

# Advancement News

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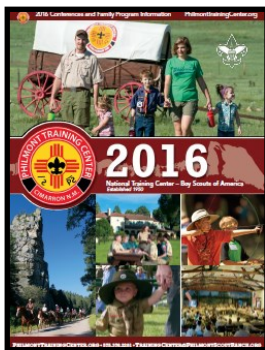
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Previous issues are available at [www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/advancement\\_news.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/advancement_news.aspx)

## Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

### Philmont Training Center – *Mechanics of Advancement* in June; *Advancement Issues and Solutions* in August

This summer there will be two opportunities for “advancing” your own knowledge and understanding of BSA advancement policies and issues at one of the most storied destinations in all of Scouting: Philmont! To get more information about either of these two great conferences or sign up now, visit [www.philmontscout ranch.org/PTC/ConferencesE.aspx](http://www.philmontscout ranch.org/PTC/ConferencesE.aspx).



The faculty for both conferences will consist of members of the National Advancement Task Force and National Advancement Advisory Panel, all of whom are exceptionally experienced in advancement issues and are up to date on the latest advancement issues and trends information.

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## **Mechanics of Advancement: June 12-18**

If you or fellow Scouters wish you had a better understanding of how advancement should work, or want to learn how to better assist units with proper and effective advancement, the Philmont Training Center is where you should be June 12-18.

The information-packed *Mechanics of Advancement* conference is intended for anyone involved with advancement, but is particularly directed at committee members who are new to advancement or are in need of some refreshing. Every significant aspect of advancement from Cub Scouts to Sea Scouts will be covered. The conference's goal will be to empower participants with the ability to create an advancement environment in their districts and councils that will increase the rate of advancement and retention through proper advancement administration.

## **Advancement Issues and Solutions: July 31-August 6**

For those looking for something a bit more advanced than June's *Mechanics of Advancement* conference, the *Advancement Issues and Solutions* conference scheduled from July 31-August 6 at the PTC is just what you are looking for!

This conference will explore the types of issues in more depth, which are regularly brought before the National Advancement Task Force. Those who attend will leave the PTC with a better understanding of the effective use of the *Guide to Advancement* and will be better prepared to handle issues that arise in their home council related to advancement.

There's still time to register for and attend these fun and exciting advancement conferences at the PTC. Better yet, bring your family with you for an unforgettable Western vacation at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico!



## **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 Task Force (formerly known as 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](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org).

# On Increasing Advancement

## Summer Camp Merit Badge Choices—The Youth's Decision

Boy Scout summer camp presents many opportunities for our youth, including how to live outdoors, how to manage money, how to make and stick to a schedule, and how to live and work with a group. Camp also presents them with choices in merit badges—most notably, which and how many to take.

*So, who decides what merit badge(s) a youth will take at camp?*

The answer is simple: the decision is the youth's. But that doesn't mean that adult leaders and parents should not be involved. Some camps might require a minimum age to participate and some badges may have prerequisites. Many camps identify merit badges that they consider appropriate for younger campers. While some of these recommendations are health and safety related, they might also take into account skill sets or progression on ranks or other merit badges.

The *Guide to Advancement* topic 7.0.0.3 explains the process. Before a Scout begins working with a merit badge counselor, he is to have a discussion with his unit leader. This discussion is meant to be a growth-oriented and positive conversation. The unit leader should bring forth any concerns related to working on the merit badge and provide appropriate counseling. It is then the Scout's decision whether or not to proceed with the merit badge.

A good example: Shooting sports merit badges are very popular at summer camp, but often difficult to complete. So if an 11-year-old wants to take Archery merit badge, what should you do? Could you have an 11-year-old expert archer? Of course. Does every 11-year-old have the upper body strength, aim, or skill required for Archery merit badge? Probably not.

First, find out what the youth intends to achieve. If he just "wants to shoot," enrolling in Archery merit badge may not be the only option. Open program periods might also be available for youth to shoot.

Second, explain to the Scout (and his parents, if appropriate) that while he may be receiving archery instruction and practice time, Archery is a skilled merit badge requiring a minimum score to pass. Attending every class and doing any supplemental work does not guarantee completion of the badge.

