

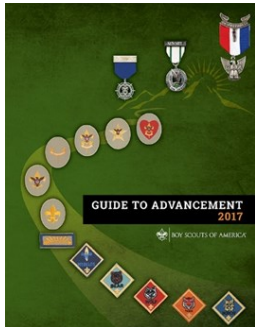
Advancement News

July-August
2017

Vol. 7, No. 4

Prepared. For Life.®

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



Guide to Advancement 2017 Released

The 2017 version of the *Guide to Advancement* (No. 33088) is now posted to the Advancement Resources web page (www.scouting.org/advancement).

See the Special supplement attached at the end of this edition of *Advancement News* for the highlights of the 2017 edition. Significant changes are outlined in topic 1.0.3.0. The supplement is designed to provide a handy format for advancement leadership to share this information with others in the units, district and council.

Is This Your Summer for Philmont?

Ask any Scouter who has been to Philmont Scout Ranch—whether on a high adventure trek or for a conference at the Philmont Training Center—about their experience. You’ll see a smile creep over their face as they remember the lyrics to the Philmont Hymn: “Silver on the sage, starlit skies above...” Each visit is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that visitors want to repeat over and over again. This summer is the perfect time to take advantage of the opportunity. Go, for your first time or your tenth. Check out the opportunities that are shared here, then go online and register for an incredible week where “the purple mountains rise.” We look forward to seeing you at one of the GREAT Advancement conferences! “Philmont, here’s to thee, Scouting Paradise.”

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Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

Advancement Issues and Solutions - July 16-22



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 importantly, they will analyze, discuss, and solve case studies similar to those regularly dealt with by the National Advancement Program Team and the Eagle, Summit, and Quartermaster Issues Task Force. The result will be a better understanding of the effective use of the 2017 edition of the *Guide to Advancement* and the confidence to handle difficult issues at the council level.



Don’t forget the fabulous programs available for families of conference participants! Spouses and children will remember the week for a very long time.

Registration information is available at: www.philmonttrainingcenter.org. Just click on the green bar to get started.

Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators (CEAA) - July 23-29

The CEAA is an advanced learning experience for council and district advancement volunteers and professionals who have advancement responsibilities. Of significant importance, it is an opportunity to assist in the development of educational materials and other resources that are used across the country. Conferees will view and discuss various existing materials and make recommendations for tools that should be developed for the future. Participants will begin development of some of those tools during this conference.



Don’t miss this fabulous opportunity to visit Philmont Scout Ranch and the opportunity to engage in some amazing Scouting and advancement activities and camaraderie. And bring your families because they will participate in programs that will not be forgotten for a long time.

Registration information is available at: www.philmonttrainingcenter.org. Just click on the green bar to get started.

Mechanics of Advancement - One Day Course on the Horizon

A day-long advancement education course will soon be published. This instructor-led course is the work of many advancement administrators and is intended to give councils a tool to educate unit, district, and council advancement administrators on the proper application of the *Guide to Advancement*. When published, it can be downloaded from scouting.org/advancement.

From the *Guide to Advancement*

Posting Accurate Advancement Information Is the Responsibility of Advancement Administrators

Do you have "egg on your face?" On your "web" face, that is. By this we mean is the advancement information on your website up to date, or does your site contain "leftovers" that you may not realize are there?

The Internet is an amazing educational and informational resource. Its capacity for storing and retrieving information is almost boundless. But this amazing capability is also its Achilles' heel. Information changes at such a rapid pace today that all too frequently something gets posted but is neither updated nor removed when it is out of date.

A quick review of a council, district, or unit website might not reveal any outdated documents, so you might think everything is okay. However, remember that the Internet stores information you "don't see." For example, occasionally, updated documents will be posted with a different name or link, but the poster neglected to delete the original document or link from the site. That original document is still searchable and could mistakenly turn-up when someone is conducting a web search, even though it doesn't appear on the website, itself.

