Integrating People, Process, and Technology to Improve Unit Service

Everyone involved in unit service has been dealing with change this year; this newsletter is full of information about that. Change breeds questions, and it’s not surprising that there have been many of them about Commissioner Tools and the Unit Service Plan.

Simply stated, one of our goals is to integrate people (commissioners, unit leaders, and district operating committee members), process (the Unit Service Plan), and technology (Commissioner Tools) to help our units better serve more youth through Scouting.

The Unit Visit Tracking System provided valuable experience with applying technology to unit service. It became apparent, however, that UVTS wasn’t capable of efficiently providing commissioners with actionable information, through either access to data collected elsewhere by the BSA or analysis of data input following unit contacts. It is being replaced by Commissioner Tools, but the primary objective of that change isn’t simply to replace UVTS. Rather, Commissioner Tools has been developed to provide commissioners with access to information needed to do their work better and easier and to enable them to work collaboratively with unit leaders and district operating committee members.

The Unit Service Plan is a new process, and it’s a better way to provide unit service. It supports all four elements of excellent unit service:

1. Supporting unit growth through the Journey to Excellence
2. Contacting units and capturing their strengths and needs in Commissioner Tools
3. Linking unit needs to district operating committee resources
4. Supporting timely charter renewal

The Unit Service Plan also supports our approach to starting and sustaining high-performing units (detailed in the Unit Performance Guide). The Unit Service Plan replaces all other service plans, including the “annual service plan,” traditionally referenced in unit service manuals and training materials. It was also a key component of the design of Commissioner Tools.

The first of the four steps in the Unit Service Plan process is completion of a unit assessment. This assessment replaces all other types of assessments, including the “unit self-assessment” referenced in unit service manuals and training materials. This unit assessment is intended to be collaborative; it is to be completed jointly by a unit commissioner and the unit Key 3 (and other key unit leaders who may have valuable input).

Larry Chase
National Commissioner Service Recruitment and Retention Chair
lhc@chasehome.net
Commissioner Tools supports the collaborative development of a unit assessment. Its design includes an electronic detailed assessment that can be used to easily identify a unit’s strengths and needs in areas that are excellent indicators of unit health. After introducing the concept to unit leaders, a unit commissioner can send an electronic assessment form to them by email that can be completed quickly and easily online, and the results of their assessments will be captured by Commissioner Tools and be available for review there. Unit assessments will be most effective when the unit commissioner facilitates a meeting with unit leaders to review their initial input and finalize an assessment of the unit’s strengths, needs, and greatest opportunities to improve the quality of the program it provides to the youth it serves. And, again, all of that can be captured in Commissioner Tools, where it will remain available for easy reference by the unit commissioner and other members of the district’s unit service team.

The unit assessment is just one example of how we’re integrating people, process, and technology to increase the impact of the good work commissioners do, which can best be measured by unit retention. In future issues, we’ll look at how Commissioner Tools has been designed to support other steps in the Unit Service Plan process. In combination, they really do provide an easier way for you to help units better serve more youth through Scouting!
How Do I …?

“I get it … there are new and better ways to provide unit service. But how do I learn how to use these new tools?”

That’s a completely reasonable question.

The pace of change in unit service is challenging. As new processes and technology come online, we’re working to provide resources that will enable commissioners to implement them successfully.

Training

Revisions that include new concepts, including the Unit Service Plan and Commissioner Tools, are well underway. Shortly, you will find new versions of our basic training courses available on our Commissioner Training Web page. That will always be your best source for the most current commissioner training information.

We began incorporating material about new processes and technology into conferences offered during Commissioner Week at Philmont Training Center earlier this year. If you are able to attend Commissioner Week in 2015, you’ll find even more information included in those conferences, as well as the opportunity to talk directly to members of our National Commissioner Task Force.

Unit Service Plan and Commissioner Tools

The Commissioners website now includes a link dedicated to the Unit Service Plan and Commissioner Tools. Currently, you’ll find a detailed presentation on the Unit Service Plan and a wealth of information about Commissioner Tools. (Remember, the Unit Service Plan is a key element of Commissioner Tools. Implementing Commissioner Tools is the best path to implementing the Unit Service Plan; preparing for the former also prepares you for the latter.)

Check the site frequently. Information is being added periodically, and the site will always be your best resource for information about the Unit Service Plan and Commissioner Tools.