Third, always let the youth know *the decision is his, and you will support him whatever he chooses.*





## Scoutbook: Managing Advancement—And Soon, So Much More!

When BSA announced its acquisition of Scoutbook in April 2015, it stated “Scoutbook expands Scouting’s presence in the digital space and helps the organization connect with its leaders and members when, where, and how they prefer.” In its *Bryan on Scouting* “Blog for BSA’s Adult Leaders,” *Scouting* magazine has called Scoutbook a “revolutionary web app that makes tracking advancement easier, faster and more fun.”

Using Scoutbook, Scouts, parents, and unit leaders now are able to cooperatively record, track, and manage individual advancement within their unit. Check out [www.scoutbook.com](http://www.scoutbook.com) for current features, available in both a mobile platform and via the Web. In addition, Frequently Asked Questions can be found at [www.scoutingwire.org/scouting-goes-mobile-with-scoutbook](http://www.scoutingwire.org/scouting-goes-mobile-with-scoutbook).

It should be noted that at this time Scoutbook does not automatically sync with ScoutNET. **Entering advancement information into Scoutbook does not make it part of the Scout’s official Scouting record.** Units must manually sync their records to ScoutNET on a regular basis to ensure proper reporting of advancement.

Over the next several months, the National Council will be working with the developer to integrate Scoutbook with BSA’s membership system, allowing an automatic sync. Information about this exciting transition will be communicated through *Scouting Wire* ([www.scoutingwire.org](http://www.scoutingwire.org)). So keep your eye on that “Official Blog of the Scouting Movement” for updates and information on how Scoutbook will enhance the way you track your Scouts’ advancement progress. *Advancement News* will highlight features of this advancement tool in the coming issues, as information becomes available.



**MOBILE  
ADVANCEMENT  
ANYWHERE YOU ARE . . .**

**This can turn into This**

**100%** Start Tracking your Scout's Progress and Watch that Percentage Increase!

**... AND ON ALL OF YOUR DEVICES.  
(No "App" Downloads!)**

### Note for Advancement:

**ScoutNET is currently the official place to maintain and access advancement records.**

# From the *Guide to Advancement*

## Advancement in Camp Settings—First, You Should Go to Camp

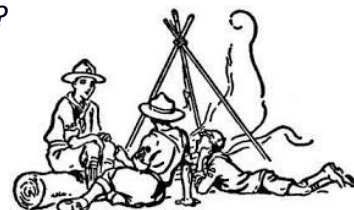
*Who hath smelt wood-smoke at twilight? Who hath heard the birch-log burning?*

*Who is quick to read the noises of the night?*

*Let him follow with the others, for the Young Men's feet are turning*

*To the camps of proved desire and known delight!*

*Rudyard Kipling*



Scouts will soon be heading into the woods at summer camps across the country, where they will sit around campfires and smell the smoke at twilight.

A great deal of advancement goes on at these summer camps, and it is important that council advancement and camping committees work together to ensure that the advancement opportunities offered enhance the camp experience. Advancement at camp might include not only merit badges, but also opportunities geared toward new member needs. The advancement committee should work with the camp director to establish advancement procedures at camp (*Guide To Advancement*, topic 5.0.1.2). In addition, resident camp standards require a letter from the council advancement committee approving merit badge counselors (*GTA*, topic 5.0.1.3).

Advancement committees can start the process of working with the camping committee by meeting with the camp director and program director before camp actually begins. Discussion topics might include:

- What merit badges are being offered? Some, like the citizenship merit badges, might better be offered in the troop setting.
- Does the camp have adequate equipment and resources for each merit badge offered?
- Are all merit badge counselors qualified (age, registration, approval for that merit badge)?
- Can subject matter experts be scheduled to visit camp to enhance the learning experience?

Offer to **go to** pre-camp leaders' meetings to discuss prerequisites for badges and how merit badge completions and partials—as well as Trail to First Class skills—are going to be communicated to the units. This would also be a good time to encourage units to hold boards of review and courts of honor at camp.

Make arrangements with the camp director for advancement committee members to **go to camp** during staff week to ensure everyone understands merit badge fundamentals: merit badge requirements cannot be changed, added, or subtracted, and each Scout must individually demonstrate that he understands the material or perform the requirement whichever is specified. Also make arrangements with the camp director to **go to camp** during camping weeks to observe merit badge classes in operation. Those visits would also be a good time to review and discuss merit badge concerns that have been received. (See *GTA* topic 11.1.0.0, Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns.)