Council, district, and unit advancement administrators, here are some steps you can take to improve the quality of the information you are sharing on your site:

1. Directly check your own website. Check that the information posted is accurate and up-to-date and that the links are active and going to the correct document. You can do this by individually checking all the advancement links and comparing the information with the *Guide to Advancement* and other official sources.
2. Do an "Internet search" of your web site using a browser, such as Google, and restrict the search to your website or domain name. Use appropriate search parameters such as "advancement" or "Life to Eagle." This will show all documents that are currently associated with your website, even those not currently listed on your site. If you discover any documents that are no longer relevant or accurate, take appropriate steps to remove them—and then recheck your site.

Review Section 3 of the *Guide To Advancement 2017* for additional council, district, and unit advancement administrator responsibilities.

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3. Do not download and post official BSA documents, such as the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* or the *Eagle Scout Rank Application* to your website. Instead, post a link to the document on the national BSA website. These documents are often updated, so by using a link instead of downloading the document, you can be assured your site always provides users the latest versions.
4. Finally, be sure to provide references to all BSA official source documents, such as the *Guide to Advancement*, the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, the *Eagle Scout Rank Application*, and *Advancement News*, for answers to your questions on advancement-related issues.

On Increasing Advancement

Summertime IS Advancement Time

Boy Scouts of America provides many incentives for continuing a well-thought-out advancement program throughout the summer. However, with sports and family vacations keeping boys away, many leaders wonder if having a year-round program is worth the effort. If pack leaders work together to look for ways to keep their boys involved through the school breaks, they will see an immense benefit to the pack's Cub Scouts and their families. Teamwork, flexibility, and consistency in running a summer program will not only help the Cub Scouts, but can help with recruitment and the strength of the pack.

The Annual pack planning conference is the first step to keeping families involved year-round. Invite parents to the conference so they will be involved as the calendar is established. Make sure school calendars are referenced and avoid major holidays and possibly community events. Consider events being held by your chartered organization and see if Cub Scout activities can be held in conjunction with these activities. With parental inputs, schedule day camp or resident camp dates so families can plan vacations around these activities. Pack leaders should remember that "family understanding" is one of the purposes of Cub Scouting and should schedule pack and den events that support the family. When leaders work with families, there will be a greater chance for successful summertime participation, as well as supporting the "Involving Family and Home" method of Cub Scouting.

Consistency is the key to having a worthwhile year-round program. If den meeting days are changing week after week during the summer or pack meetings are moved here and there with no communication, families will lose faith in the program and they will not attend – and they may not be back in the fall. Plan the calendar, communicate the events, and provide meaningful fun, learning, and advancement opportunities for Cub Scouts and packs. By doing this, packs will find that their program will thrive and their pack numbers will grow as more families want to be involved because of the excellent year-round program being provided.

Plan the calendar, communicate the events, and provide meaningful fun, learning, and advancement opportunities for Cub Scouts and packs.

A well-planned calendar can also keep families informed as to what kind of advancement opportunities will

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be taking place during the meetings. Communication can keep individual Cub Scouts from falling behind. For example, the den might be visiting the local zoo during a month that the absent Cub Scout could visit another zoo with his family while away on vacation. It is important for families to understand that they can be helping their Cub Scout by being familiar with the adventures of each rank.

However, planning for summer does require flexibility. Pack leaders should consider what changes need to be made during school breaks to enable the greatest success. For example, during the school year, dens may have 2-3 hour-long meetings per month in addition to the monthly pack meeting, but in the summer, may find two or even one longer den meeting a month easier for more Cub Scouts to attend, especially if these meetings involve outdoor activities. Leaders may want to consider combining dens if two-deep leadership is difficult to maintain due to vacations and work schedules. Leaders may want to consider not meeting in a month a major pack activity will take place, such as Cub Scout camp or Cub Scout day camp.

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.

About *Advancement News*

Follow the National Advancement Program Team on Twitter!

