

# Advancement News

NOVEMBER  
2012

Vol. 2, No. 8

Prepared. For Life.®

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

## Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

### Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators at Sea Base

Next January, when it is cold and snowy in many parts of the country, the Florida National High Adventure Sea Base will host the Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators (CEAA). Scheduled for January 21–26, the CEAA will be the first-ever attempt to provide a forum at which experienced and inexperienced council, district, and unit advancement volunteers and professionals can come together to review and evaluate the new educational materials produced this year by the national Advancement Committee. Participants will also learn about recent changes and updates to advancement procedures and will be given copies of the new material to take home. The week will close with conference attendees assisting in the first stages of creating a number of new advancement-related presentations to be released later in 2013.

Registration information can be found at [www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/511-027\\_SeabaseTrainingEmail.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/511-027_SeabaseTrainingEmail.pdf). Reservations are now being accepted, so be sure to secure your spot at this groundbreaking opportunity. We look forward to seeing you in the Florida Keys in January!

P.S.: Don't forget to pack your sunblock!

#### Next Issue of *Advancement News* to Cover Two Months

The next issue of *Advancement News* will cover December and January. We will be back to monthly issues in February.

## On Increasing Advancement

### Using the Numbers

Scouters sometimes say it seems the only thing the BSA cares about is numbers. The truth is certain statistics are vital in helping us learn which units need our help most. Remember, Scouting happens in units. If council and district advancement committees are to make a difference, they must start by helping the leaders in our packs, troops, teams, and crews perform at a higher level. The numbers help us determine where to apply our resources.

First, there are numbers that help us understand how we are doing overall, like the numbers found on the council Journey to Excellence dashboard. Two of those measures are of particular interest: Cub Scout and Boy Scout advancement. If you drill down on either of these, you will find month-by-month advancement numbers compared with those from the previous year. The dashboard also shows how current numbers match up against this year's Gold, Silver, or Bronze Award criteria and explains how those calculations are made.

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To improve the dashboard numbers, we need to look at a second, more detailed set of numbers: unit-based figures that can be found in the district totals and district advancement reports. These two reports track on a unit-by-unit basis how much advancement has been recorded for each rank in the last month and during the year to date.

The reports also show how many youth members there are in each unit. Compare those numbers to the unit charters, where you will see each boy's age and grade, and take into consideration any rank listings not appropriate for a youth's age. Then compare the rate of advancement numbers to the advancement goals established by the council or district advancement committee. For Cub Scouts, the ideal is one rank advancement per boy per year. For Boy Scouts, an average of less than one rank per year could point to problems. Many councils have developed spreadsheets and computer-generated reports that help make comparing the numbers from these reports meaningful, for instance, by showing statistics such as advancement per member per unit. If these spreadsheets are not available, and you can't generate them yourself, consider recruiting someone who finds this kind of task relatively easy. However you get the figures, concentrate on the numbers for one unit at a time.

Think of what the reports tell about that unit, and ask yourself, "What actions would I take if I were on this unit's committee?" These actions might include conducting advancement training, improving advancement reporting, or building a unit program rich in advancement opportunities. Whichever actions may be appropriate, one thing is certain: If little or no advancement is being reported, we need to be in touch with that unit.

The numbers should be reviewed on a monthly basis. In this way, trends and trouble-shooting efforts can be observed in a timely manner. We can see if units that are getting assistance from an advancement committee or the commissioner staff are showing results. Advancement fosters retention, and keeping boys in Scouting longer gives us more opportunities to influence their character, citizenship, and fitness. Isn't that what we're all about?

### About Advancement News

*Advancement News* is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America national Advancement Team and the national Advancement Committee. Its intent is to support 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. The plan is to distribute *Advancement News* monthly, but we're flexible. It will go out when there is something important to say. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at [advancement.team@scouting.org](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org). Districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication.

## Advancement Committee Mechanics

### Advancement Committee

#### Position Descriptions

For the past year *Advancement News* has been running a series of articles describing the responsibilities of 12 specialized council advancement committee positions that support not only the specific duties defined in section 3 of the *Guide to Advancement*, but also quality advancement experiences across all Scouting programs.

Previous issues have discussed the duties of the district advancement coordinator, volunteerism specialist, advancement promotions specialist, advancement training and events coordinator, camping committee and outdoors program liaison, records keeper/statistician, Internet Advancement specialist, and merit badge chair. This month we address the Eagle Scout issues coordinator and special needs Scouting specialist positions.

#### Eagle Scout Issues Coordinator

The Eagle Scout rank is often the major focal point for advancement committees because of the special procedures used in approving it. The Eagle Scout issues coordinator helps ensure both national and local council procedures are properly followed, including—but not limited to—approving Eagle Scout service project proposals, ensuring availability of project coaches, securing references, handling board of review arrangements, and addressing the paperwork necessary to document each young man's achievement.

