

Advancement News

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Prepared. For Life.®

Previous issues are available at http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/advancement_news.aspx

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

Philmont Training Center: Advancement Issues Conference

Have you ever wondered what kind of advancement issues are commonly seen at the national level? Have you ever wondered what the Tooth of Time looks like at sunset? Join us at the Philmont Training Center this August and find out the answers to both questions!



During the week of August 10-16, the Advancement Issues and Solutions Conference participants will analyze, discuss, and solve case studies similar to those regularly dealt with by the National Advancement Committee's Eagle Issues Task Force. Examples will range from disputed circumstances and appeals to time extension requests. In addition, the latest advancement updates will be discussed, and we will put the most up-to-date information in your hands.

Seasoned council and district advancement administrators and professional advisors will find this hands-on experience extremely rewarding. Not only will they gain a unique insight into the proper and effective use of the *Guide to Advancement*, but they will acquire the confidence needed to handle similar difficult issues in your home councils. It's not too late to register! See page 2 for instructions.

Continued on page 2

In This Issue

- **Opportunities for Advancement Administrators:** Philmont Training Center: Advancement Issues Conference; Coming This January: the CEAA; Advancement Education Tools Available for YOU
- **On Increasing Advancement:** Shared Leadership—Involving Scouts in Advancement
- **Advancement Committee Mechanics:** Setting Goals and Making Plans—Time Well Spent (Part 1)
- **Cub Scout Angle:** A Great Year Ahead—Delicious Den and Pack Meetings
- **The Venturing Perspective:** Discovery Award—Second Step on Trail to the Summit
- **Eagle Issues:** Revised *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* Posted
- **Varsity Scouting News:** Boy Scout Oath and Law Replace Varsity Scout Pledge
- **Merit Badges—Enhancing Our Youth's Competitive Edge:** Computers and Digital Technology Transition—Questions and Answers
- **Awards and Recognitions:** Medal of Merit and National Certificate of Merit to Be Processed by Local Councils
- **From the Archives:** November, 2011: Advancement Committee Mechanics: Committee Size Makes the Difference (continued)
- **Helpful Links:** Advancement Resources Page
- **A Peek Ahead:** Topics Planned for August-September

Registration information for the Philmont conference can be found at MyScouting.org using the Events Registration tab. For more on these and other PTC conferences, as well as complete information about the family programs and leisure activities, visit www.philmontscoutranch.org/PTC/ConferencesE.aspx.

Coming This January: the CEAA

Don't miss the Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators!

Date: January 11-17, Florida Sea Base

First, the "C.E. double A" is not a training course. Instead, it is an opportunity for Scouting volunteers who work with the advancement program in any capacity to provide input to the National Advancement Committee. We want to know what YOU think we should be doing. The CEAs in 2013 and 2014 were responsible for laying the groundwork for several new advancement educational presentations. The 2015 conference will do the same and more.

The CEAA uses a workshop approach, generating tangible results for consideration by the National Advancement Committee. Participants will improve their skills in working with advancement policies and procedures, but the learning simply *happens* as we take on the issues at hand and work toward the desired results. The method is not unlike that used in a good Scout troop that offers a fun program in which advancement simply "happens."

General information on Florida Sea Base conferences is available at www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/FSB_Conference_Flyer.pdf. Please let us know at advancement.team@scouting.org if you are interested in attending the CEAA. The registration site will open soon and we will send you a link.



Advancement Education Tools Available for YOU

The National Advancement Committee's Webinars and Education Task Force continues to develop new informational tools to help councils teach the proper advancement processes. The tools are in PowerPoint and video formats that can be used in a variety of ways. Individuals can view all of them at home, but several come with presenter notes and are best used in district or council group settings. The resulting group discussion provides valuable interaction and feedback. To find the educational tools go to www.scouting.org/advancement, and click on "Advancement Educational Presentations."

Two of the videos are particularly important when it comes to improving JTE scores:

- "On Increasing Advancement" is a series of videos from a presentation at the 2013 National Annual Meeting by members of the National Advancement Committee. The individual segments cover topics such as "Increasing Volunteerism," "Fully Functioning Advancement Committees," "Promotion and Reinforcement," and "Purposeful Management."
- "Guardian of the Gate" is a video contributed by a member of the National Advancement Advisory Panel that discusses common road blocks that could cause unnecessary delays in advancement.

Continued on page 3

Other tools on the site include: “Getting the Most From Internet Advancement,” “The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling,” “The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach,” and “Effective Troop Advancement.”

www.scouting.org/advancement is your one-stop source for all information related to advancement. You will find there links to the *Guide to Advancement*, past editions of *Advancement News*, and much more.

