

Advancement News

July-August
2015

Vol. 5, No. 4

Prepared. For Life.®

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

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

Philmont Training Center—Advancement, Adventure, August!!

Advancement Issues and Solutions: August 2-8

There are only a few days left for experienced volunteer advancement administrators to sign up for this fast-paced, case study-based conference. Unit, district, and council advancement coordinators, chairs, committee members, and staff advisors will not only learn about the latest updates on advancement issues, but more importantly, will be invited to analyze, discuss, and solve case studies similar to those regularly dealt with by the National Advancement Committee. As a result of this experience, attendees will return home with a first-hand understanding of the effective use of *Guide to Advancement* 2015 and the confidence to handle difficult issues in their home councils.



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To register for this advancement opportunity or one of the other remaining conferences being held at the PTC this summer—and how you can turn your week into an unforgettable family adventure—visit www.philmontscoutranch.org/filestore/philmont/pdf/PTC8PGO.pdf. Better hurry, though; summer is almost over!

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Report on CEAA:

Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators, June 7-13, 2015

A successful week at Philmont Training Center included the testing of advancement educational materials in development, as well as the start of some new topics. Participants commented:



"After years of advancement experience, the course was filled with new information that will be extremely useful."



"What a wonderful week at PTC! I can't believe I waited so long to come here!!!"

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 six 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.

Updated and In-Development Advancement Education Materials

The “Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling” PowerPoint presentation has been updated with information presented in the 2015 *Guide to Advancement* and is now online. The new “Essentials” clarifies that a Scout may begin initial efforts on a merit badge before the unit leader signs the blue card. Be sure to check the 2015 *Guide to Advancement*, 1.0.3.0, Section 7, for additional revisions to the merit badge program.

Two new PowerPoint presentations are in the final stages of development. “Advancement Committee Operation” will give advancement chairmen and committee members guidance on how to build and sustain advancement committees, from initial committee member recruitment through continuing operations at a high level of performance.

The second new PowerPoint presentation, “Eagle Boards of Review,” delves into the best practices for conducting Eagle Scout rank boards of review as well as describing associated board member responsibilities. Look for both of these presentations this fall at scouting.org/advancement.

On Increasing Advancement

Program Features for Troop, Teams and Crews, Volume 1, Available Volumes 2 and 3 on the Horizon

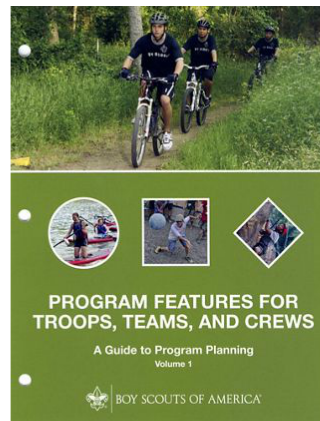
If you have been in Scouting for a while, you have probably used either *Troop Program Features* (perhaps even *Woods Wisdom*), *Team Program Features*, or the meeting plans from the old *Venturing Handbook*. But did you know that BSA has recently combined all these resources into one product: *Program Features for Troops, Teams and Crews: A Guide to Program Planning*?

Volume 1 of this guide was released in 2014, and Volumes 2 and 3 are slated to be published later this year. When complete, rather than having three different publications by program, volunteers will have a set of guides that focuses on progressing skills regardless of age.

Thus, whether your unit consists of 11-year-old Boy Scouts or 20-year-old Venturers, you will be able to find program features that will help each youth advance to the next level. Each of the three volumes contains modules covering a 16 month-long series of topics. Each module will list which Scout, Varsity, and Venturing advancement and awards are related to the topic. For example, the First Aid module will list Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class requirements, the First Aid merit badge, along with the adventure requirement for Venturing’s Discovery Award.

Volume 1 of this combined guide is available now at your local Scout shop or online through www.ScoutStuff.org

www.scoutstuff.org/pamp-bs-trp-prg-featrs-v1.html#.VY8MRaMo4dU



The Cub Scout Angle

New Cub Scout Adventure Program—Be Prepared for Success



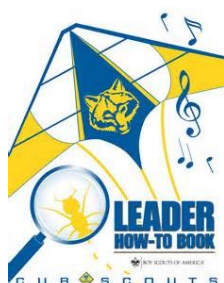
The new Cub Scout advancement program was launched on June 1, and boys and families have already started using the materials at day camp, resident camp, and during summer-time den and pack events. If your pack starts its annual program at the beginning of the traditional school year in August or September, you can be ready by using the time remaining this summer to build a plan featuring the new program materials that will lay the groundwork for a well-organized program launch starting in the fall.