This volunteer works with the district advancement chairs to ensure these functions are supported. This would normally involve training and regular communications. Units must receive accurate information and advice to ensure compliance with established procedures. This position is also a key contact in the event of boards of review under disputed circumstances and appeals, making a comprehensive knowledge of both the approach and the policies governing advancement critical.

#### Special Needs Scouting Specialist

The BSA has a long history of successful advancement for youth with special needs. In order to support these young people, it is recommended that advancement committees leverage the expertise of someone closely acquainted with BSA advancement policies and procedures regarding Scouts with special needs. This is addressed in detail in section 10 of the *Guide to Advancement* and includes registration of youth beyond the age of eligibility and applications for alternative requirements or alternative merit badges where necessary. The specialist also supports training for district and unit leaders regarding compliance and handling of special needs requests.

# The Cub Scout Angle

## The Pack Committee Role in Advancement

While the Cubmaster, den leaders, and their assistants present the program and encourage advancement, the pack committee is responsible for the administration of advancement. See the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 4.1.0.2. The pack committee collects den advancement reports, compiles and maintains them in pack records, and reports advancement to the council (preferably through Internet Advancement). The committee should also be responsible for promptly purchasing awards, ensuring their presentation as soon as possible after they are earned, and helping to plan and facilitate various ceremonies such as the annual blue and gold banquet.

To facilitate those roles, an active pack committee should have a pack advancement coordinator (or chair if there is a unit advancement committee). The coordinator is charged with supporting the pack's advancement program, maximizing rank achievement, and facilitating smooth implementation of the advancement process. The coordinator should also serve as a resource to help new den and pack leaders to stimulate and encourage advancement by helping build existing programming around advancement opportunities. See the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 3.0.0.3.

The pack committee and advancement coordinator may also recommend special pack activities that could lead to higher rates of advancement. For example, some packs hold an annual Webelos graduation ceremony to make the transition between ranks a more meaningful and welcoming process for returning youth. Other pack advancement coordinators or committees use recognitions such as the Cub Scout Leave No Trace Award to encourage greater participation in multiple pack outings. Programs and supporting ceremonies such as these should be developed jointly by the Cubmaster, den leaders, their assistants, the pack committee, and the pack advancement coordinator.

## The Venturing Perspective

### Bronze Award—Halfway to Expert

Each Bronze Award focuses on one of Venturing's five special areas of interest: sports, outdoors, arts and hobbies, religious life, and Sea Scouting. For those who continue to improve their understanding, skills, and abilities, Venturing also has what one could call expert level or advanced recognitions that correspond to each of the Bronze Awards, with the exception of arts and hobbies.

Conveniently, when a young person completes the Bronze Award, he or she is halfway to earning the corresponding advanced recognition. For example, to earn the Outdoor Bronze Award, one must complete four of eight core requirements and two of 18 elective requirements. The corresponding expert Ranger Award requires the other four core requirements be completed

along with an additional two elective requirements. Literally, earning one award means the Venturer is halfway to earning the advanced award!

The expert level awards help to solidify one's personal knowledge and understanding of a particular topic, but there is still freedom to pick and choose which elective requirements to complete. Many of the requirements for an individual award can be worked into crew meetings and activities for the benefit of the entire group.

The chart below shows the relationships between the Bronze and the more advanced awards. It is important to note that the requirements must be completed while a registered Venturer. More information about Venturing advancement and each award can be found at [www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Venturing/Awards.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Venturing/Awards.aspx).

Bronze Award	More advanced award
Outdoor	Ranger Award
Sea Scouting	Ordinary Rank
Sports	Quest Award
Religious Life	TRUST Award

## What's the Procedure?

### Cooking Merit Badge Required for Eagle

Effective Jan. 1, 2014, the Cooking merit badge will be required to obtain the Eagle Scout rank. Here are some details.

### What about Scouts who started working toward Eagle before 2014?

Regardless of when a Scout earned the Life rank or began working toward Eagle, unless he fulfills all the requirements before Jan. 1, 2014—with the exception of his board of review—he must earn the Cooking merit badge to become an Eagle Scout.

### Will the Cooking merit badge requirements change?

Yes. During 2013 the Cooking merit badge will undergo a major revision. The process for implementing changes to merit badge requirements is covered in the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 7.0.4.2, "What to Do When Requirements Change." The changes to Cooking will first appear in a revised merit badge pamphlet to be released sometime in 2013.