Volunteer Scouters from across the country are currently developing a wide range of new tools, including: “Conducting Effective Eagle Boards of Review,” “Building and Sustaining High Performing Advancement Committees,” “Including Scouts with Disabilities,” and “Effective Pack Advancement.” Watch future issues of *Advancement News* for more information.

On Increasing Advancement

Shared Leadership—Involving Scouts in Advancement

Most Scouters since Brownsea Island know that the result of their influence on a boy’s character is seldom seen while the Scout is young. Nevertheless, the longer we can keep him in the program, the more the opportunities to effect a positive outcome. Let’s examine how efficient use of positions of responsibility might help.

Boys need to be given challenging responsibilities that will promote personal growth without discouraging them. Not every boy may have the personality or maturity to be the senior patrol leader (*Guide to Advancement*, topic 4.2.3.4.6), but regardless, it behooves unit leaders to see that each boy has a position of responsibility that works with his skill set.

For example, while younger Scouts are often drawn to the job of den chief, there are numerous opportunities for those older to help with Cub Scout activities, too. Any den leader would welcome a 17-year-old Eagle as a den chief—or as a junior assistant Scoutmaster who is assigned the task of facilitating Webelos-to-Scout transition for the Webelos den.

On the other hand, older boys are often given instructor roles but assigned no specific area of instruction. In such cases, these assignments may fail to retain Scouts who perceive that they are not contributing. Remember that Star and Life rank requirements allow candidates to carry out a unit leader-assigned project to meet the “position of responsibility” requirement. This might work especially well if the unit leader asks the candidate to come up with a project he thinks will help the troop. Suppose the youth shows an interest in organizing, outfitting, and training the troop’s first Klondike Derby team. As an alternative to a unit-leader assigned project, the senior patrol leader might appoint the Scout as an instructor with the responsibility for carrying out that project.

Instructors are not the only Scouts tasked to help with the advancement of others. Patrol leaders help their patrol members advance, troop guides mentor the new Scout patrol, and Star Scouts use the EDGE method to teach others. Teaching and learning takes place on both sides when one boy helps another (*Guide to Advancement*, topic 4.2.0.2), and it is a learning experience for the older Scout to find ways to encourage

younger Scouts to approach him for help.

The knowledge and skills of an instructor need not be limited to teaching other youth. Many Scouts are much more technically knowledgeable than adults. One can almost envision the punch line in a *Boys' Life* cartoon showing a Tenderfoot Scout saying to his patrol leader, "I can't go on the campout because I promised my parents I'd stay home and teach them how to text." Joking aside, a useful project that a technically savvy Star or Life Scout might undertake could be to teach selected unit committee members to use Internet Advancement or one of the new My.Scouting tools.

Another way to help others advance is to serve as a member of a summer camp staff—an opportunity that many older Scouts will find rewarding. While a Scout under the age of 18 cannot be a merit badge counselor, he can help with instruction under the guidance of senior camp staff members.

Hopefully these suggestions will spark new ideas to help keep older Scouts engaged, and, thus, increase the opportunities to influence their character and personal growth. And isn't that what we're all about?

About *Advancement News*

Follow the National Advancement Team on Twitter! BSA Advancement Team, @AdvBSA

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 provide 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. Therefore, districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication. Our plan is to distribute eight or nine issues of *Advancement News* annually, but special editions may go out whenever there is important information to share. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at advancement.team@scouting.org.

Managing Subscriptions to *Advancement News*

Advancement News is designed for council and district advancement committees, advancement staff advisors, and Eagle processors. However, any Scouting volunteer or professional may subscribe.

Subscribing. Send a message to advancement.team@scouting.org, with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line. Indicate your name, email address, and council in the message text.

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Advancement Committee Mechanics

Setting Goals and Making Plans—Time Well Spent (Part 1)

The *Guide to Advancement*, in topics 3.0.0.1, #3 and 3.0.0.2, #3, recommends that councils and districts “establish objectives and implement action plans that stimulate advancement and lead to maximum success in the Journey to Excellence.” Goals provide a framework for developing action plans, and plans with specific objectives and milestones provide a means for measuring progress and the eventual success of those plans.

Too often we find ourselves so bogged down in the day-to-day tasks of approving merit badge counselors and handling Eagle issues, that we may not think we have time to set goals and make plans. We may not even find the time to step back and evaluate the results of all our efforts. Scouters who find themselves in this situation, instead of lamenting what looks to be a weakness, can turn it into a strength.