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**Go to camp** and work with program director to get weekly advancement reports. While there, review the record keeping and storage of merit badge records, including partial completions. This will help you answering the inevitable questions that come months later. Remember that partials don't expire.

In summary – **go to camp**. Work with the camp staff to make sure that camp is a positive, wonderful, and fun experience. This will keep Scouts coming back for more and give us a continuing chance to influence their character. Now, isn't that what we're all about?



## The Cub Scout Angle

### The Cub Scout Adventure Program at Day Camp

The great Cub Scout Adventure program is coming up on its one-year birthday. Hard to believe it's been a year already! Now that there's been a whole year to see it work in dens and packs, what are you going to do with your day camp?

The principle duty of a district is to support the units – and what better way to support them than by providing program opportunities that the units might find hard or impossible to produce on a unit level. Den leaders in the district will really appreciate offerings focused on aquatics, fishing, Cub Scout cooking, or any of the other outdoor-oriented adventures that the boys love, but may be difficult for its den leaders to present.

Some parents and day camp program directors believe that the most important part of a camp experience is how many awards their Cub Scouts earn. But remember—Cub Scouts go to camp to have fun, and to try out some new, exciting things to do. Give it to them! Advancement is absolutely a part of camp, but it should not be the main focus. Don't neglect fun outdoor activities just because they are non-advancement related. Advancement activities, when included, should come naturally, as a part of a great program.

If your day camp will include elements of adventure loops and pins, it's important to keep the big picture of the adventure program in mind. Because not every Cub Scout is able to attend camp, required adventures are best used in the den meeting setting, where all boys are working together on requirements. There are plenty of elective adventures for each rank that are well-suited for day camp or resident camp settings—things that boys may otherwise not be able to experience.



Make the most of your outdoor time by focusing on outdoor activities. Plan an exciting program, present it well, and the Cub Scouts will be lining up to put on one of the camp T-shirts and get started! Cub Scouts who participate in these great adventures and earn different adventures than their den mates help promote camp next year every time they wear the recognition.

## Cub Scout Shooting Sports Awards

The new Cub Scout shooting sports awards offer a unique opportunity for exciting programming options at camp. The awards feature a deeper involvement with the three disciplines of BB-guns, archery, and sling-shots. Several councils are already planning camps focused on earning these awards. The new awards will require more range time, so a more shooting-specific camp will provide greater options for interested Cub Scouts.



## Eagle Issues

### Record Keeping Along the Trail to Eagle Scout—Be Prepared

An Eagle Scout Rank Application (No. 512-728) must be submitted for verification before an Eagle Scout board of review may be convened. Filling out the two-page form should be easy—if accurate and complete records are available.

The required information should be available via ScoutNET, the BSA's current electronic record keeping system, but that is not always the case. ScoutNET records are dependent upon each troop routinely reporting advancement. Because advancement information can be recorded and reported in different ways, information sometimes gets fragmented.

Traditionally, advancement was reported and easily archived via a Unit Advancement Report. With the advent of Internet Advancement and troop management software programs, the proliferation of places where advancement info might be kept can create challenges. The Scout might have requirements signed-off in his *Boy Scout Handbook*; the unit will have its own hardcopy or electronic records; the council might have copies of advancement reports; information is contained in ScoutNET—and now Scoutbook. Unfortunately, these multiple sources are not always in sync with each other.

Sections of the application that require specific completion dates, such as boards of review and merit badge completions, can present a challenge. If a date has not been previously entered into ScoutNET, proof of completion will be required. Unfortunately, this documentation may not always be available. The candidate's *Boy Scout Handbook* may have been lost or damaged; troop records may have been corrupted or are otherwise inaccessible; a key unit leader who could verify information is unavailable; or the Scout does not have his



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### Note for Advancement:

**ScoutNET is currently the official place to maintain and access advancement information.**

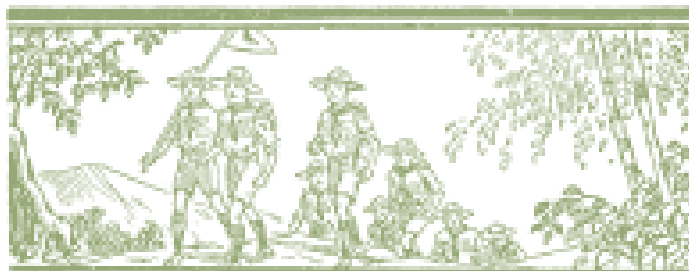
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merit badge blue card or rank advancement pocket certificate. If the proof is not available, the Scout may have to re-do certain requirements or merit badges. If timing is close to his 18th birthday, he may not be able to “make-up” these deficiencies in time to earn the rank of Eagle Scout.