## Once the revised requirements are released, which version will count?

The new requirements become effective Jan. 1, 2014, with the release of the *2014 Boy Scout Requirements*, No. 34765. The *Guide to Advancement* then allows the following options for the period of time between the release of the revised pamphlet and the Jan. 1, 2014, effective date:

- If Scouts have already started on the merit badge, they may switch to the new requirements (using the new merit badge pamphlet) or continue with the existing ones (and using the existing pamphlet) until the badge is completed.
- Scouts who have not already started on the merit badge may opt to use the new requirements and the new pamphlet.
- Scouts who begin work on the merit badge before Jan. 1, 2014, may use the existing requirements and pamphlet until the badge is completed.
- Under the same topic, the *Guide to Advancement* goes on to say, "There is no time limit between starting and completing a badge, although a counselor may determine so much time has passed since any effort took place that the new requirements must be used." This will apply to Scouts working on the Cooking merit badge as well.

## Let's say a Scout has already earned Cooking. Will he have to re-earn it with the revised requirements to obtain the Eagle rank?

No. Scouts who complete the requirements for the Eagle Scout rank *after Jan. 1, 2014*, must earn the Cooking merit badge under *either* the existing requirements *or* the requirements as revised during 2013. Scouts are not required to earn the badge under the new requirements in order to qualify for Eagle.

## New Sustainability Merit Badge a Required-for-Eagle Option

Upon its release set for summer 2013, the Sustainability merit badge becomes an Eagle-required merit badge as an option to Environmental Science. This means once the Sustainability merit badge and pamphlet become available in 2013, Scouts may choose to earn the Sustainability merit badge in place of the currently required Environmental Science merit badge. Here are some additional facts.

## If a Scout earns both the Sustainability and the Environmental Science merit badges, do both count toward Eagle?

Scouts who have already earned Environmental Science may also earn Sustainability, but only one of the two merit badges would count as "Eagle-required." The second badge may be counted among his electives to reach the total of 21 required merit badges.

### 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 best practices in advancement.

If you already have a Twitter account, follow us at @AdvBSA or BSA Advancement Team. If you don't have an account, it's quick and easy to set one up at [www.Twitter.com](http://www.Twitter.com). To limit incoming emails (tweets), you can select the Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

## Can you give me a general description of what the Sustainability merit badge will cover?

The Sustainability merit badge, in essence, takes conservation and environmental science to another level. The protection, preservation, and management of wildlife and natural resources involved in conservation provide a foundation for what we call environmental science. It integrates physical and biological sciences such as ecology, biology, soil science, atmospheric science, and others in order to generate solutions to environmental issues. Sustainability takes it a step further by emphasizing responsibility for balancing long-term environmental, social, health, and economic needs with progress and development. It further suggests that development, while meeting the needs of the present, cannot compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

## What subject areas will Scouts be studying?

- Ecology
- Air, water, and land pollution
- Endangered species
- Pollution prevention, resource recovery, and conservation
- Ecosystem—living and nonliving
- Environmental impact

## What are the requirements for Sustainability?

The requirements for Sustainability have not yet been finalized, but initial discussions include the following topics:

- What is sustainability?
- Examining our current needs and our choices in meeting them, with attention to extraction, production, distribution, consumption, and disposal
- Impact on our natural resources
- Problems we must address, including plastic, electronic, and medical waste; species extinction; and climate change
- New habits to adopt, including green chemistry, recycling, zero waste, and sustainability conscious citizenship
- Careers related to sustainability



## One Oath and Law for All Programs

On Oct. 17, 2012, the Boy Scouts of America's National Executive Board passed a resolution that will extend the Scout Oath and the Scout Law throughout all BSA programs, from Cub Scouting through Venturing and Sea Scouts. While the change will affect the language in certain advancement requirements, it relates more to program content and thus does not fall under the purview of the national Advancement Committee. However, members of the committee contributed to the research and planning behind the resolution.

Here are a few condensed excerpts from the actual resolution that was passed:

*Whereas, such volunteer-led task forces have determined that it is in the best interests of the Boy Scouts of America, the young people participating in its programs, and the United States of America that all participants develop an understanding of and subscription to the Scout Oath and Law at the earliest possible age and over the full span of BSA program offerings:*

*Now, therefore, it is hereby*

*Resolved, That the first sentence of Charter and Bylaws, article X. Program, section 1, paragraph 3: In all activities, emphasis shall be placed upon practice in daily life of the principles of the Tiger Cub Promise, the Cub Scout Promise, the Scout Oath or Promise, and the Venturing Code. Shall be modified to read: In all activities, emphasis shall be placed upon practice in daily life of the principles of the Scout Oath.*

*Resolved further, that the Rules and Regulations, article IX. Principles, Policies, and Definitions, clause 3: All Boy Scouts must know and subscribe to the Scout Oath and Law. Shall be modified to read: All Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, Venturers and Sea Scouts must know and subscribe to the Scout Oath and Law.*

In three further clauses of the resolution, references to the Cub Scout Promise, the Law of the Pack, and the Venturing Oath and Code were deleted, and timing of the changes was stated as "approximately January 1, 2014, for Venturing-related changes and May 15, 2015, for Cub Scout and Boy Scout-related changes."