Other resources will become available as we move beyond the current pilot implementations. Webinars will be available to train council unit service teams. Also, an application that will enable Commissioner Tools hands-on experience and practice—MyDemo—will be available. Entries in MyDemo won’t be captured in the production version of Commissioner Tools that council unit service teams will use once they convert to the new application.

Social Media

Finally, you may have noticed that unit service is more visible on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other similar sites. Rick Hillenbrand, a recent addition to our team, is working hard to make sure the most current information is available through social media channels.

Effective change requires effective communication; we’ll continue to do our best to meet your needs in this critical area.
Manual Modules Update

Fulfilling the promise of manual modules updates has been a long time coming. As you might imagine, with all of the changes being made to streamline the responsibilities of the commissioner corps, keeping abreast of the changes has been a difficult task. We decided to put things on hold until the Unit Service Plan was finalized and Commissioner Tools was rolled out. We will begin in earnest to update all of the commissioner “manuals” in the form of new modules. These will be posted as they are finished.

Note that the development of the Commissioner Tools required a significant investment of time by the BSA from volunteers, professionals, and developers, which all translates into intellectual property. This will result in posting some of the content of Commissioner Tools within the confines of my.Scouting. In other words, viewing some of the training and manual modules for Commissioner Tools will be limited to registered Scouters.

Darlene Sprague
National Commissioner Service Resources Chair
darsprague@roadrunner.com
Commissioner College Schedule

The College of Commissioner Science program is a great way to get additional training. The Commissioners website provides a listing of colleges of commissioner science that we receive information about.

Please check the list, found on the Commissioner Training page, if you would like to experience a college outside of your area or if your council does not currently run a college.

Note: To have your council’s college listed, please send information to Darlene Sprague at dorsprague@roadrunner.com.
Questions and Answers

Q: Will I be able to determine my council JTE scores with Commissioner Tools?

No. Commissioner Tools is a very robust program that was designed specifically to complement JTE but not replace it. For now, the council JTE score won’t be calculated by Commissioner Tools, but we will continue to improve the program and evaluate the feasibility of including the calculation in future releases.

Q: So what will Commissioner Tools be able to do?

Commissioner Tools is a very robust program that will provide commissioners a great deal of information about their units. It is an evolving program with enhancements and improved reporting capabilities planned for future releases. Commissioner Tools was designed to aid commissioners in evaluating unit performance by assessing unit strengths and needs. Through execution of the Unit Service Plan, commissioners are able to link district resources with a unit to resolve that unit’s needs and improve its Journey to Excellence scores. The assessment used in Commissioners Tools is quantified, which enables the commissioner to easily track a unit’s progress. Commissioner Tools also allows for administrative commissioners to easily see the number of commissioners and registered units in the council and district. It identifies the commissioners assigned to units as well as units that do not have commissioners assigned to them. In addition, the unit contacts entered into Commissioner Tools is extracted by the BSA Performance Management Group to determine the council unit visitation rate for JTE. Commissioner Tools is able to report the number of contacts that each commissioner is making, but there will not be any report trending in the initial release.

Q: How does my council go about adopting Commissioner Tools?

There is an abundance of information on the Commissioners website. Specifically, see the document titled “First Steps to Adopt Commissioner Tools.”

Q: When will my council get Commissioner Tools?

The decision about when your council will adopt Commissioner Tools is up to your council commissioner and Scout executive. It could be as early as November 1, 2014, or the first of any month thereafter. All councils must have moved off of UVTS and on to Commissioner Tools no later than March 1, 2015.

For more FAQs about Commissioner Tools, visit the Unit Service Plan and Commissioner Tools page at the Commissioners website.

Do you have a question for the National Commissioner Support Team? Send your questions to darsprague@roadrunner.com at any time. Those that are of general interest will be used in this column.
Traditional All Markets Strategy Report

The Traditional All Markets Strategy Report contains the number of traditional registered youth members by ethnicity in each council for the month of August 2014 compared to the same period last year. Please use this report to identify opportunities and strengths in serving all markets.

Joe Domino
National Commissioner Service
Underserved Markets Chair
send2jd@gmail.com
Get Ready for 2014 JOTA and JOTI

The 57th Jamboree-on-the-Air and the 18th Jamboree-on-the-Internet will be held Oct. 18 and 19. JOTA and JOTI are annual World Scouting events that provide an opportunity for Scouts to communicate with other Scouts from around the world!