Annual program planning is nothing new, it has always been a common attribute of all successful Cub Scout packs. Cub Scouting's new program materials provide every pack with a great opportunity to recalibrate—and rededicate—its program to the values of Scouting at an annual program planning meeting.



Program Guidance

New den leader guide books now are available to support den-level programs at each level: Tiger, Wolf, Bear, and Webelos/Arrow of Light. Each of these guides maps out in great detail what materials are needed to run a high interest program for the boys in your den. After using your den level's guide in consonance with the Cub Scout handbook to lay out a basic plan for your den-level adventures, use the range of additional support materials available, such as the *Cub Scout Leader How-to Book*, *Den and Pack Ceremonies*, and more, to add richness and depth, otherwise known as fun!



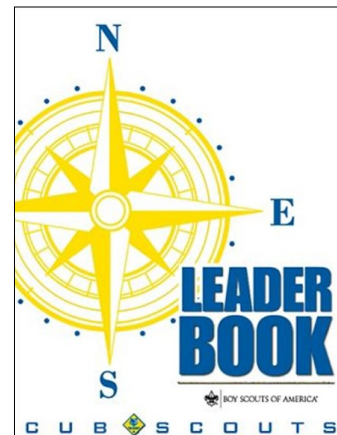
Training

New training guides for Cubmaster/Assistant Cubmaster, Den Leader, and Pack Committee (i.e., Pack Committee Challenge) were released early this year and are available through the [Program Updates – 2015 and Beyond page](#).

Online training courses for Cubmasters, den leaders, committee chairs and members, and chartered organization representatives have been totally revised with help from volunteers from around the country. Each has been divided into shorter, more targeted modules so leaders can get the training they need, in the order they want, any time they need it. With that in mind, each new training was organized around what the person taking it would need to know prior to the first meeting, within the first 30 days, and finally, to be considered position-specific trained. All of this training was developed to be implemented in conjunction with the BSA's new learning management system. For more information, visit MyScouting Tools (logging in through [MyScouting.org](#)).

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Planning Tips. As always, pack-level planning centers on major pack activities, such as pack family campouts, day camp and resident camp opportunities, and monthly pack meetings. Under the new Adventure Program, each month's meeting should correspond to a point of the Scout Law. In addition, each plan should follow a theme to help make the pack meeting even more fun. Help for creating your pack meeting plans can be found by visiting www.scouting.org/programupdates. The plans you will find do not have to be used in a specific order, but some do have reminders to include activities from the required adventures to help the Scouts advance in rank.



Planning is meant to be easy and straightforward: using the calendar in the den leader guide book, map out the required adventures for your rank. Be sure to look at any local issues that may impact the adventures you select, such as weather and school holidays. After you map out the required adventures, map out the elective adventures that your boys would like to complete. Bring these with you to the pack's annual planning meeting.

Several of the required adventures have a requirement that suggests or requires completion at a pack meeting, but den-level planning should be a part of pack program planning as well. With an expanded set of elective adventures for boys to explore, den leaders may wish to consult with the boys in the den to see what they would like to accomplish. Pack leaders should work with the den leaders to plan when these activities will take place.

Program Impact. Completing these tasks – planning, preparation, and training – will help your pack with recruitment this fall. New parents will see a well-planned program in place, trained leaders to help deliver the program, and will want their boys to be a part of that program. A well-planned pack and den-level program also will encourage new parents to lend a hand during their first year, helping to develop them into future den or pack leaders.