(BSA Advancement Team, @AdvBSA)

Advancement News is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America National Advancement Program Team. 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.

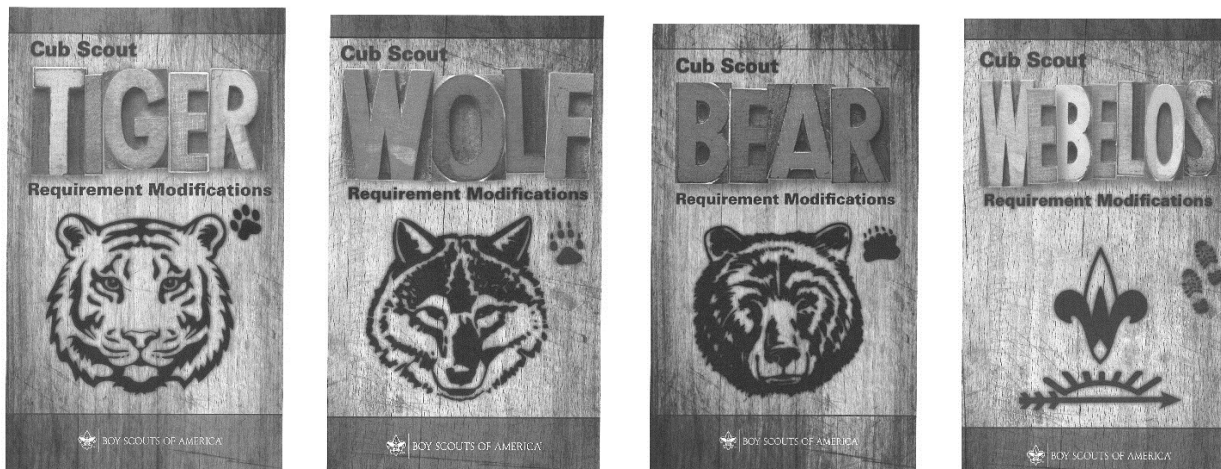
The Cub Scout Angle



Important: Cub Scout Advancement Requirements Continue to Evolve

Cub Scout adventure requirements continue to be revised based on experience gained since the issuance of the currently available Cub Scout rank handbooks. While den leaders may continue to use the resource materials on hand, there have been changes in how to use them in terms of advancement. The latest requirements and history of the changes made can be found online at the Program Updates web page.

www.scouting.org/scoutsourc/programupdates.aspx



Council and District advancement chairs are encouraged to facilitate sharing these *Requirement Modifications* documents with all Scouting leadership, particularly training chairs and advancement chairs. These requirement modifications are available at no charge from your local Scout store. The goal is that the current information will be provided to the den leaders who need them when doing their annual planning for den meetings and advancement activities.

Summertime Awards Make Advancement Easy

“Summertime, and the livin' is easy,” So go the words of a popular song. Too often our Cub Scout leaders decide to take it easy too, but summertime is a great time for advancement to take place. A year-round program provides opportunities and variety for Cub Scouts. The BSA has awards for packs, dens, and individual Cub Scouts that can help to motivate Scouts and families to participate and keep summertime boredom from settling in.

A pack can earn the **National Summertime Pack Award** by doing three pack activities when school is out for the summer—one activity each in June, July, and August, (or during school breaks for packs associated with homeschools or year-round schools). Packs that qualify get a colorful streamer for their pack flag. Dens that have at least half of their members participate in the three summer pack events can earn a den ribbon. Final-

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ly, pack members who take part in all three events are eligible for the National Summertime Pack Award pin. This Cub Scout award is worn on the right pocket flap of their uniform. Note that this is a youth award and may not be earned or worn by adults.