The first steps in the goal-setting exercise might be to look at what is already being done to support and stimulate advancement, and then look at the results. Make a list of all the advancement-related activities your council or district committee *is* doing. Be sure to include advancement-related activities that other committees are presenting, such as troop advancement coordinator training provided by the training committee or merit badge counselor orientation offered through camp programs. For each activity develop and record a “qualitative” consensus of what is working well, what could be improved, and finally, what is consuming resources but not really helping.

In light of the “qualitative” consensus, conduct a “quantitative” analysis of the same issues against some set of standards. For example, if goals were set last year, were they met, or not? How do results compare to past years? If goals were not met, what is the comparison to other districts or councils? Most importantly, and by far most objectively, how was performance according to the Journey to Excellence criteria? One note of caution, however: be mindful that JTE measures Boy Scout advancement by the number of Scouts who advance at least one rank in a year. An increase in the total number of ranks earned in a year may or may not translate to an increased JTE advancement score.

Balancing the relative values of the qualitative and quantitative information you have gathered, you can begin to examine whether you want to continue the same goals into the next year, raise the bar by adding new goals or adopting more ambitious goals, or change course to put energy and available resources to work in a different direction.

Doing this will entail a lot of hard work—and should keep you busy until the next issue of *Advancement News*, where we will talk more about setting objectives and milestones to achieve your goals. It will be worth the effort.



The Cub Scout Angle

A Great Year Ahead—Delicious Den and Pack Meetings



Remember the last time you had a double-dip ice cream cone and sat outside enjoying the summer weather? Remember how the ice cream seemed to melt faster than you could eat it? Remember when you finished it and wiped those melted drips of ice cream from your face and hands? You enjoyed that cone, but maybe you feel a little sorry that it was finished and would soon be only a memory.

By now many have heard that changes will be coming to the Cub Scout program effective June 1, 2015 (scouting.org/programupdates). Some may have begun to feel like you did when you finished that ice cream cone. Well, 2014 has not melted away yet, and there is still a whole year of exciting program and activities to enjoy. Remind families of the uniqueness of the coming year, and celebrate the present!

- New Tiger Cubs recruited in the spring and fall will be among the last to learn the Cub Scout Promise and the Law of the Pack. They will be the last to wear the original Tiger Cub rank patch and the Tiger Cub immediate recognition totem. They are a special group that can earn awards that no other Cub Scouts will have the opportunity to earn ever again.
- This program year will be the final opportunity for Cub Scouts to earn belt loops and pins in the Academics and Sports program. Take advantage by helping the boys to learn new things while earning those belt loops and pins. Remind parents and guardians that those recognition items soon will become collectibles.
- This will be the last program year for Arrow Points. Challenge Wolf and Bear Cub Scouts to earn as many as possible.
- Webelos activity badges, the Webelos compass emblem, and compass points are likewise being retired. Fourth-grade Webelos Scouts can be challenged to earn as many activity badges as they can this year. If they become discouraged that their program is changing mid-stream, remind them that they will be the **only** Webelos Scouts able to experience both programs and earn both activity badges and the new Adventure pins.
- During this final year of usage, help Cub Scouts of all ages to “internalize” the deeper meaning of the Cub Scout Promise and Law of the Pack and realize that they can fulfill these ideals in everyday life. Incorporate reflection in your den ceremonies, such as asking each Cub Scout for an example of how he helped other people during the past week. You might want to concentrate on a specific phrase of the Cub Scout Promise or Law of the Pack in the pack meeting’s opening and closing ceremonies.

So while much is changing, much is not. Cub Scouting will still be family-focused. “Do your best” will always be part of the Cub Scout program; nothing is going to replace that challenge. There will continue to be an outdoor program, the traditional ranks, and even more fun than before. There will be many **new** belt loops to earn in the future and new adventures to explore. But like that ice cream cone, enjoy the special flavors of the current program before it “melts” into history.

The Venturing Perspective



Discovery Award—Second Step on Trail to the Summit

In the last issue of *Advancement News*, we introduced the Venturing Award, one of four new Venturing awards, and related how it and the other three awards will provide Venturers with a pathway to adventure, leadership, personal growth, and service. The requirements for each award will be published in the new *Handbook for Venturers* and can be found at www.scouting.org/programupdates.

After earning the Venturing award, the next step along the trail to the Summit is the Discovery award. Once a new member is oriented to Venturing, the Discovery award documents his or her preparation for adventure, leadership, personal growth, and service. Venturers who achieve the Discovery award will have taken part in two activities with their crew, allowing them to experience the fun and adventure that is at the heart of Venturing.

