Troubleshooting](#)

[Tech Tip: SMAW Troubleshooting](#)

[Tech Tip: Visual Weld Inspection](#)

[Tech Tip: SP-140T Troubleshooting](#)

[Tech Tip: GMAW Troubleshooting](#)

[Welding Safety Interactive Guide](#)



More is on the way. One curriculum on welding has been produced for Boy Scout resident camps, and others designed for Cub Scout day camps feature welding with chocolate! For more information contact Bill Evans at [bill.evans@scouting.org](mailto:bill.evans@scouting.org).

Lincoln Electric has hired Charlie Cross as the BSA account manager. He is dedicated to helping councils in a number of ways. His current project is to build a contact list of council welding coordinators and staff advisors. He will appreciate receiving your council's information at [charles\\_cross@lincolnelectric.com](mailto:charles_cross@lincolnelectric.com).

## Cooking Merit Badge Changes

### Cooking Merit Badge to Be Required for Eagle Scout Rank

Effective Jan. 1, 2014, Cooking merit badge will be required for the Eagle Scout rank. Regardless of when a Scout completed the Life rank or began working on Eagle, unless he fulfills all the requirements—with the exception of his board of review—before Jan. 1, 2014, he must earn the Cooking merit badge to attain Eagle.

### Cooking Merit Badge Undergoing Revision

During 2013 the Cooking merit badge has been undergoing a major revision. The process for implementing changes to merit badges is covered in the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 7.0.4.2, "What to Do When Requirements Change." The changes to Cooking will first appear in a revised merit badge pamphlet, and the new requirements will then become effective the following Jan. 1, with the release of *Boy Scout Requirements*. For example, if the revised pamphlet is released during 2013, the new requirements will become effective on Jan. 1, 2014. The 2013 edition of the *Guide to Advancement* describes the following options for the Scout.

If changes to merit badge requirements are introduced in a revised merit badge pamphlet after the January release of the *Boy Scout Requirements* book, then the Scout has until the following January 1 to decide what to do. He may continue—or begin work—using the old merit badge requirements and the old pamphlet; or he may switch to—or begin work—using the new requirements and the new pamphlet. Unless it is otherwise stated in the merit badge pamphlet, *Boy Scout Requirements*, or official communications from the National Council, if a Scout chooses to use the old merit badge requirements and pamphlet, he may continue using them until he has completed the badge.

The *Guide to Advancement*, under the same topic, goes on to say, "There is no time limit between starting and completing a badge, although a counselor may determine so much time has passed since any effort took place that the new requirements must be used." This will apply to Cooking as well.

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### **Regardless of the Requirements Used, Cooking Will Count**

Scouts completing the requirements for the Eagle Scout rank after Jan. 1, 2014, must earn the Cooking merit badge under either the existing requirements or under the new requirements as revised. Scouts are not required to earn the badge under the new requirements in order to qualify for Eagle.

### **Green Vs. Silver Border**

Once the Supply Group has released a new Cooking merit badge patch with a silver border, which signifies it is Eagle-required, then any Scout who earned and received a green-bordered Cooking patch (regardless which requirements were involved) may purchase or be presented with one that has a silver border. A Cooking merit badge certificate or fully signed blue card must be presented to obtain the new patch. The green-bordered patch may then be retained as a keepsake. Scouts are not permitted to wear both merit badge patches at the same time and there will not be a “trade in” program for exchanging one for the other.

## **Eagle Issues**

### **Eagle Scout Letters of Recommendation**

An Eagle Scout candidate must list five or six references on his application. The resulting recommendations provide the board of review insight to the Scout and how he lives the Scout Oath and Law in his everyday life. While variety may be useful, councils must not impose restrictions on who, specifically, provides the recommendations. It is the Scout who lists the references, and it is his decision as to who they will be—as long as they fit the general description. If a Scout does not have a job, and thus no employer, he may leave that reference line blank. If a Scout is not associated with an organized religion, or if he is home-schooled, a parent or guardian provides the religious, or educational, references. There is no procedure that prohibits one person from providing multiple recommendations; neither is there a minimum age for those providing recommendations.

On a related note, please note that Neil Armstrong, Apollo 11 Commander, has passed away. Please advise Scouts not to send requests for Eagle congratulatory letters to his family. His name and contact information should be removed from any lists of such letter sources.

How references are contacted and how recommendations are handled are determined by the local council. Some councils contact references by phone, while others provide a form and expect the Scout to deliver it to the references. This is acceptable, but it is the limit of the Scout’s involvement. Recommendation letters must be returned to the Scoutmaster, board of review chair, council service center, or someone else; but not to the Scout. The Scout must not be asked to handle the completed recommendations. These are confidential to the board of review and are never shown to the Scout.