What kinds of activities could make a boy and his unit eligible? The warm days and nights of summer spark the imagination. For example, a pack activity at a local pool would provide something for everyone to do. Water Adventures for each rank include Floats and Boats, Spirit of Water, Salmon Run, and Aquanaut. Accomplishing these adventures toward rank advancement with the families, provides more fun and more adult support. Other ideas may include a pack campout or an outdoor activity such as a camp fire program, hike, picnic, or a visit to a zoo, animal refuge, or nature center, where additional adventures await. These include My Tiger Jungle; Tigers in the Wild; Call of the Wild; Howling at the Moon; Paws on the Path; Bear Necessities; Fur, Feathers, and Ferns; Webelos Walkabout; Outdoorsman; Castaway; Into the Wild; and Into the Woods.

The **National Den Award** recognizes dens that have a quality, year-round program. The award goes to dens that do service and conservation projects, field trips, character building, and camping. Dens earn the award as a team, not as individual den members, by having at least half of the Den participating in the various activities. The recognition is a ribbon for the den flag or den doodle.

Additionally, Cub Scouts can earn the **Cub Scout Outdoor Activity Award**. This award can be earned each year using the requirements for the individual ranks. The first time the award is earned, the boy will receive a pocket flap award, each successive time the award is earned a Wolf Track pin may be added to the flap. Activities for this award include earning the specific rank adventures, some of which have already been mentioned, including My Tiger Jungle, Paws on the Path, Bear Necessities, and Webelos Walkabout. These and many additional activities, such as a nature hike, pack overnighter, service or conservation project, can quickly lead to the Scout, den, and pack earning the Summertime Pack Award.

Specific requirements for these additional BSA Cub Scout Awards can be found on scouting.org. Cub Scouts should provide year-round opportunities for learning, fun, AND advancement particularly “in the good ole’ summertime.”



The Boy Scout Angle

Summer Adventures don't have to break the bank

I'm sorry if your troop or pack won't be going to summer camp this summer. I truly am. But that doesn't mean that you won't be able to keep the OUTING in SCOUTING. Let's use the summer time to plan events that will interest and excite the boys. Wait... wasn't that Baden-Powell's original idea.

How about an outdoor rain gutter regatta? Plan to hold the event outdoors rain or shine. If you do happen to get rain, the boys will talk about that for years.

How about a day hike to the zoo?

Get the patrol leader's council to plan an outdoor service project. Is there outdoor work that needs to be done at the church? Is there a local neighbor whose porch needs painting? Does the homeless shelter need someone to cook and serve a meal? How about including the Cub Scout pack in that project? How about including the whole chartered organization in an activity led by the Scouts?

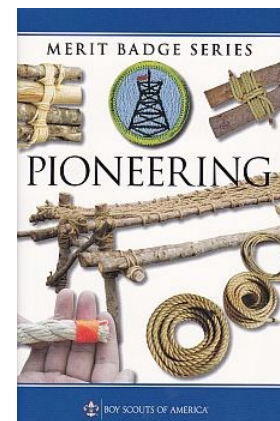
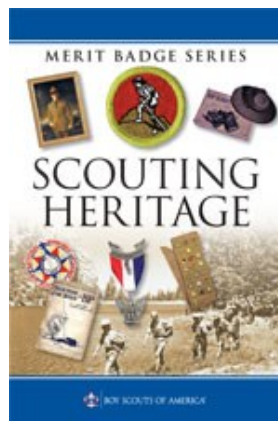
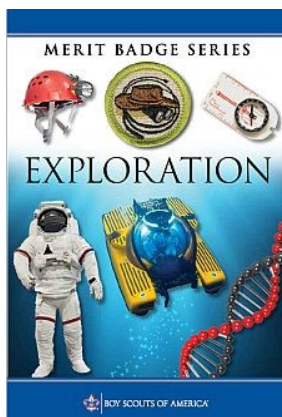
A summer weekend campout is a good time for a themed event. Pioneering merit badge is always lots of fun. The new exploration merit badge would make a great weekend camp out (see requirements at http://www.scouting.org/filestore/Merit_Badge_RegandRes/Exploration.pdf) Preparation for this weekend will be the plan for many troop meetings before the weekend.