What can a Scout and his parents do to avoid some of these pitfalls?

- Be sure that all advancement is documented in the youth’s *Boy Scout Handbook*.
- Retain the youth’s portion of Applications for Merit Badge (blue cards). Signed and dated by the merit badge counselor, these serve as proof of a merit badge completion, even if they have not been previously entered into ScoutNET.
- Retain rank advancement pocket certificates, which show completion dates for each rank.
- To help eliminate last-minute surprises, meet early and often with the unit advancement coordinator to review current progress and discuss any work remaining for the next rank.
- Originals of documents referenced above could be kept in a safe manner for easy retrieval.

These few simple steps will help ensure that completing the Eagle Scout Rank Application will be simple and easy.



**APPLICATION FOR MERIT BADGE**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

is a registered  
☐ Boy Scout   ☐ Varsity Scout   ☐ Venturer


of \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Troop, team, crew, ship

District \_\_\_\_\_

Council \_\_\_\_\_

I have discussed this merit badge with this Scout and recommended at least one merit badge counselor.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of unit leader \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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](mailto: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.



# Merit Badges: Enhancing Our Youth's Competitive Edge

## Digital MB Pamphlets--Available Now, 20; Coming Soon, All 136!

In the near future all 136 merit badges will be available in the digital format. If you did not see the recent article in *Boys' Life* regarding the features and advantages of these new digital merit badge pamphlets, here is an excerpt.

*"Experience cutting edge technology with the new interactive digital merit badge pamphlets using your computer, tablet, or smartphone. Just purchase your digital pamphlet (at Scoutstuff.org) and you will have access to it wherever you may be. This enhanced version includes interactive features, videos, extra photos and other supplemental information.*

*"Interactive digital merit badge pamphlets are a digital version of the traditional paper merit badge pamphlet. They have space for much more material, as well as multimedia and interactive content that isn't possible in a print pamphlet."*

Twenty digital merit badge pamphlets are now available—all of the Eagle-required merit badges plus Animation, Digital Technology, and Robotics. Soon to be released is the new Exploration pamphlet and a total remake of the Photography pamphlet. These digital formatted merit badge pamphlets are really handy and fit right into our youth's lifestyles. All of the digital merit badge pamphlets can be purchased at [ScoutStuff.org](http://ScoutStuff.org). Printed versions will continue to be available.

Every Scout should be counseled that he has no obligation to purchase a digital merit badge pamphlet in order to earn a merit badge. Everyone involved in the advancement process should note that even though the new digital merit badge pamphlets contain a broader breadth of the merit badge subject matter, the requirements are no different between the two versions. Merit badge counselors should be reminded that even though they may find using the digital format helpful in teaching certain aspects of the merit badge, a Scout cannot be penalized for not using the digital merit badge pamphlet.

## Try Them Out for Free!

Free sample chapters are available. Before you decide to go digital, you can test drive a new merit badge pamphlet for yourself.

- Head to [media.boyslife.org/meritbadge/cooking/](http://media.boyslife.org/meritbadge/cooking/) to preview the **Cooking** interactive digital merit badge pamphlet.
- You can also preview videos, like the **Animation** clip found at [youtu.be/A7qw4l8Cacc](http://youtu.be/A7qw4l8Cacc).



## Managing Merit Badge Fairs: A Council Responsibility

The National Advancement Team frequently receives questions on how to manage merit badge fairs and fee-based workshops that are cropping up around the country. How should these events be organized? How can a council ensure that the merit badge counselors are registered and approved?

The *Guide to Advancement*, topic 3.0.0.1, states that it is the responsibility of the council advancement committee to establish local practices for adhering to National Council advancement procedures at events such as merit badge fairs or midways. Because each event is unique and every council has unique needs, National provides no “cookie cutter” guidance on how to organize these group instruction events. However, the National Advancement Task Force has produced a new document—[Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide](#) (no 512-066)—to give councils, districts, and units guidance on things to consider when presented with a group instruction event, whether large or small.