If recommendations are not received, the troop, or a district or council representative handles follow up. There should be a reasonable effort to obtain recommendations, but following this, the lack of any of them is not a reason for delaying a board of review. For more information see the *Guide to Advancement* section 9.0.1.7.

Be “in the know” when the *Guide to Advancement* 2013 is released. The news will come first through a tweet from the BSA National Advancement Team.

### **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](http://www.Twitter.com). To limit incoming emails (‘tweets’), you can select BSA National Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

# The Venturing Perspective

## Multiple Credit for Venturers

As always, it is best to keep detailed and accurate records on all advancement requirements completed, including the date they were fulfilled. This is not only important for Boy Scouts, but also for Venturers.

Topic 4.3.1.3 in the *Guide to Advancement* explains that Venturers may receive multiple credit for completing a requirement. This is only the case, however, if the requirement was completed when the youth was a registered Venturer. If a Boy Scout completes a requirement, and then joins a Venturing crew the following day, the completed requirement does not apply in Venturing. Though if the records indicate the Scout was also registered in a crew at the same time, the requirement may be recorded as completed toward both a Boy Scout requirement and a Venturing requirement. Thus the importance of keeping accurate records—it is too easy to forget when requirements were passed.

*Within* Venturing, there may be opportunities where fulfilling one requirement may count toward multiple Venturing requirements. For example, a Venturer could complete an EMT basic course for the first aid Ranger award elective and also receive credit for the lifesaver Ranger elective. For a dual-registered youth, if his Boy Scout patrol plans a menu to meet the Cooking merit badge requirements, the cooking requirement for the Ranger award may also be met. While the Boy Scout and Venturing cooking requirements are different, they are similar enough that elements from both can be done at once in the same process to satisfy both requirements. Similarly, if the Backpacking merit badge was earned while registered as a Venturer, elements can also be counted for the backpacking Ranger elective.

Venturers are not, however, permitted to receive multiple credit for requirements that require sharing what they learned from completing a specific requirement or elective, such as a table top display. Separate table top displays would have to be made to share what was learned in the specific elements of each requirement.

## From the Field

### Ceremonial Props Inspire

A district in the Central Region coordinated a special Eagle Scout court of honor ceremony complete with a five-foot tall Eagle Scout badge. The badge was made with fabric, and each color and section had a light behind it. It even had a special lectern to control the lights. As the Eagle Scout challenge was read, each section, in turn, was lit up. It was very impressive. Almost every troop used it for Eagle Scout courts of honor.

As M.R. from Illinois writes, sometimes the effects of a ceremony linger long after the lights are turned off.

“The pack I worked in always made sure that every Webelos Scout had an opportunity to attend an Eagle Scout court of honor. In 1974 my younger son and his buddy, both fifth-grade Webelos Scouts, went with me to an Eagle Scout court of honor. At the end of the ceremony his buddy turned to me and said “I’m going to finish my Arrow of Light, and I’m going to be an Eagle Scout.

“Over the course of the next seven years, this young man was shifted back and forth several times between his parents, from the Midwest to Florida and back again, then back to Florida. Fortunately he had two excellent Scoutmasters.

“In the spring of 1981 I received an invitation to his high school graduation in Florida. Enclosed in the envelope was an invitation to his Eagle Scout Court of Honor. The power of that court of honor so many years earlier had obviously made a deep impression.”

Thank you, M.R.

Have you seen an impact on a boy or a young man as a result of his experience in the advancement program? Please send your story to [advancement.team@scouting.org](mailto: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.

# From the Archives

## November 2011: Cub Scout Advancement Likely Underreported

(Updated with 2011 and 2012 statistics)

As pack committees prepare their annual plans, it is a good time to review the thoroughness of each pack in completing the necessary advancement reporting. As annual plans are being formulated, attention to activities in support of advancement will provide benefits to the pack and to the youth it serves.

The *Guide to Advancement*, in topics 3.0.0.1 and 3.0.0.2, which cover advancement committee responsibilities, calls for the establishment and implementation of action plans that will stimulate advancement and lead to maximum success in the Journey to Excellence. For a council to achieve the JTE Cub Scout advancement standard, the following is required:

- Bronze: 40 percent of Cub Scouts must advance at least one rank, or the rate of advancement must increase by 2 percent; for example, 36 percent to 38 percent.
- Silver: 55 percent of Cub Scouts must advance at least one rank, or 40 percent advance and there is a 2 percent increase.
- Gold: 75 percent of Cub Scouts must advance at least one rank, or 55 percent advance and there is an 2 percent increase.