Get a local historian to help with a local historical trail-type hike.

Do you have Scouts that need Tenderfoot, 2nd class and 1st class requirements? A requirements trail weekend campout would do the trick. This would be a good time to have the older boys earn Scouting Heritage merit badge (http://www.scouting.org/filestore/Merit_Badge_RegandRes/Scouting_Heritage.pdf).

How about patrol hikes to the local library for the Reading Merit Badge?

Start with these ideas and add some even better ones of your own to keep the OUTING in Scouting. The fun and adventure that you generate will keep your scouts in scouting longer and provide a greater opportunity to influence their character. Now isn't that what we're all about?



Counselor's Corner

The Blue Card: A Vital Record

In the March-April 2017 issue of the *Advancement News*, we discussed the “Process of Counseling.” In that article, we mentioned the role that the “Application For Merit Badge” (aka the “*Blue Card*”) plays in the overall merit badge earning process. This follow-up article will deal more directly with some of the specific areas of the “*Blue Card*” that the counselor needs to understand.

The “*Blue Card*” is a Scout’s official record for keeping track of his advancement. It shows when the Scout met with his unit leader to discuss the badge; it lists requirements that have been completed; and it provides helpful information for counselors. To the Scout, the “*Blue Card*” is a very important piece of his scouting trail, and, as such, it is extremely important that the merit badge counselor do the upmost to ensure it is properly filled out, signed, and dated.

Information for Applicant		Information for Counselor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A merit badge application can be approved only by a registered merit badge counselor.You must have a buddy with you (Scout buddy system) at each meeting with the merit badge counselor.Turn in your approved application to your unit leader. You will be awarded the merit badge emblem and certificate at a suitable occasion.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Merit badge applications must be signed in advance by the applicant's unit leader.The Scout must have his buddy (Scout buddy system) in attendance at all instructional sessions.You may not change any requirement, but you may share your knowledge or experience that will make the counseling more interesting and valuable.	
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APPLICATION FOR MERIT BADGE	
Name _____	
Address _____	
City _____	
is a registered <input type="checkbox"/> Boy Scout <input type="checkbox"/> Varsity Scout <input type="checkbox"/> Venturer	
of _____ Troop, team, crew, ship No. _____	
District _____	
Council _____	
I have discussed this merit badge with this Scout and recommended at least one merit badge counselor.	
Date _____	Signature of unit leader _____
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA® 34124	

APPLICANT'S RECORD		COUNSELOR'S RECORD	
Name _____		Applicant _____	
has given me his completed application for the _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Troop <input type="checkbox"/> Team Unit No. _____	
Merit badge _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Crew	
Completed on ____/____/____ by _____		Merit badge _____	
Signature of counselor _____		Date completed ____/____/____	
Signature of unit leader _____		Remarks: _____	
NOTE TO BOY SCOUT, VARSITY SCOUT, OR VENTURER: Retain this copy for your permanent records.		It is suggested that the counselor keep this record in case any question is raised later in regard to this award.	

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The diagram shows some important areas of the “Blue Card” to which the merit badge counselor should pay careful attention.

1. The “Blue Card” must be presented with the dated signature of the unit leader, i.e., Scoutmaster.
2. The requirement score sheet indicates what requirements the Scout may have completed previously. If your counseling sessions with the Scout only allow certain requirements to be completed (called a “partial”), then those requirements should be noted in this area along with your initials. Subsequent counselors with whom the Scout may work will use notations in this area as a road map to see what has been completed and what has not.
3. The easy-to-remove Counselor’s Record section of the “Blue Card” trifold is not to be detached until the Scout has fully completed the merit badge. Do not remove this portion of the “Blue Card” when only partials are being recorded. It is for the signing merit badge counselor’s records and should be kept for a reasonable period of time in case questions arise.
4. The merit badge counselor’s dated signature is required here when the merit badge is completed and deemed earned.
5. Completion of this section requires the Scout’s name, name of the merit badge, and a dated signature. Remember, this is the Scout’s portion of the trifold and is his proof he completed the merit badge. It is very important it be filled out correctly. His unit leader will sign it at a later date.
6. This portion of the “Blue Card” trifold will be retained by the unit. Therefore, it is imperative all the information be filled in, including a dated signature.
7. You may have reservations on providing your phone number, but it is important because it is the quickest way to get in touch with you if questions arise. Please provide the most convenient number.