Visit the [JOTA Web page](#) and the [JOTI Web page](#) to get information on how to participate, download participation certificates, order this year’s patches, and MUCH MORE!

We hope you have lots of fun and success during these exciting events.

Jim Wilson, K5ND  
National JOTA Organizer  
jota@scouting.org

Dan Goetzman  
National JOTI Organizer  
international@scouting.org
Regional and Area Commissioners
Organization Chart

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Western Regional Commissioner
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Area 1 Commissioner
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Updated September 29, 2014
### Commissioner Support Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Acree</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Rick Hillenbrand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Johnston</td>
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<tr>
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<td>David Rumbarger</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coming Events

October 2014–February 2015

National Executive Board and Committee Meetings
DFW Marriott North, Irving, Texas (by invitation)

Nov. 1, 2014–March 1, 2015
Commissioner Tools rolls out to councils

Feb. 8, 2015
Scouting Anniversary

Feb. 9–11, 2015
National Executive Board and Committee Meetings
DFW Marriott North, Irving, Texas (by invitation)

Feb. 14, 2015
Scout Sabbath

Feb. 15, 2015
Scout Sunday
My fellow commissioners,

Commissioner Tools is LIVE!

You may ask what is so significant about a new software tool for commissioners. Our role as commissioners is to work with units to make sure they are offering the best BSA program to our youth. Over the years, our unit commissioners have not always had access to the data they need about the units they serve, such as rosters, contacts, training records, advancement records, or the charter renewal progress. Well, now we have most of this information at our disposal with the launch of Commissioner Tools. I say most, because advancement and charter renewal information will be coming along shortly. How empowering this is for the commissioner corps!

Commissioner Tools is not just a place to record a visit like we did in UVTS. We think that you will find Commissioner Tools to be an intuitive, user-friendly program. All the data is there for a commissioner to assess a unit and its health. But it is not the data alone that makes it powerful. The tools have a place for the commissioner to keep a record, or journal, of contacts with units and, most important, identify priority unit needs for further support by the district or council.

When coupled with the new Unit Service Plan—the cycle of assessing a unit, creating a Unit Service Plan, working with unit leaders and district volunteers to provide guidance and resources, and supporting on-time charter renewal—the Commissioner Tools provides information and a place to record progress in the commissioner’s hands. Better yet, the Unit Service Plan is completely integrated in the Commissioner Tools—by filling out the tools, you effectively help the unit create a Unit Service Plan.

The launch of Commissioner Tools means that we are able to deliver to the commissioner corps the information needed to more effectively identify the needs of the unit and link resources to the unit so we can boost unit retention. Our testing is coming to a close, and councils have begun the adoption process with four councils going live in the first few weeks. The positive feedback from those using the tools has been great! More councils are slated for October and November. Every council should be selecting a launch date sometime before March 1, 2015. You will find further information about the content and rollout of Commissioner Tools in this edition of the newsletter, as well as on the Commissioners website. Visit the Unit Service Plan and Commissioner Tools Web page for information about preparation for the launch.

A special thanks to an incredible team of volunteers, commissioned personnel, and technical professionals who came together to design what we needed to better serve our units and have worked so hard to make Commissioner Tools a reality.

God bless.

Tico Perez
National Commissioner
New Resources to Help Support Commissioners’ Mission

In this issue and in coming months, you will see evidence of a lot of improvements in the support structure for the commissioner corps. Consistent with our promise to you to deliver a “simple and unified” platform to make your service as a commissioner easier and even more rewarding, we are releasing a number of new resources and refinements that impact how we focus our efforts. The commissioner mission of retaining our units remains the same. We still want to focus on Four Things that we know will drive unit retention: 1) Drive improvement in Journey to Excellence performance; 2) Contact units and record the data in Commissioner Tools; 3) Identify and link unit needs to the resources of the district and council; and 4) Renew that unit’s charter!

The launch of Commissioner Tools is a great day in the history of the commissioner corps. You will find ample coverage of the launch elsewhere in this issue and on the Commissioners website. I find particularly gratifying the collaborative efforts of volunteers, commissioned personnel, and technical professionals who worked so well together to design and deliver this support tool. You might say they captured the essence of the formula for success in how we can support unit volunteers. You can trace the origins of Commissioner Tools to some frustrations by a number of volunteers and professionals who recognized that our old methods for the support of unit contacts were not working as effectively as our units deserved. Led by National Commissioner Tico Perez, who was joined by a host of local and national volunteers and professionals from within and outside the Commissioner Service Task Force, we designed a solution from scratch, continually asking about the needs of unit commissioners and how we can make their role easier and more rewarding. It is amazing what we can accomplish together when we keep our eye on what really moves the needle of performance.