Nationally, the percentage of Cub Scouts who advanced at least one rank increased from 45 percent to 51 percent from 2008 to 2010, and to nearly 60 percent in 2012. Just less than half (48 percent) of councils have reported an increase thus far during 2013, however, which suggests the rate may level off for the year. Regardless, it remains likely that Cub Scout advancement is underreported, and the actual rate may be significantly higher.

It makes sense, then, that the first step in any action plan would be to improve accuracy through increasing advancement reporting. The most efficient method may be email messages and phone calls to pack advancement coordinators, Cubmasters, or committee chairs urging them to submit reports. An email message could provide a link to Internet Advancement, and information on how to obtain a unit access ID and get started making entries. The new educational presentation, "Getting the Most from Internet Advancement" found at [www.scouting.org/scoutsources/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/scoutsources/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx), has proven to be helpful as well.

Entering advancement through Internet Advancement represents the most efficient method to ensure advancement is recorded to the JTE dashboard.

As more packs consistently report advancement, an accurate baseline can be derived and plans to increase advancement directed to where they are most needed.

Entering advancement through Internet Advancement represents the most efficient method to ensure advancement is recorded to the JTE dashboard.

## Special Necessities

### Merit Badges and Scouts with Special Needs

All requirements must be met for any merit badge a Scout attempts to earn. This is the same, even for Scouts who have special needs. Scouts with special needs, however, who are unable to complete Eagle-required merit badges are permitted to earn alternative badges in order to qualify for Eagle. Topic 10.2.2.3 in the *Guide to Advancement* outlines the process. Scouts with special needs must first earn as many of the Eagle-required badges as possible before applying for any alternatives. This does not mean, however, that he must start an Eagle-required badge that due to his disability, he will not be able to complete. If he will not be able to complete it, he should apply for approval to earn an alternative, once he has completed all those he is able to earn. Planning ahead is the key. The Scout and his parent or guardian, and his leaders, should be thinking about alternative merit badges early in the process so the Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges, No. 512-730, can be completed and submitted quickly.

It should also be noted that alternative merit badges must be "as challenging" for this Scout as the replaced merit badges are for other Scouts.

The Scout with special needs does not have to be registered beyond the age of eligibility with a disability code (See the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 10.1.0.0), but must qualify as having a permanent physical or mental disability, or a disability expected to last more than two years, or beyond age 18.



# The Survey Says!

Welcome to our new feature, “The Survey Says!” Nearly 2000 Scouters like you have responded to our *Advancement News* surveys since the beginning. Keep your eye on this space to learn about the results. A number of the task forces organized by the National Advancement Committee have studied your feedback and shaped their recommendations based on this important input. Many thanks to those of you who have been telling us what you think.

## Your Feedback Makes a Difference

Here are some examples of what previous surveys have revealed:

- 75% of respondents somewhat or strongly agree with the new approach to evaluating “active participation.”
- Only 29% of respondents indicated their councils provide training for service project coaches. 13% require coaches to take training before assisting Scouts. 79% prefer that national provide the training materials. (Note that participants in the January 2013, Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators began work on a presentation for Eagle Scout Service project coaches. We hope to release it at the next CEAA this January.)
- 77% of respondents are somewhat or very satisfied with the final plan section of the Eagle workbook, and 84% reported they knew of no problems occurring as a result of requiring approval of a project proposal rather than a final plan.
- However, 92% of respondents believe it is important or somewhat important that the Scout provide a copy of a final plan to the Eagle Scout service project beneficiary.
- 68% of respondents encourage Scouts to attend any or all merit badge fairs. 6% discourage Scouts from attending.
- Only 12% of respondents agree or somewhat agree that it is appropriate for merit badge fairs to serve as fundraisers.

Until recently, the largest survey participation was 570 respondents to the September, 2012, *Guide to Advancement* and *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* survey. This feedback played a key role in shaping many of the 2013 *Guide to Advancement* changes. The May 2013 Camp-Earned Merit Badges survey set a new record, though, with more than 800 responses!

## A Peek Ahead

Here is a glimpse of what we are working on for the next issue of *Advancement News*. As always, actual content may vary based on a number of considerations, especially any late-breaking news that we want to be sure you hear about.

### Topics Planned for August/September

- **Opportunities for Advancement Administrators:** The Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators at the Florida Sea Base, January 13-17, 2014
- **On Increasing Advancement:** How Advancement Committees Affect the Journey to Excellence.
- **The Cub Scout Angle:** About Den Chiefs
- **From the *Guide to Advancement*:** Did this Scout Earn His Advancement?; The Scoutmaster and the Blue Card
- **Advancement Committee Mechanics:** What Makes a Great Merit Badge program?
- **Merit Badges—Enhancing our Youth’s Competitive Edge:** Mountain Biking
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