The Discovery award, like all of the awards in the new Venturing program, is designed to encourage members to design and lead an active program of continuous adventure with their crew. Venturers, both with the crew and individually, prepare service projects that contribute toward meeting the needs of their community and help to develop the youth as participating citizens. Developing leadership skills is also part of the recognition system. Venturers who understand and can apply essential leadership skills will be better able to lead their crew programs.

Program Updates –2014 and Beyond

Stay on top of the latest changes to Venturing (as well as Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting) by visiting www.scouting.org/programupdates.

- Venturing award requirements and program overview
- Updated Venturing Frequently Asked Questions
- Updates from the BSA National Annual Meeting
- Cub Scout youth handbook sampler
- Den leader meeting plans for youth handbook sampler adventures

Plus meet Ethan, the new Cub Scout guide.



Eagle Issues

Revised *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* Posted

The revised *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, No. 512-927, was published electronically on the Advancement Resources webpage at www.scouting.org/advancement on May 20. Simultaneously, the previous workbook was removed and can no longer be accessed.

The revised workbook is not fundamentally different from its predecessor. It has been reorganized, some functionality has been improved, a few clarifications made, and a new document added for project beneficiaries. The key changes include:

- All general information, including the “Message to Scouts and Parents or Guardians” and the “Excerpts and Summaries from the *Guide to Advancement*,” are now at the front of the workbook.
- The “Contact Information” page is included with the proposal. Note the instructions at the top of the page indicate that only information that is reasonably required must be included.
- Functionality has been added to allow certain information from title pages and the “Contact Information” page to auto-populate fields elsewhere.
- Some tables have been added and functionality improved to allow appropriate fields to expand to accept additional text.
- A “Project Description and Impact” section has been added to the project report.
- “Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project, Information for Project Beneficiaries” has been added at the back of the workbook. The Eagle Scout candidate should provide this piece to the project beneficiary and use it for discussion purposes. Note there is now a check box on the proposal for the beneficiary to indicate that a copy of the document was received.



Scouts who have already downloaded and begun working with the previous version of the workbook must be allowed to continue using it, whether or not their proposal has been approved. A Scout whose proposal has already been approved using the original workbook may opt to use the “Final Plan,” the “Fundraising Application,” and the “Project Report” sections of the revised workbook. Scouts who have not begun working on their proposal must now use the May 2014 version of the workbook. Council or district advancement committees should use common sense and judgment, however, if Scouts submit former versions of the workbook. There is not much point in having Scouts copy everything from one version of the workbook to another.

Recommendations for changes or other improvements to the workbook should be sent to: advancement.team@scouting.org.



Varsity Scouting News



Boy Scout Oath and Law Replace Varsity Scout Pledge

As the BSA moves forward with changes in each of the three traditional Scouting programs, one could easily expect to hear someone—most likely a Varsity Scout—ask, “Hey, what about Varsity Scouting? Will we see any changes in this program?” The simple answer is yes.

Varsity Scouting has some unique opportunities for recognition that can be found in no other program. These include the Varsity Letter (with Gold Bars), individual Varsity Letter Pins, and the Denali Award.

With the adoption of one Oath and one Law beginning June 1, 2014 for all BSA programs, the Varsity Scout Pledge will no longer be used. This change has created a need to update the requirements for the Denali Award. Requirement #5 of the award previously read, *“Satisfy to the team captain that you know and live by the Varsity Scout Pledge.”*

Beginning June 1, 2014, requirement #5 of the Denali Award was replaced with the following: *“Demonstrate that you possess Scout spirit by understanding and living by the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Tell how you have done your duty to God and how you have lived each of the twelve points of the Scout Law in your every-day life.”*

A number of other changes to the traditional Boy Scout program that will occur in 2016 (www.scouting.org/programupdates) will also apply to Varsity Scouts. Keep watching as we continue to ensure all of the Scouting programs are relevant and meaningful for today's youth.

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 is time to take the plunge. It is a quick and easy process to set up an account at www.twitter.com. To limit incoming emails ('tweets'), you can select BSA National Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

Did You Receive these Tweets?

June 30: Online fundraising for Eagle projects is allowed by BSA, but requires submission of Eagle project fundraising application to local council.

May 20: Scouts currently working in the Eagle workbook that has been online may continue with it. Those starting the process should use new workbook.

May 20: New Eagle workbook now online at www.scouting.org/advancement. Content mostly the same, but reorganized. Project beneficiary info sheet included.