Topic 7.0.3.2 of *Guide to Advancement* provides further guidance on group instruction, particularly as it relates to merit badge counselors. While guest experts can be utilized to help with instruction, they must be under the direction of a registered and approved merit badge counselor who is on site for each merit badge session that is being presented. It is the council advancement committee’s responsibility (*GTA*, topic 3.0.0.1) to approve merit badge counselors—including those at group instruction events.

Merit badge opportunities presented by outside organizations require special attention, as these events must be approved by the Scout Executive (*GTA*, topic 7.0.4.9) and should involve a written agreement. The council must assure compliance with applicable BSA policies and procedures, including those related to Youth Protection and safety, National Council consent to use protected brand images, and the merit badge counseling and approval process.

The council advancement committee should make use of “Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns” (*GTA*, topic 11.1.0.0) at all group instruction events. Feedback will help in the evaluation process, perhaps leading to adaptation of local council practices concerning these events. The ultimate goal should always be to provide a quality merit badge experience for each individual Scout.

### Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide

This new document was recently posted! *Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide* can now be found at the Advancement Resources web page: [www.scouting.org/advancement](http://www.scouting.org/advancement). Located under the Merit Badge category, this document provides a review of *Guide to Advancement* Topic 7.0.3.2, with highlights on planning the event as well as evaluating the event. Review this document when your unit, district, or council is anticipating conducting a merit badge event where group instruction will take place.





## Venturing's Conceptual Framework—The ALPS Model

The ALPS model – Adventure, Leadership, Personal Growth, and Service – was developed during the 2012-14 program review process by the National Venturing Task Force in an effort to provide a better framework and aim for Venturing. The chart below shows each of the award's aims as Venturers "climb" towards the Summit Award.

	ADVENTURE	LEADERSHIP	PERSONAL GROWTH	SERVICE
<b>SUMMIT</b> 	<i>Mentoring and participation</i>	<i>Ongoing leadership development</i>	<i>Goal-setting and personal growth</i>	<i>Leading others in service</i>
<b>PATHFINDER</b> 	<i>Leading and participation</i>	<i>Leading others</i>	<i>Goal-setting and personal growth</i>	<i>Participating in service</i>
<b>DISCOVERY</b> 	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Preparing to lead</i>	<i>Goal-setting and personal growth</i>	<i>Participating in service</i>
<b>VENTURER</b> 	<i>Initial participation, orientation to the crew, Personal Safety Awareness training, induction into the crew</i>			

### Levels of performance

The levels of performance provide benchmarks of progress as skills and knowledge are acquired within the areas of program emphasis.

- **Venturer**—designed to be earned within a month of joining the crew. Its requirements are based upon learning about Venturing and its values, learning about personal safety, and forming a commitment to further participate. A crew's leadership should seek to make this a natural process for all new members.
- **Discovery Award**—designed to help a new Venturer benefit from full and active participation in crew activities and to learn skills and basic competencies that will prepare him or her to assume leadership roles in the crew as he or she progresses on the Trail to the Summit. The purpose of the Discovery Award is to move past the orientation provided by the Venturing Award and shift the Venturer into action.

*Continued on page 12*

- **Pathfinder Award**—designed to solidify basic and intermediate leadership skills by providing the Venturer with opportunities to lead crew activities, adventures, and service projects and to focus on personal leadership development. The four areas of program emphasis continue to form the foundation of the program, with the Venturer now taking a more active part in the leadership of the crew and the crew's activities.
- **Summit Award**—designed to provide advanced leadership skills and experience and to help focus the Venturer on working diligently to make a difference in the lives of others, including those in the crew and in the community, through a significant service project and advanced leadership opportunities. The Summit Award moves the experience of Venturing to become more "others-directed." The experiences grounded in the four areas of program emphasis focus more on the Venturer's impact on other people.

From the perspective of the crew, the ALPS model provides a tool to help plan adventures and recognize accomplishments along the way.

## Recognition – Not Ranks

Unlike Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Sea Scouting, Venturing's levels of advancement are not considered "ranks." While the ALPS model uses recognition devices (Venturing, Discovery, Pathway, and Summit) to reinforce progress, Venturing is founded on the belief that recognition serves as encouragement and not as an end in itself. By receiving recognition, Venturers do not reach an "end" and may continue to serve and strive for success.