In the same vein, the 2015 Journey to Excellence standards for unit service have been revised and aligned to focus on moving the needle in areas that really matter. A new standard that measures retention of the unit has been added. If unit retention is our most fundamental measure of success, it seems only appropriate that driving increased unit retention and measuring that performance should be part of the JTE formula for success. Another JTE standard measures the number of unit contacts that we make with each unit. We have measured visits (now called contacts) before, but the new standard incorporates the concepts of making unit contacts, along with a detailed assessment that is designed to help the unit develop its Unit Service Plan. The elegance of this approach is that all of these elements are automatically incorporated in Commissioner Tools and require fewer steps and a lot less paperwork. Better yet, if we use the power of Commissioner Tools, we will automatically achieve each of the Four Things listed above that we know are the key to the success of local unit service.

The 2015 Journey to Excellence standards move away from the use of the 3-to-1 unit-to-commissioner ratio and toward our primary role of retention of units. While having a sufficient number of unit commissioners remains a priority, you will see less focus on the 3-to-1 ratio. The number of unit commissioners does not tell us how many units have actually been contacted. It also does not tell us how many units have...
a detailed assessment that has resulted in a Unit Service Plan and identification of needs to the district committee. The detailed assessment is built into the Commissioner Tools and is one of our strongest means of influencing a quality experience by the unit and youth and, in turn, unit retention. It all ties together in a simple and unified platform.

We welcome your ideas and feedback on these and many other tools, methods, and resources, and hope that you share our enthusiasm about commissioner service in 2015 and beyond.

Thanks for all you do for Scouting.
Introducing the New Western Region Commissioner

Robert J. “Bob” Johnston is the new Western Region commissioner.

Bob’s lifelong tenure in Scouting began when he was an 8-year-old in Cub Scouts. He is an Eagle Scout who earned the God and Country Award. Adult roles have included troop committee chairman, Scoutmaster, chartered organization representative, unit commissioner, Order of the Arrow chapter advisor, and district chairman. Further service in the last two decades includes council board member, council vice president of operations, council commissioner, OA lodge advisor, area commissioner, and regional board member.

Bob served on the staff for the 1971 National Order of the Arrow Conference and three national jamborees. He has also been a faculty member for Philmont Training Center courses six times.

Scouting recognitions include the Scouter’s Training Award, District Award of Merit, James E. West Fellow, Distinguished Commissioner Service Award, Silver Beaver Award, and Silver Antelope Award. He is also a Vigil Honor member of the OA.

His greatest achievement in Scouting was meeting his wife, Julie, at Camp Silverado. Bob and Julie have three children and six grandchildren. Julie and Bob have just returned from Beijing, China, where they taught English and law for one year.

After 10 years as an attorney, Bob was appointed a U.S. magistrate judge in 1987 and served more than 25 years in the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada at Las Vegas. The caseload, often one of the busiest in the federal court system, included civil and criminal cases. Bob was involved in court administration at the local, circuit, and national levels. He was regarded as one of the premier settlement conference judges in Nevada. His hobbies include running (he has done 25 marathons), hoop dancing, and studying court history. Bob is an active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
Commissioner Training Update

As you may remember from previous newsletters, committees were formed at the beginning of 2014 to update all commissioner training with the intention of posting all updates to the Commissioners website before the National Annual Meeting in May. This update was primarily driven by the new Commissioner Tools but was also intended to include new programs such as Voice of the Scout, the updated Unit Service Plan, and updates to JTE. However, Commissioner Tools was not released in March as planned. Thus, all training updates were suspended until Commissioner Tools became available. Now that Commissioner Tools is beginning to roll out to all councils, we will reinitiate the training updates at the beginning of 2015 with the intent to have all courses updated and posted to the Commissioners website by the National Annual Meeting in May. The updates being planned are described below.

Basic Training

- Dave Fornadel—Team lead for Basic Training

All seven of the Basic Training courses are being updated by a team led by Dave Fornadel. Dave will incorporate the Commissioner Tools and the new Unit Service Plan as part of the Basic Training updates.