Program Updates – 2015 and Beyond

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

Recently posted:

- Position-Specific In-Person Training Guides Available Now!
- Philmont Training Sessions Are Filling, but There Is Still Time to Register



The Venturing Perspective

Venturing-Certified Board of Review Representatives



The *Venturing Board of Review Guide* ([www.scouting.org/filestore/venturing/pdf/512-](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/venturing/pdf/512-940_WB.pdf)

[940_WB.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/venturing/pdf/512-940_WB.pdf)) is an orientation guide for those persons who will serve as members of boards of review for the Discovery, Pathfinder, and Summit awards. The section on the Summit Award describes the role of the chair of the Summit Award board of review:

<The chair> “shall be an adult at least 21 years of age who is a Venturing-certified member of the district or local council advancement committee or their designated Venturing-certified representative. He or she is selected according to local council practices. To become Venturing-certified, one must study this guide, complete the Venturing Awards and Requirements Training (when it is released), and develop a basic knowledge of Venturing. Council advancement committees are tasked with certifying this individual using a local process.”

Until the Venturing Awards and Requirements Training is released, studying the *Venturing Board of Review Guide* will serve as the source of information to become “Venturing-certified,” with the method of certification to be determined by the local council. Members of any Venturing board of review would benefit from studying the guide—and later completing the training—to ensure understanding of the purpose, the discussion, and the story-based approach of Venturing boards of review, and how they differ from an Eagle Scout board of review.



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.

Unsubscribing. To decline future issues please reply and enter “REMOVE” in the subject line. We will remove the subscription within the next two weeks.

Receiving Multiple Copies. If you receive *Advancement News* at more than one email address, choose the one to be removed and reply with “REMOVE” in the subject line. Include a message requesting that we remove only that email address.

Duplicate Copies. If you receive more than one copy of *Advancement News* at the same email address, please reply to all but one of them with “DUPLICATE” in the subject line.

Address Change. If you want *Advancement News* sent to a different address, reply and enter “ADDRESS CHANGE” in the subject line. In your message, enter your council name and the email address you prefer.

Guide to Advancement 2015 Online

As announced as late-breaking news in the previous edition of *Advancement News*, the 2015 version of the *Guide to Advancement* (No. 33088) is now posted to the Advancement Resources web page. Download your copy now by going to www.scouting.org/advancement. Printed copies are available at your local Scout shop or from www.scoutstuff.org.



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 do not, it is time to take the plunge. Setting up an account is a quick and easy process at www.twitter.com. To limit incoming emails ('tweets'), you can select BSA National Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

Note: Advancement questions should be directed to advancement.team@scouting.org.

Did You Receive these Tweets?

May 13: Requirements for new Animation merit badge released: www.boyslife.org/merit-badges/animation-merit-badge.

May 20: First four interactive digital merit badge pamphlets released: Animation, Robotics, First Aid, Cooking. www.boyslife.org/merit-badges.

May 29: The print version of the *2015 Guide to Advancement* is now available in local Scout shops or from ScoutStuff: www.scoutstuff.org/bsa/new-items/pamp-gde-to-advancement.html.

June 8: It was a beautiful day at Philmont Training Center for the opening session of Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators.

June 8: We invite you to join us August 2-8 for the Advancement Issues & Solutions conference. www.PhilmontScoutRanch.org/PTC/ConferencesO.

June 9: Updated "The Essentials of Merit Badge counseling" PPT presentation now posted at www.scouting.org/advancement_presentations.

June 17: Now posted: Eagle Scout Service Project Coach Application, for optional use by councils. Scouting.org/advancement.

Merit Badges: Enhancing Our Youth's Competitive Edge

Merit Badge Concerns—Got a Case of the “Blue Card Blues”?

When Scouts head off to summer camp for the fun and adventure of the outdoors, it is only natural that merit badges will be on their minds. Every unit leader wants the merit badge experience at camp—as well as any other group merit badge experience—to be of the highest quality and highest value to the Scout.

Unfortunately, a unit leader may discover that a Scout, through no fault of his own, did not learn or demonstrate the merit badge requirements as stated, resulting in a less than optimal learning experience. For example, a Scoutmaster may find a note from the camp merit badge counselor attached to a “partial” blue card, indicating that the Scout did not understand some of the items that were nevertheless signed off. Perhaps a board of review learns from a Scout that an “alternative option” was substituted for one of the merit badge’s requirements “due to time constraints” at camp. What to do?

First of all, remember that adult volunteers are not charged with “watchdog” responsibilities. Nor is unit leadership allowed to re-test a Scout when he turns in a blue card signed by an approved merit badge counselor. However, should you encounter a situation where action is required to help ensure that future Scouts pursuing the same merit badge will get the full benefit from the program, the *Guide to Advancement* provides a method of recourse.