### Pathfinder Award: Project Management Training

Advancement and Recognition Update: Project Management Training, required for the Pathfinder Award, is available by request. The training, developed in collaboration with the Project Management Institute's Education Foundation, is not available online per request of Project Management Institute. It may, however, be shared by email. Advisors and Venturers are welcome to request a copy of this training from Jessica Ayala-Jansch, Venturing lead on the BSA's Member Experience team ([jessica.ayala@scouting.org](mailto:jessica.ayala@scouting.org)).





# Awards: Sea Scout

## Changes in Sea Scout Eligibility for Venturing Awards and More

The BSA National Board, on February 10, 2016, adopted a resolution “...to make Sea Scouting a separate program with the same status of other programs.”

### What are the changes in Sea Scouting eligibility for awards and recognitions as a result of the Sea Scouting program status change?

As with past changes in BSA programs, changes to eligibility for awards and recognition are being phased in over time. In the past, Sea Scouts were considered to be a subset of Venturing and were eligible for a variety of Venturing awards including: Venturing, Discovery, Pathfinder, and Summit; Quest, TRUST, and Ranger; and the Venturing Leadership Award (VLA). With the change in the Sea Scouting program status, this eligibility has been reviewed at the National Office and the following changes have been adopted.

Sea Scouts, who are working on any of the Venturing awards and recognitions, will be “grandfathered” to complete those awards and recognitions through December 31, 2016. After that date, eligibility for Venturing awards and recognitions will be limited to registered Venturers. Any Sea Scout may dual-register in a Venturing Crew to maintain eligibility for Venturing awards. Likewise, any Sea Scout Ship (unit) may dual register as a Venturing Crew.

A new Sea Scouting Leadership Award has been approved for use beginning in 2017. Insignia for the Sea Scouting Leadership Award will include the existing VLA knot, with Sea Scouting miniature device, and neck ribbons with a Sea Scouting pendant, similar to the existing VLA. (For 2016, Sea Scouts and Sea Scout leaders are eligible for the Venturing Leadership Award.)

### Venturing & Sea Scout Leadership Awards



### What about eligibility for other advancement, awards, and recognitions?

The Sea Scouting Resolution didn't change the eligibility for other advancement, awards, and recognition programs. For example, the Eagle Scout rank will continue to be available to Sea Scouts who achieved First Class rank in a Boy Scout troop or Varsity Scout team. General BSA awards, such as Religious Emblems, Nova Awards, BSA Lifeguard, etc., will continue to be available to Sea Scouts.

### Will there be a "Unit Leader Award of Merit" for Sea Scout Skippers?

Yes, the application form for the Unit Leader Award of Merit is being updated to specifically include Sea Scout Skippers. The existing Unit Leader Award of Merit knot, with Sea Scouting miniature device, will be used to recognize these outstanding Skippers. A new Sea Scout Skipper Award emblem is also being developed; it will be similar to the existing emblems for Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, Team Coach, and Venturing Advisor.

A link to past issues of **Advancement News** may be found at the Advancement Resources web page:

[www.scouting.org/advancement](http://www.scouting.org/advancement)

## From the Archives

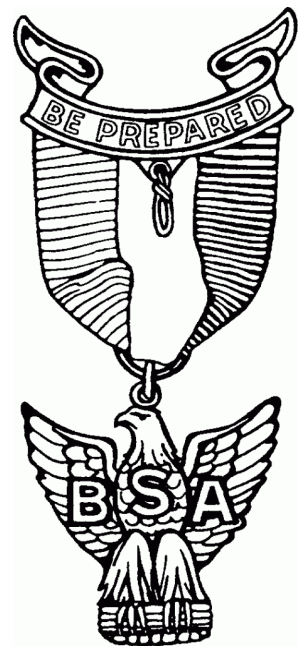
### Eagle Issues: Boards of Review—Negative Reference Responses

(October 2014)

Eagle Scout Requirement 2 reads: *“Demonstrate that you live by the principles of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in your daily life. List the names of individuals who know you personally and would be willing to provide a recommendation on your behalf.”* Therefore, the Eagle Scout Rank Application requires that a Scout list references. The *Guide to Advancement* requires that each of these references be contacted, but allows local councils leeway to determine the specific process for obtaining the recommendations, most often in a letter, to the board of review.

