



Commissioner Newsletter

Your Single, Best Resource.

March 2, 2026 Edition

“You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give.” – Winston Churchill

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](#).

Spring Commissioner Impact Session, April 11

Join us for the Spring Commissioner Impact Session: Racing to Impact – Making Strides to Retain, Grow, Thrive, happening Saturday, April 11, in Louisville, Kentucky, with optional activities on Friday. Learn more and register [here](#).

This session offers a unique opportunity to connect with the National Commissioner Service Team and fellow commissioners, collaborate, and explore new strategies to increase your impact on Scouting. Together, we'll focus on helping every unit grow, retain members, and thrive, while also enjoying Louisville's vibrant downtown, rich history, local culture, and unique culinary experiences.

The conference fee is \$50 and includes morning refreshments, lunch, conference materials, recognition, a Kentucky Derby Museum racetrack tour, and the 360-degree immersive experience “The Greatest Race.” Travel and lodging are not included.

2026 National Exploring Live Hour

The 2026 National Exploring Live Hour is a monthly Zoom series designed to engage, equip, and inspire Exploring volunteers and professionals. Each session, led by our National Exploring Program Chair and the National Director of Exploring, will share best practices and ideas from councils across the country, highlight successful growth campaigns, offer training and inspiration for new initiatives, and provide opportunities to collaborate with national and local leaders to solve real-life Exploring challenges. All sessions start at 1 PM Central, with the 2026 schedule as follows: March 11, April 8, May 13, June 10, July 8, August 12, September 9, October 14, November 11, December 9. Don't miss out! Register for each session [here](#).

Merit Badge Pamphlets Are Receiving a Modern Update

Merit badge pamphlets are receiving a modern update designed to keep requirements accurate and accessible. Instead of printing requirement lists inside the pamphlets, each one will now include a QR code and URL that link directly to the latest requirements in the Merit Badge Hub on scouting.org. This ensures Scouts and leaders always have access to the most current information.

QR codes are already being added to free downloadable pamphlets, and newly printed pamphlets with QR codes will begin appearing in Scout Shops in 2026. The transition will continue gradually as pamphlets are updated and reprinted over the next several years.

This change reflects the fact that merit badge requirements are regularly reviewed and updated to stay current with technological advances, best practices, and current events. While many updates take effect annually on January 1, safety related changes may occur at any time. Linking to the Merit Badge Hub keeps the detailed content in the pamphlet aligned with the most up to date requirements, whether accessed digitally or in print.

Competitive Gaming Newest Badge Added to the Test Lab

The Competitive Gaming badge will enter the Scouts BSA Test Lab in March 2026, giving Scouts the opportunity to explore esports, game strategy, teamwork, and competitive team dynamics with an emphasis on sportsmanship, communication, and strategic thinking. The Test Lab allows Scouts to try new, experimental badge topics using digital resources rather than printed pamphlets. Scouts may work with any registered adult volunteer to complete the requirements and must submit a short survey at the end. If the badge later becomes an official merit badge, those who completed it during the test period will receive full advancement credit.

All requirements must be completed before the badge's expiration date, and Scouts will earn a certificate of completion signed by their registered adult volunteer, which may be used for advancement if the badge is approved. Requirements and digital resources will be available [here](#), and questions may be directed to testlab@scouting.org

Scouts BSA Program Features

Looking for fresh ideas to energize your troop program? Program Features offer 48 themed modules designed to make planning easier for troop leaders. Covering topics such as outdoor adventure, sports, health and safety, citizenship and personal development, STEM, and arts and hobbies, these resources bring fun, challenge, and new experiences to meetings and outings while supporting advancement. It is a great way to keep Scouts engaged, learning, and excited to return each week. You can find all Program Features for free [here](#).

2026 National Jamboree Day Visitors

Scouting families, alumni, and friends are invited to attend the 2026 National Jamboree as Day Visitors at the Summit Bechtel Reserve. This is a unique opportunity to experience Scouting's premier national event firsthand, featuring high energy activities, live demonstrations, interactive exhibits, and the vibrant spirit that defines the National Jamboree.

Day Visitors will have the opportunity to connect with 15,000 Scouts and Scouters from across the country who are participating in this once in a lifetime experience. It is an exciting way to see Scouting in action and share in the adventure.

Day Visitor access will be available on July 24 and 25, 2026, as well as July 27 through July 29, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM each day. Ticket prices are \$100 for guests ages 14 and older, \$75 for youth ages 6 to 13, and free for children ages 5 and under.

Two of the most anticipated highlights of the Jamboree are the Opening and Closing Shows. The Opening Show will take place on July 23, 2026 at 8:30 PM, and the Closing Show will be held on July 30, 2026 at 8:00 PM. These special events bring the entire community together to celebrate the spirit, adventure, and excitement of the 2026 National Jamboree.

Additional details and ticket information are available [here](#).

Follow Us on Social Media

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.

Get to Know Your Unit Service Team

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. How can the Impact 365 program help improve retention in my troop since I am struggling to retain Scouts and worry that in a few years I will not have enough Scouts to renew?

A. Retention is really about giving scouts a reason to feel that what they do matters, that they belong, and that they are growing. A program like Impact 365 can hit all three if you use it intentionally, and the Messenger of Peace program gives you a global framework and recognition to reinforce that.

Start by making it feel bigger than just another badge or activity. Frame Impact 365 as your troop's way of creating positive change in the community and contributing to peace in the

wider world. Many Impact 365 themes such as clean water, climate, health, education, and inclusion naturally align with the idea of building a more peaceful and sustainable world. When scouts see their local service as part of a global movement of scouts working for peace, the sense of purpose gets even stronger.

Give scouts ownership early. Instead of leaders choosing all the Impact 365 activities, have patrols pick issues they care about and explore how those connect to building peace in their community. They can ask simple questions like who is helped, what problem is reduced, and how this makes life better for others. That reflection ties their project directly to Messenger of Peace values while still keeping the focus on youth led planning.

Break the program into visible milestones. A long term impact goal can feel abstract, especially to younger scouts. Turn it into smaller steps every couple of months and connect some of those milestones to Messenger of Peace recognition. When scouts know their sustained effort can also be recognized as part of a worldwide initiative, it adds meaning without adding a lot of extra work.

Use it to create leadership roles that feel meaningful. Appoint Impact 365 project leads, communications scouts who document the work, and partnership scouts who connect with community groups. You can also have a scout serve as a Messenger of Peace champion who helps the troop reflect on how each project promotes understanding, cooperation, or community well being. Older scouts often stay engaged when they are trusted with responsibility that feels important and outward facing.

Make the impact visible. Track hours served, people reached, items collected, or environmental improvements. Then go one step further and talk about outcomes in terms of peace building such as safer spaces, healthier families, or stronger community connections. Sharing these stories with parents and the community reinforces pride and helps scouts see that their actions truly matter.

Connect it to adventure, not just service. If your Impact 365 theme is environmental stewardship, pair service with outdoor adventures in the same area. If it is connected to culture, health, or global understanding, add cooking nights, guest speakers, or virtual exchanges. These experiences help scouts see that peace building is not just work, it is also about friendship, learning, and fun.

Finally, tell the story often. Open meetings with short updates, share photos, and let scouts explain not only what they did but who it helped and why it matters. Reflection is a key part of Messenger of Peace, and it helps scouts recognize their own growth. That sense of growth and contribution is one of the strongest drivers of retention.

Used together, Impact 365 provides the structure for sustained action, and Messenger of Peace provides the global context and recognition. Scouts are not just attending meetings. They are part of a worldwide movement of young people creating positive change all year long.

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



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