GTA topic 7.0.4.7 provides valuable guidance on dealing with the situation in a way that does not penalize the Scout—who in most cases should never be made aware that an issue existed. Using the “*Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns, No. 512-800*” form (topic 11.1.0.0), report to the council advancement committee any concerns regarding completion of merit badge requirements. The form provides a checklist for describing the merit badge environment (camp, fair or midway, individual counselor, or outside organization) and the nature of the submitter’s concern (non-registered counselor, requirement alterations, lack of personal attention, or other deviations from BSA expectations). It then provides a space to describe all factual information observed or determined and asks the submitter to reference one or more applicable *GTA* topic numbers.

Should the rare occasion arise where use of this form appears necessary, keep in mind it is not intended to be a “report card” on counseling. Nor is there a requirement that councils or districts must follow up on reports submitted. Its use should always be aimed at continuous improvement of the quality of the merit badge experience for every Scout in the future.

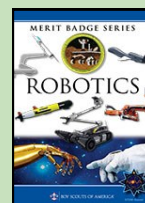
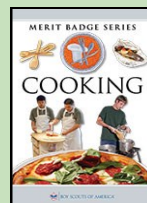
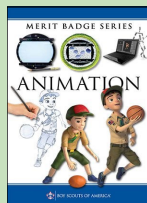
Interactive Digital Merit Badge Pamphlets Now Available

Animation

Cooking

First Aid

Robotics



www.scoutstuff.org/bsa/literature-media/interactive-digital.html

Survey Says

Advancement Education Resources Survey Results

In December 2014, the National Advancement Committee surveyed readers of *Advancement News* about the various advancement education resources that are available to assist units and advancement committees. The survey elicited 799 responses, 93% of which came from respondents with more than six years' adult leader experience.

The survey asked respondents to rate how frequently they used various resources, as well as how useful they found those resources to be. Not surprisingly, 91% indicated they used the *Guide to Advancement* "regularly" or "sometimes." In fact, 86% indicated the *GTA* was "very useful"! Other resources, including *Advancement News*, the *Boy Scout Requirements Book*, and www.scouting.org/advancement, all received strongly positive responses.

The survey results showed that some resources only had limited use, but revealed that those who did use those resources found them to be very useful. The message from users seemed clear: These specialized resources helped us when we needed them, and we recommend them to other volunteers in the field.

Resource	Aware but Not Used	Not Aware	Total Non-Use Responses	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Total Useful Responses
Getting the Most from Internet Advancement	26%	40%	66%	46%	45%	91%
The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach	25%	31%	56%	50%	45%	95%
The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling	17%	23%	40%	54%	43%	97%
Effective Troop Advancement	22%	40%	62%	41%	53%	94%
GTA and ESS-PWB*Overview	20%	29%	49%	62%	33%	95%
Including Scouts with Disabilities	30%	27%	57%	47%	47%	94%

The survey also polled for participation in advancement events, such as a district or council advancement training event. Two-thirds of the respondents indicated they had attended training as part of another event. While nearly half of those who took the poll said that they had attended a stand-alone training event, less than 10% indicated that they had attended a National Advancement Conference at Philmont Training Center or Florida Sea Base. Even though attendee feedback from these conferences consistently supports the value participants believe they have received by attending, survey respondents showed that the biggest challenges to participating in one of these events are travel distance, cost, and loss of vacation time.

(Continued on page 10)

After analyzing the results of this survey, the National Advancement Committee and National Advancement Team have decided to focus on continuing to promote key resources, such as the *Guide to Advancement*. The survey results also indicate a need to raise awareness of underutilized resources such as the specialty presentations, and to conduct a gap analysis to develop a list of additional educational resources. This will assist volunteers in delivering an exciting and rewarding advancement program for all Scouts.

Special Needs

Abilities Digest—Spring 2015 **Essential Resources for Autism and Scouting**

The following informative information is reprinted from the Spring 2015 edition of the *Abilities Digest*, the newsletter of the National Disabilities Awareness Committee. Anyone wishing to subscribe to the *Digest* should send a message to disabilities.awareness@scouting.org. Place "Subscribe" in the subject line, and include your name and council in the body of the message.