## From the Guide to Advancement

### Multiple Advancement Credit for One Activity

The national Advancement Team is often asked: "What is the policy on using a single activity to fulfill more than a single Boy Scout requirement?"

The answer involves three considerations. The first occurs when there is an exact match in the wording of the requirements. The second is when requirements give the appearance of aligning at first glance, but differ upon further examination. The third and most frequent consideration involves service to others.

When requirements do match exactly—e.g., camping nights for Second Class and First Class ranks and merit badges—it is appropriate and completely permissible to use those matching activities for both the ranks and merit badges.

However, in the vast majority of instances, seemingly similar requirements have nuances intended to create distinctly different experiences. The Communication and Citizenship in the Community merit badges provide an appropriate example. Each requires the Scout to attend a public meeting, but that is where the similarity ends. For the Communication merit badge, the Scout is asked to practice active listening skills during the meeting and "present an objective report that includes all points of view that were expressed." For Citizenship, the Scout is asked to examine differences in opinions expressed during the meeting, and then to choose and defend one side. After fulfilling the more inclusive Communication requirement, if the Scout selects an issue presented at the same public meeting and defends it, only then has he also met the Citizenship requirement.

As for service to those in need, the BSA wisely does not have a set policy or rule. Rather, this outlook is left to the Scout's and his leaders' consciences. When contemplating whether to double-count service hours or a service project and apply the same work to pass a second advancement requirement, each Scout should ask himself: "Do I want to get double credit for helping others this one time, or do I want to undertake a second effort and make a greater difference in the lives of even more people?" To reach his decision, each Scout should follow familiar guideposts found in words and phrases such as "helpful," "kind," "Do a Good Turn Daily," and "help other people at all times." As Scout leaders, we must ask ourselves an even more pointed question: "Is my goal to produce Scouts who seek out loopholes or Scouts who will become the leaders in our communities?" To answer our own question, we should consult the same criteria that guides the Scouts.

## Merit Badges—What's New?

### Centennial Historic Merit Badges Are Now History

During the BSA's centennial year in 2010, Scouts were offered a historic opportunity to retrace some of Scouting's steps from the past by earning four merit badges from bygone days: Carpentry, Signaling, Pathfinding, and Tracking (originally called Stalking). Temporarily reviving these merit badges for the centennial year was for fun, novelty, nostalgia, and skills development.

The plan was to confine the earning of these merit badges to the centennial year, and the deadline for completing all requirements for any of the four was Dec. 31, 2010. In most cases Scouts completed the requirements by that cutoff date. However, in a few instances, work on these merit badges was mistakenly allowed to continue into 2011. Some units even confused local summer camp "tracking" activities—which were based on the historic Tracking merit badge—as a merit badge experience and incorrectly recorded it as such in reporting advancement. ScoutNET and Internet Advancement has allowed posting the merit badges past the deadline to avoid penalizing Scouts who legitimately began work on the badges during 2010, but never received them.

Council and district advancement administrators and unit advancement coordinators must understand the four historic merit badges are no longer available. In this case, contrary to the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 7.0.4.4, "Discontinued Merit Badges," even if effort began before Dec. 31, 2010, and even if that effort has actively continued since then, *the badges may no longer be completed and will no longer count toward advancement*. However, the national Advancement Team will consider exceptions based on extreme extenuating circumstances, but only upon receipt of a message to [advancement.team@scouting.org](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org) from a council advancement chair, staff adviser, or Scout executive.

## What Do You Think?

### Survey for November 2012

#### Eagle Scout Project Beneficiary Brochure

The national Advancement Committee is working to develop a simple information brochure or fact sheet for Eagle Scout service project beneficiaries. The publication could contain general information about Eagle service projects and the responsibilities and "rights" of beneficiaries. This month's survey seeks your thoughts on information the brochure should contain and how it might be distributed. We want to know what you think!

**Note:** Anonymous responses are not accepted for any of the *Advancement News* surveys. This is because of the importance the national Advancement Team places on the ability to communicate with survey respondents should more information be needed to consider their answers.

Completing the survey should take about three to five minutes. Just click on the link below to begin. Thanks in advance for your time and feedback.

[http://scouting.us.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_9QAKRUHjoh4JG6N](http://scouting.us.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9QAKRUHjoh4JG6N)

## A Peek Ahead

Here is a glimpse of what we are working on for the next issue of *Advancement News*, which will come out in January. 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 December/January

#### Opportunities for Advancement

**Administrators:** New Training for Advancement Administrators

**Advancement Committee Mechanics:** Awards and Recognition Chair, Religious Emblems Coordinator

**From the *Guide to Advancement*:** Offering Merit Badges at Camp

**Merit Badges—What's New?:** What Merit Badges Are New and Newly Released?

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