Commissioner College Courses

All 68 Commissioner College courses as well as the supporting materials in the General folder will be updated by the team listed below:

- Dick Kroll—Continuing Education courses
- Peter Matrow—Doctorate courses
- Craig Donais—Masters courses
- Bill Kropa—Bachelor courses
- Suzanne Windisch—Supporting materials in the General folder

This team will make sure the course materials contain the most current information. The goal in making the updates is to make sure that we are offering current, up-to-date training that is aligned with the BSA's major initiatives. We also want to provide an outstanding learning experience for every commissioner whether they were just commissioned or have years of experience.

In addition, Dan Maxfield has approved seven additional courses as support for roundtable commissioners. Thus a college will be able to offer a bachelor degree in Roundtable Science. These courses will be posted at the same time as the others above. Selection for the development committee will begin next month.

Scouting U

In March 2014, Diane Thornton was named BSA chief learning officer for Scouting University. Diane is now responsible for all training development within the BSA including commissioner training. While commissioner training is still very separate from program training, the goal is to make sure that all training is aligned.

Diane attended Commissioner Week at Philmont this year. She is interested in developing a strong relationship with the commissioners and making sure we are included in all future training development.

In addition, Diane and her team of course developers are available to assist in the future development of commissioner courses. Therefore, Tim Acree will sit on the review committee.
for Scouting U as the representative for commissioner service. The relationship between commissioner service and Scouting U is very strong, and we will work to make sure commissioner service is mentioned in all appropriate future training development. We welcome the opportunity to work with Diane and her team.

**Florida Sea Base Commissioner Training**

Whether you directly serve a unit, serve as a roundtable commissioner, or are an administrative commissioner, this conference, scheduled for Jan. 18–24, is for you. You’ll learn how to link the unit with district and council resources and communicate more effectively. Your experience this week will teach you how to support and retain new units. We will also discuss best practices, the new Unit Service Plan, and the rollout of the new Commissioner Tools.

Click [here](#) for more information.

**Philmont Training Center Commissioner Training**

Commissioner training will take place June 14–20 at the Philmont Training Center with an additional Unit Commissioner course during Week 8, July 26–Aug. 1.

Courses include:

- Commissioner Service for Non-Traditional or Faith Based Units
- The Council Commissioner
- District Commissioner and Assistant District Commissioner
- Effective Roundtables
- The Unit Commissioner

Click [here](#) for more information.

If you have feedback on how training can be improved, please contact Tim Acree, national commissioner service training chair, at tim.acree@comcast.net.
Commissioner Training for the LDS Church

In May 2014, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) released the updated version of the *Scouting Handbook for Church Units in the United States*, sometimes referred to as the “Green Book.” The Green Book explains how the Scouting program is implemented within the tenets of the Church.

This release of the Green Book contained a significant change from the previous version. The new version stated that the stake presidents should provide commissioner service for the units served by the Primary. The Primary serves Cub Scouts and 11-year-old Boy Scouts. This change will result in a significant increase in the number of commissioners nationwide. To support these new commissioners, David Beck, Young Men general president, approached the national commissioner support staff at the National Annual Meeting and asked for updated training for these new commissioners.

In response to this request, Larry Gibson, first counselor in the Young Men General Presidency, Mark Francis, a Scouting professional and LDS liaison on the National Alliances Team, and Tim Acree, national commissioner service training chair, have begun work on developing a series of learning modules. The content of the modules will be developed by this team with the help of additional volunteers from the Church. This content will then be transformed into self-paced learning modules with the help of Steve Yackel and the development team within Scouting U. The modules should be available after Jan. 1, 2015.

If you would like to learn more about the LDS Church and its relationship with the BSA, please see [http://www.ldsbsa.org/](http://www.ldsbsa.org/). Click [here](http://www.ldsbsa.org/) for information about a conference on this topic to be held in Salt Lake City Oct. 2–4.
2015 Commissioner Workshop at the Sea Base Conference Center

“An Overview of Commissioner Service” is the title of the Commissioner Training Conference to be held Jan. 18–24 at the Sea Base Conference Center in Islamorada, Florida. The conference will be taught by Kandra Dickerson, Central Region Area 5 commissioner; Kresha Alvarado, Circle 10 Council, assistant council commissioner; and Jeff McKinney, Northeast Region Area 3 commissioner.