(More detailed information regarding the “Blue Card” may be found in the *Guide to Advancement*, Section 7).

Archived editions of *Counselor’s Compass* remain available at

www.scouting.org/scoutsource/boyscouts/guideformeritbadgescounselors.aspx.



Eagle Issues



Timing for Eagle Scout Reference Letters

Eagle Scout letters of recommendation are typically requested near the end of a Scout's journey to Eagle Scout rank. Generally, this occurs when he completes and submits his Eagle Scout Rank Application on which he lists the names and contact information for his references. However, there is no procedure or expectation that requires Scouts to wait until after all other requirements are completed before asking for letters of recommendation. An enthusiastic Life Scout may want to move forward early to request recommendation letters to allow his references plenty of time to consider his request and submit their letters.

Councils, districts, and units must not establish specific timing requirements that limit when a Life Scout may request his recommendation letters. Neither the council-appointed representatives responsible for collecting reference responses nor the board of review may reject previously received recommendation letters; nor may they require the Scout to submit additional names in lieu of those already provided. However, they may contact the writer to assure themselves that he or she still supports the comments (positive or negative) in their original recommendation letter, especially if written some time ago.



Venturing

Take a Peek Inside the New Venturing Toolbox

In May 2017, the national office released a new Venturing Training Toolbox that can help both youth and adult Venturers learn and give presentations more effectively. This is an entirely free toolbox where you can obtain information and presentation materials for upcoming crew meetings.

Inside the toolbox, users will find several PowerPoint templates that can be adapted for various types of presentations, ranging from advancement-related topics (training and awards) to helpful crew and council topics (marketing, events, Venturing officers' association (VOA), and others). All PowerPoints have been reviewed and enhanced by the National Venturing Youth Cabinet and other youth Venturers.

All toolbox presentations may be reviewed and customized for individual presentations to fit specific needs of individuals and crews. Presentations may also be combined, depending on the desired topics. Check this new Venturing Training Toolbox out today by visiting www.venturing.org/training-toolbox.html

From the Archives

[Ed Note: Boy Scouts returning from 2017 National Scout Jamboree will have wonderful experiences to last a lifetime, and possibly some advancement started at the Jamboree, but not completed. Advancement administrators may find this 2013 article useful in dealing with these situations.]

On Increasing Advancement

2013 National Scout Jamboree Offers Advancement

(June/July 2013)

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

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

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

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

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

Hear It First on Twitter

If you want the news first, follow the National Advancement Program 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 a quick and easy process to set up an account at www.Twitter.com. To limit incoming emails (‘tweets’), you can select to have BSA National Advancement Program Team as the only account you want to follow.

Did You Receive this Tweet?

June 5: The 2017 *Guide to Advancement* has been posted. It is a downloadable PDF and can be accessed from www.scouting.org/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 from the 2017 edition

On Increasing Advancement: Using the Scout Planning Worksheet

The Cub Scout Angle: Is your council ready for the Lion program?

