



Commissioner Newsletter

Your Single, Best Resource.

February 2, 2026 Edition

“Instruction does much, but encouragement, everything.” – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

This February, we celebrate the official founding of Scouting in the United States. On February 8, 1910, the Boy Scouts of America was incorporated, bringing the global vision of Scouting to American youth. Inspired by the principles of character, citizenship, and personal fitness set forth by Robert Baden-Powell in 1907, Scouting in America has grown into a movement that has impacted millions of young people for over a century.

As we honor this milestone, we recognize the countless volunteers, families, and Scouts who have carried the torch of Scouting across the country. This month is a reminder of the enduring spirit and promise of Scouting: preparing youth for life, fostering community, and building a better future.

Join us in celebrating the legacy of Scouting in America this February and reflecting on over a century of adventure, learning, and growth.

Scouts BSA Webinar – February 4

Register for an upcoming leader discussion, “Working Advancement into Troop Meetings,” on February 4 at 8:00 PM Eastern Time. Advancement is one of the eight methods of Scouting, and when used well, it helps keep Scouts engaged and progressing. Learn practical ideas for incorporating advancement and recognition into troop meetings while still delivering an exciting, youth-focused program. This session is ideal for unit leaders looking for fresh approaches that support Scout development and growth. Register [here](#).

National Membership Mixer – February 15

The next mixer will be held on February 15 via Zoom at 8:00 pm. The session will focus on retention and will be led by CST-15 Membership Lead Mike Matzinger, who will share practical insights drawn from some of the most successful units in his territory. This topic is relevant to anyone involved in membership and program delivery. Council professionals, committee members, unit leaders, commissioners, and other volunteers are encouraged to attend and to share the invitation with others who may benefit. Participants will learn proven strategies that are working in the field, actions units can take right away, and practical approaches that the

average volunteer can realistically implement. The session will also highlight ideas that require no financial investment or specialized training. Register to attend [here](#).

Commemorative Eagle Scout Certificate

To commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and in recognition of our partnership with America250, Scouting America will present all Eagle Scouts who earn the rank in 2026 with a special commemorative Eagle Scout certificate. This limited-edition certificate will be available only to Scouts who achieve the Eagle rank during the 2026 calendar year.

The special certificate will be issued automatically beginning February 1, 2026. No special request is required; it will replace the standard Eagle certificate for all 2026 recipients.

Scouts who earned the Eagle rank in January 2026 may request a reprint through their local council.

The Application Window to Sail the Eagle is Now Open

Do you know a Sea Scout who wants the adventure of a lifetime? Encourage them to apply to sail aboard the tall ship US Coast Guard Cutter Eagle!

The Eagle is a three-masted barque that trains Coast Guard cadets and officer candidates each spring and summer. Built in Germany in 1936 and brought to the U.S. as a World War II war reparation, the ship has been homeported in New London, Connecticut, at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy ever since.

Through the Coast Guard Auxiliary's youth program, select Sea Scouts can join the Eagle as crew during the final portion of the summer cadet cruises. This is a chance for fun, adventure, and an unforgettable summer at sea. And, sailing on the Eagle counts toward the Long Cruise award!

Space is limited, and applications are due March 31st each year. Applications are made using this [link](#).

Scouting is For All

Experience shows that not only is it possible to support a youth with disabilities in any unit, but that this benefits everyone in the unit. Learn more about "The Unit Leader's Role in Supporting a Scout with a Disability" [here](#).

Environmental Health & Safety Shares Aims for 2026

Safeguarding youth is everyone's top priority. Tree Kiester, Scouting America Director of Environmental Health & Safety, looks back on 2025 and shares his team's aims for 2026 [here](#).

Make Plans to Attend a Commissioner College

Do you have a commissioner college on your 2026 calendar yet? Find one near you [here](#) and reach out to invite friends to come with you. To get your college listed, send the information to Barbie Taylor (barbiestaylor@msn.com). Entries are posted as they are received, please allow at least 1 week to get your entry posted. Include council name, council city and state, date, time, location, website or pdf document where more information can be found, and contact information.

Reminder: Commissioner Newsletter eBlast Survey

The Commissioner Newsletter eBlast is the most read newsletter in Scouting America produced entirely by volunteers. Volunteers are often stretched thin and do not always have the time or energy to track updates across emails, newsletters, and social media, especially when it is not always clear which sources are official. Missing important information can be a real concern.

The goal of the eBlast is to serve as the single, best resource for unit leaders by delivering timely, reliable updates in one place. Please take a few minutes to share your feedback and help ensure the newsletter continues to improve and better meet your needs. Access the survey [here](#).

Reminder: Commissioner Week at Philmont Training Center, June 7 – 13

Join a community of passionate commissioners at the Philmont Training Center the week of June 7 – 13. Expand your skills, explore new ideas, and connect with like-minded leaders while experiencing the magic of Philmont. Learn more and register [here](#).

Follow Us on Facebook or Instagram

Join the [Commissioners of Scout America's Facebook page](#) and [Instagram account](#) and help spread the word about Scouting by liking and sharing posts. Engage those whom you serve by being where they go for information.

Prior Editions of the Commissioner Newsletter

Find a repository of the most recent back issues of the Commissioner Newsletter [here](#).

How Can We Help You?

The National Commissioner Service Team (NCST) exists to serve commissioners. Learn who are the members of the 2025-26 team are and what they do [here](#).

Ask A Commissioner

Q. Does Scouting U requires position specific training to be retaken every time a course is updated in order to remain “trained,” and does anyone who has not completed the newest version automatically lose their trained status?

A. No. However, leaders should make an effort to stay current with their training as changes and updates occur as part of Scouting's natural evolution. Great leaders are continuous learners.

Q. I am a unit commissioner for a Cub Pack. They are struggling with retaining families. What advise can I give them.

A. The following are a few ideas to get a conversation started.

Evaluate the Experience - Ask families why Scouts are leaving or considering leaving. Common reasons include lack of engaging activities, scheduling conflicts, or feeling disconnected. Honest feedback will help target the problem.

Focus on Fun and Engagement - Cub Scouts stay when meetings and activities are fun and hands-on. Encourage den leaders to plan interactive games, outdoor adventures, or themed meetings. Make sure every Scout has a role or responsibility to feel included. Scouts don't want "night school."

Strengthen Family Involvement - Scouting works best when parents are engaged. Invite families to participate in meetings, service projects, or outings. Recognize their contributions and make them feel valued.

Communicate Consistently - Clear communication about schedules, upcoming events, and achievements keeps families connected. Consider newsletters, group texts, or a shared calendar to avoid confusion and no-shows. The Voice of the Scout survey consistently finds that poor communication is a big reason families leave.

Celebrate Achievements - Recognize every accomplishment, even small ones, during meetings, pack newsletters, or ceremonies. Scouts who feel proud of what they do are more likely to stay. Most enjoy celebrating with bacon.

Recruit and Retain Leaders - Sometimes retention suffers because leadership is stretched thin. Make sure den leaders are supported, trained, and encouraged. Fresh ideas and energy help keep Scouts engaged. The biggest need that leaders say that they commissioners to address is that parents aren't helping out.

Connect to the Community - Plan activities that allow Scouts to see the impact they have, such as service projects, community events, or partnerships with local organizations. Scouts who see their value are more likely to continue. Earning awards isn't enough.

Follow Up Personally - If a Scout misses meetings or seems disengaged, have a leader or parent reach out personally. Sometimes a simple check-in can prevent a family from leaving.

You have questions? Commissioners have answers!
Reach out by email: commissionerserviceteam@scouting.org



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