The topics covered in this conference are designed to help you bring best practices and current ideas to your role as a commissioner, whether you directly serve a unit, serve as a roundtable commissioner, or are an administrative commissioner. The course outline includes:

- Four main focus areas for commissioners
- Finding and using commissioner resources
- Annual Service Plan
- Commissioner’s role in retention
- Linking district resources to unit needs
- Commissioner Tools
- Roundtable organization and the new program planning guides
- Building better relationships with unit leaders through effective communication
- Commissioner support to new units
- Voice of the Scout and what it means to your units
- Managing conflict
- Best practices forum

Click here to register for commissioner training at Sea Base in January. If you have any questions about attending Sea Base, please contact Tim Acree, national commissioner service training chair, at tim.acree@comcast.net.
Commissioner Training at Philmont

Commissioner Week 2014

Commissioner Week 2014 at the Philmont Training Center was Week 2, June 15–22. The attendance for the 2014 conference is listed below:

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<td>How to Conduct a Commissioner College</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Unit Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commissioner Service for Non-Traditional or Faith-Based Units (new)</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
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Special thanks to our outstanding faculty. “The Council Commissioner” was taught by Gail Plucker, Larry Chase, and Craig Bailey. “District Commissioner and Assistant District Commissioner Training” was taught by Ellie Morrison, Randy Corgan, and Dave Lown.“The Unit Commissioner” faculty was Dave Fornadel and Steve Swain. “Effective Roundtables” was conducted by George Costigan and Dave Lyons. “How to Conduct a Commissioner College” was taught by Terry Chapman and Jeff McKinney. And of course, Friday was the fifth annual PTC Commissioner College, conducted by the “How to Conduct a Commissioner College” students.

Be aware that “How to Conduct a Commissioner College” will not be on the agenda next year. A Commissioner College has been offered at Philmont Training Center for the past five years and more than one-third of councils have been represented in the conference.

Commissioner Service for Non-Traditional or Faith-Based Units

Commissioner Week 2014 offered a new conference this year—“Commissioner Service for Non-Traditional or Faith-Based Units.” This conference was coordinated by Tom Hunsaker, Espy Randolph, the Rev. Chip Turner, and Tim Acree, and was taught by six faculty members, each of whom is a specialist in their area of instruction.

Tom Hunsaker was joined by Mark Francis to discuss how The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints implements the Scouting program within the Church. Mark is a professional Scouter and LDS liaison as a member of the National Alliances Team. Rabbinical student Todd Zinn, who was resident on-site as a Philmont chaplain, presented information on how those of the Jewish faith use the Scouting program, and guest speaker Haris Qureshi, a Pakistani Scout on the Philmont staff, talked about the Islamic faith. Turner completed the faith-based portion by explaining the benefits of a chartered organization being faith based. He also discussed how several other faiths have used Scouting to augment their youth program.

One of the highlights of the conference was that the entire class earned the Thomas S. Munson Award. This award is available to anyone interested in learning more about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Click here for more information.

Those who attended the “Commissioner Service for Non-Traditional or Faith-Based Units” conference earned the Thomas S. Munson Award. Showing their awards are (front row, from left, Mary Bauer, Colleen Chapman, and Cheryl Weishaar, and back row, Richard Parrish, William Miller, and Carroll Golden.
The second half of the week, Espy Randolph discussed ScoutReach and how it has helped strengthen Scouting in the Circle Ten Council. Maria Dahl, a professional Scouter who is the director of All Markets Strategy, also presented information on how the demographics of America are changing, how the family structure has changed, and how the attitudes and behaviors of the millennial generation are different from preceding generations.

The intent of all these presentations was to equip commissioners with the knowledge and tools they need to provide effective commissioner service in units with Scouts of different faiths or demographics than their own. The most common comments throughout the week were “Every commissioner should be required to take this class,” “I never knew Scouting was so vast,” “I didn’t realize Scouting was so inclusive,” and “I didn’t realize that Scouting was open to so many religions.” If you are a unit commissioner or an administrative commissioner, this conference has something for you.

Commissioner Week 2015

Unfortunately for 2014 our attendance dropped off a bit from the previous year. Let’s get back on track this coming year! Consider attending national-level commissioner training in 2015, and you will be glad you did. Commissioner Week at the Philmont Training Center for 2015 will be Week 2, June 15–21.