April 16: BSA's 2014 Fieldbook is now available, both hard copy and digital. [http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/04/15/2014-fieldbook-your-must-have-users-guide-to-the-outdoors/ ...](http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/04/15/2014-fieldbook-your-must-have-users-guide-to-the-outdoors/)

Merit Badges—Enhancing Our Youth's Competitive Edge

Computers and Digital Technology Transition—Questions and Answers

With the debut of the Digital Technology merit badge on April 16, there have been many questions about the Computers merit badge. Here are some answers:

- Computers merit badge will be discontinued as of December 31, 2014 and replaced at that time by the Digital Technology merit badge. See topic 7.0.4.4 in the *Guide to Advancement* for the full text of the policy on discontinued merit badges.
- The 2014 *Boy Scout Requirements* book does not include requirements for Computers merit badge, but does have those for Digital Technology. However, requirements for Computers merit badge will still be provided on the BSA website, along with those for all other merit badges.
- Scouts have until December 31, 2014, to begin work on Computers. If by that date, a Scout has begun an actual and purposeful effort on the merit badge, and that effort is more than simply incidental to participation in Scouting activities, then there will be no time limit for completing the badge, except for his 18th birthday. However, the Computers merit badge pamphlet will not be reprinted and the patch will no longer be made; when inventories are gone, they are gone.
- Scouts **are not** permitted to begin work on Computers merit badge after December 31, 2014.
- A Scout **may** earn both Computers and Digital Technology merit badges and wear both on his merit badge sash—as long as Computers is begun before Dec. 31, 2014.



Awards and Recognition

Medal of Merit and National Certificate of Merit to Be Processed by Local Councils

Beginning September 1, 2014, National Certificates of Merit and Medals of Merit will be processed by the local council rather than submitting to the national office for approval.

- The **National Certificate of Merit** is awarded when a member has performed a significant act of service that is deserving of special national recognition.
- The **Medal of Merit** is awarded when a member has performed an act of service of a rare or exceptional character that reflects an uncommon degree of concern for the well-being of others.

Councils should review and follow the implementation guidelines found at <http://scout-wire.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Resolution-NationalCertofMerit.pdf>. A council merit awards committee, which might report to the council advancement committee, should be formed to consider applications for National Certificates of Merit and Medals of Merit for individuals residing within that council. The council's executive board will locally make the final approval decisions.

Applications for the Honor Medal and the Honor **Medal with Crossed Palms** will still be reviewed and considered by the National Court of Honor.

Questions may be directed to awards@scouting.org.



From the Archives

Advancement Committee Mechanics: Committee Size Makes the Difference—Continued!

November, 2011. In the October 2011 issue of *Advancement News*, council advancement committee responsibilities outlined in section 3 of the *Guide to Advancement* were discussed, and a list of 12 positions for a committee suggested. It is through this recommended practice that a council may develop the capacity to accomplish everything called for.

In the “What Do You Think” survey question in that issue, we asked advancement chairs to tell us how many volunteers were active with their committees. You told us the average size of a council advancement committee—not counting district advancement chairs—is eight people. The average size of a district advancement committee is six. There were only a few councils responding with more than the recommended 12 members, but it is likely many of their volunteers focus on the priorities of Eagle Scout boards of review and service projects. For advancement committees to make that leap toward positively influencing the rate of advancement—especially in Cub Scouting—most councils will need more volunteers. Pack and troop advancement coordinators—or assistant unit leaders who understand how to support their Scouts in a strong rate of advancement—are among the best prospects for advancement committee members at either the district or council level. Prospecting methods such as “Friendstorming On Tour,” No. 510-003, have the potential to identify additional willing volunteers. Stay tuned for more ideas on increasing advancement committee size and effectiveness.

Helpful Links

Here are some links to the most current materials of interest for Scouters who are involved in the administration of advancement. These and many more resources are available via the Advancement Resources web page at www.scouting.org/Advancement.

[Advancement Educational Presentations](#)

[Eagle Scout Rank Application](#)

[Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#)

[Guide to Advancement](#)

[Merit Badge Counselor Information](#)

[Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project; Information for Project Beneficiaries](#)

[On Increasing Advancement](#); [On Increasing Advancement video link](#)

If any of these links are not working, please let us know at advancement.team@scouting.org.

A Peek Ahead

Topics Planned for August-September 2014

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators: CEAA at Florida Sea Base

The Cub Scout Angle: Webelos Two-Year Program and Cub Scout Adventure Program Debut

Advancement Committee Mechanics: Setting Goals and Making Plans—Time Well Spent (Part 2)

The Venturing Perspective: Pathfinder Award—Third Step on the Trail to Summit Award