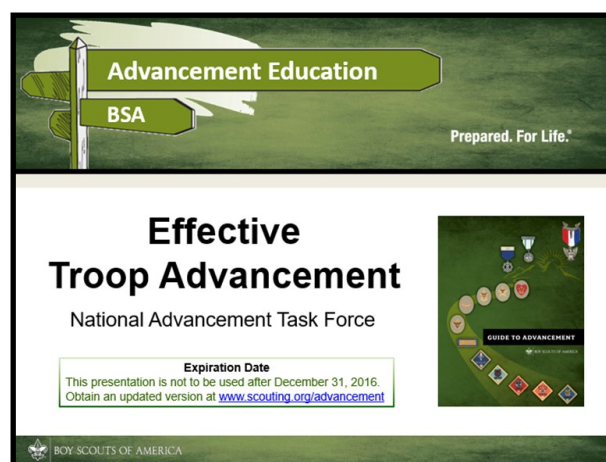
Helpful Links

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.

[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
- The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach
- Effective Troop Advancement
- 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 2017](#)

[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](#)





Guide to Advancement 2017

Released May, 2017

The *Guide to Advancement 2017*, the official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America programs, is now available online at www.scouting.org/advancement, in both HTML and PDF format. Printed copies will soon be available in your local Scout shop for purchase. The publication number 33088, has not changed, so when asking, specify the *Guide to Advancement 2017*.

The *Guide to Advancement* is the most important reference tool for anyone involved in advancement in Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Varsity Scouting, Venturing, and Sea Scouts. The *GTA 2017* replaces all previous editions of the Guide, and becomes the source for all advancement policies and procedures. As such, it supersedes any other BSA publications that may conflict with it.

The *Guide to Advancement* is updated periodically in response to changes to programs, requirements, and policies, as well as comments and recommendations received by the National Advancement Program Team. For the 2017 revision, and every revision, a task force of volunteers reviewed each section of the *Guide* in-depth and made recommendations for updates or clarifications. So carefully was each section of the *Guide* reviewed that almost every page received one or more changes. Some were as simple as changing BSA departmental references, some clarified existing policies, and while others added requirements to existing policies. The changes are too numerous to list individually; however, the following provides a summary of some of the changes in each section:

General - All references to the National Advancement Committee and the National Advancement Team have been changed to National Advancement Program Team.

Section 1 - Significant Changes and Frequently Asked Questions were updated.

Section 2 - The Methods of Scouting table was deleted.

Section 3 - Advancement committee functions (titles) were made more generic to better reflect how volunteer committees may actually be organized. Advancement education presentations were updated and the Spanish-language presentations were removed.

Section 4 - Clarification was added regarding Cub Scout program changes and allowing additional time to complete requirements. For Boy Scouting, clarifications were added regarding counting time for active participation and in positions of responsibility, delegating a Scoutmaster conference, not requiring certain documentation for a Scoutmaster conference, and how to count certain service hours. The topics on Venturing and Sea Scouting were rewritten to reflect the fact that Sea Scouts is now separate from Venturing.

Section 5 - The Spirit of Eagle Award is reviewed and approved at the local council level.

Section 6 - ScoutBook has been included and recognized as another means of reporting advancement.

Section 7 - Some clarification was added about what to do when requirements change.

Section 8 - Several clarifications were added regarding conducting boards of review such as when they must be granted, who can serve on the board, scheduling them promptly, and a Scout's right to a board of review under disputed circumstances.

Section 9 - Clarifications were added regarding who the Scout may list for his references, limits to which attachments can be required with the Eagle Scout Rank Application, signatures not required on the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook before the Scout's 18th birthday, and local council is responsible for completing the extension request form. New guidance also was added regarding how to handle advancement errors discovered after a board of review has been completed.

Section 10 - Clarification was added about when a request for registration beyond the age of eligibility may be submitted.

Section 11 - Changes and clarifications were made to most of the forms in the Appendix.

This brief overview is provided to present an idea of the scope of changes that were made. A complete list of the more significant changes to the *Guide to Advancement 2017* is found in section 1.0.3.0, beginning on page 7. However, it would be wise to consider carefully reviewing all those sections that impact your Scouting responsibilities.