On occasion, a board of review may receive a letter from a reference that provides a negative view of the Scout. What are the members of the board to do with this? The answer is found in the *Guide to Advancement*. Topic 8.0.1.1 explains that one of the purposes of any board of review is to help assure that the requirements for the rank have been met. One of the requirements for every rank is to demonstrate that the Scout lives by the principles of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in his daily life. The members of the board of review should not delegate the determination of whether this requirement is satisfied to any single reference.

If any board of review, especially an Eagle Scout board, receives a negative letter, the members of the board should consider the content and context of the recommendation. Does the writer have an accurate understanding of the principles of the Scout Oath and Law? Did the reference impose additional requirements beyond those written for the rank? Does the reference have a bias against the Scout? How does the negative recommendation compare to the others received? After considering questions such as these, the members of the board may determine they do not have enough information to make an informed judgment. Follow-up, either by phone or a personal visit, may be in order. Or the board may want to consult with others who know the Scout in order to make an accurate determination of whether he lives by the principles of the Scout Oath and Law. That determination is the responsibility of the members of the board of review after considering all the information about the Scout.



## 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](http://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](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org).

## Did You Receive these Tweets?

**March 18:** New requirements for Hiking merit badge now posted at [www.scouting.org/meritbadges](http://www.scouting.org/meritbadges). See GTA 7.0.4.3 for "What to Do When Requirements Change."



**March 29:** Planning a group merit badge event? Check out the new "Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide." [www.scouting.org/advancement](http://www.scouting.org/advancement)



Check out the May-June 2016 edition of *Scouting* magazine: Learn all about Boy Scouting's required positions of responsibility.

## 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 July-August

**Opportunities for Advancement Administrators:** Overview of Advancement Educational Presentations

**The Cub Scout Angle:** Advancement Opportunities at Summertime Cub Scout Events

**From the *Guide to Advancement*:** Introducing Scouters new to Advancement to the use of the *Guide to Advancement*.

## 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](http://www.scouting.org/advancement).

**NEW:** [Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide](#)



### [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](#)

[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](#)







## Philmont Training Center 2016

### Mechanics of Advancement

June 12-18, 2016

The Philmont Training Center will host the 2016 Mechanics of Advancement conference for unit, district, and council volunteers and professionals June 12-18, 2016.



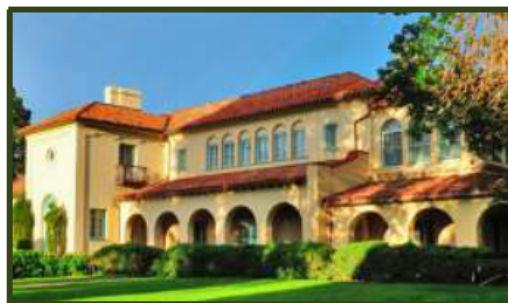
This course is a **must** for new advancement administrators or those just in need of a refresher on advancement procedures. Conference attendees will gain an in-depth understanding of the essentials of advancement and an appreciation for the rationale behind the policies and procedures governing it. Group discussions will focus on effective ways to resolve the related issues and challenges that arise. Presentations will come from members of the National Advancement Task Force and its advisory panel.

### Advancement Issues and Solutions

July 31- August 6, 2016

If you are an experienced volunteer advancement administrator, consider taking your game to the next level at the Philmont "Advancement Issues and Solutions" conference. This case study-based conference is designed for unit, district, and council advancement coordinators, chairs, committee members, and staff advisors. If that's you, start making plans now to take advantage of this opportunity to share ideas with other committed advancement administrators at Scouting's premier destination.

Conference participants will not only learn about the latest updates on advancement issues, but more important, they will analyze, discuss, and solve case studies similar to those regularly dealt with by the National Advancement Team and Task Force and the Eagle Issues Task Force. The result will be a better understanding of the effective use of the *Guide to Advancement* and also the confidence to handle difficult issues at the council level.



Share the beautiful Philmont Scout Ranch with your family and new Scouting friends from across America.

For more information on conferences and family programs, see [www.PhillmontTrainingCenter.org](http://www.PhillmontTrainingCenter.org).

Register at [www.philmonttraining.center.org](http://www.philmonttraining.center.org) and click the "Register For PTC 2016" button.