There are many helpful resources leaders can access online when working with a Scout on the autism spectrum.

- BSA's Disabilities Awareness website: www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx. Resources include:
 - * *Guide to Advancement*
 - * *Guide to Working with Scouts with Special Needs*
 - * *Essentials in Serving Scouts With Disabilities* PowerPoint educational presentation
 - * College of Commissioner Science curriculum
 - * Link to all past *Abilities Digest* newsletters
- Autism Empowerment, www.AutismEmpowerment.org, is a nonprofit organization devoted to enriching the lives of youth, adults, and families within the Autism and Asperger community. It is the only national organization that offers an Autism and Scouting program designed to help leaders support youth and adults with autism. The organization's autism and Scouting website is: www.AutismandScouting.org.
- In addition, other helpful resources are available to share with Scouting families in units. These include:
 - * Autism and Scouting leadership training kit - free 93-page kit being used worldwide
 - * Autism and Scouting podcast
 - * Autism and Scouting webinars and training materials
 - * Growing national database of autism-friendly Scouting units.
- Both the Autism and Scouting program and *Abilities Digest* provide social media for connecting to other members of the community. In particular, both provide Facebook pages:
 - Autism and Scouting - www.facebook.com/autismandscouting
 - Abilities Digest-- www.facebook.com/pages/Abilities-Digest/824105334298165

From the Archives

Eagle Issues—Current Records Prevent Future Issues (February 2012)

The importance of retaining membership and advancement records is confirmed every time the National Advancement Committee's Eagle Issues Task Force is presented with a case where a former member who completed his Eagle requirements long ago never received his credentials. The task force must examine the evidence and determine whether he can be presented his award. Unfortunately, many have not kept the records necessary to prove their cases.

Retaining accurate records is everyone's responsibility. As a Scout completes the requirements for his next badge, his unit should keep records of his progress. Scouts, too, should be encouraged to maintain evidence of their accomplishments. They will need it if they later seek to replace a badge or certificate of rank.

Today's key to retaining good advancement records lies not in a wall chart displayed in the meeting room, but accurate and prompt reporting of all advancements to the council service center. The Internet Advancement system is the mechanized method used by the BSA to track all advancements. It allows a unit representative to enter advancement awards, print advancement reports, and verify rosters. These features aid in documenting a member's eligibility for the next rank or award as well as provide a document acceptable for transferring from one unit to another. In all cases, a printed Advancement Report must be presented to your Scout shop before any advancement insignia can be purchased.

To learn more, consult the *Guide to Advancement*.

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 somewhat based on a number of considerations, especially to accommodate "late-breaking news" of immediate importance to our subscribers.

Topics Planned for September-October

From the *Guide to Advancement*: Highlights of Significant Changes (topic 1.0.3.0)

The Cub Scout Angle: Cub Scout's Adventure – It Still Begins with Bobcat

Merit Badges: Digital Merit Badge Pamphlets—interaction at Its Best

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 page at www.scouting.org/advancement.

Advancement Educational Presentations:

- Cub Scout Advancement: Delivering Adventure
- Getting the Most From Internet Advancement
- The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling (English and Spanish)
- The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach (English and Spanish)
- Effective Troop Advancement (English and Spanish)
- Including Scouts With Disabilities
- Videocasts on *Guide to Advancement*, selected topics
 - ◇ Introduction to the Guide to Advancement
 - ◇ Judgment Calls
 - ◇ Boards of Review
 - ◇ Boards of Review Under Disputed Circumstances
 - ◇ Boards of Review Appeals
 - ◇ The Eagle Scout Application Process
 - ◇ Eagle Scout Boards of Review
- Videos
 - ◇ On Increasing Advancement
 - ◇ Why Advancement?
 - ◇ Guardian of the Gate



[Guide to Advancement 2015](#)

[Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#)

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

[Eagle Scout Service Project Coach Application](#) **NEW!**

[Eagle Scout Rank Application](#)

[Merit Badge Counselor Information](#)

[Reporting Merit Badge Concerns](#)

[Venturing Summit Award Service Project Workbook](#)

[Venturing Board of Review Guide](#)

[Individual Scout Achievement Plan](#)

[Lone Scout Friend and Counselor Guidebook](#)