A new conference titled “Advanced Administration of Commissioner Service” is being offered in 2015. The conference is open to all region and area commissioners as well as anyone who has attended the “Council Commissioner” course at Philmont. Exceptions to these guidelines can be made by sending an email to Tim Acree. The conference will include the significance of leaders, how to build better relationships, aspirations of leaders, mentoring and coaching, and how to leave a legacy of leadership.

All of the conferences offered this past year will be offered again in 2015 with the exception of “How to Conduct a Commissioner College.” Please see the Philmont flier. Click here for more information and to register. Consider making a personal commitment to attend one of the conferences in 2015. You will not be disappointed!

If you have any questions about commissioner training, please contact Tim Acree, national commissioner service training chair, at tim.acree@comcast.net.
Roundtable Guides Update

When the roundtable project began in 2011, the volunteer development team sent out an informal survey to about 1,200 Scouters across the country. The results of that survey framed much of how the 2013–2014 roundtable guides looked. Then, for improvement purposes, the development team solicited and received a lot of input about the agenda structures and mini training topics before producing the 2014–2015 roundtable guides.

Now we are in the beginning stages of developing the 2015–2016 roundtable guides. In an effort to make improvements that help roundtable commissioners assist unit leaders in providing better program, we designed a new survey and invited about 2,800 registered roundtable commissioners to provide input. It was available online between mid-September and mid-October to those who chose to participate. We hope to have results by the end of October that will guide us in our upcoming work. Thanks very much to all who participated in this vital process.

We will keep you advised of our progress in upcoming newsletters. Also, we will continue the technology dialogue and provide roundtable success stories as this year progresses.

Your thoughts and comments are always welcome. Send them to dbmaxi05@gmail.com.

Daniel B. Maxfield
National Commissioner Service Roundtable Chair
dbmaxi05@gmail.com
How Will the Commissioner Tools Roll Out?

As a part of our pre-deployment test program, the Stonewall Jackson Area Council was chosen to “go live” with Commissioner Tools first and by itself. The reasoning behind this testing approach was to give the council the opportunity to help us uncover any software errors or logic errors that our nearly 70 user acceptance testers and the members of the focus group may have missed—and indeed, as Ray Ezell writes in “District Commissioner Reports on Commissioner Tools,” they found a few items that fell into both categories.

As the next part of our pre-deployment testing process, three more councils were scheduled to go live in September: Crossroads of America, Los Padres, and Theodore Roosevelt. An additional six pilot councils were slated to go live on Oct. 1: Atlanta Area, Capitol Area, Chester County, Cradle of Liberty, Great Salt Lake, and Greater Niagara Frontier councils. This is all a part of the test program that we have designed to make sure that when Commissioner Tools is deployed in your council, the users will have the best experience possible.

Commissioner Tools will be made available on the first of each month starting Nov. 1, based upon a local readiness decision made by your council commissioner and Scout executive. The Acceptance Protocols for Adoption of Commissioner Tools form needs to be submitted by each council before going live.

Two significant differences between UVTS and Commissioner Tools are: 1) Commissioner Tools not only collects data but also uses commissioner entered data and data taken from other BSA sources to provide relevant and timely information to commissioners, which is intended to help them conduct analysis and better serve their units, and 2) Commissioner Tools easily allows commissioners who are not as comfortable with technology to use offline methods (i.e., preprinted forms) that other individuals can enter in the system on their behalf.

On behalf of all the Commissioner Tools focus group members, user acceptance testers, and the BSA Information Development Group, thank you very much to Ray Ezell and the Stonewall Jackson Area Council for working with us to bring this important tool to you.
District Commissioner Reports on Commissioner Tools

If you have heard that the new Commissioner Tools is simply a replacement for the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS), then you will be pleasantly surprised to find out that it is much, much more than simply an “in-kind” replacement database. This new system merges several essential Scouting databases to provide a commissioner with an almost “real-time” snapshot of a unit’s leader training status, roster composition, and Key 3 contact information. The “detailed unit assessment” feature leads the commissioner through a series of specific questions related to JTE performance criteria and unit health factors to accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses in any unit’s operation (including training, program, finances, and leadership). The Commissioner Tools also includes the ability to electronically collaborate (via an email link) with the unit Key 3 to provide direct unit input into the assessment questionnaire and receive unit feedback that can be factored in with the commissioner’s assessment responses. Plenty of space is provided for custom responses for both the commissioner and unit evaluators. There is no longer a reason for a commissioner to not have the most accurate information available to use in the assessment of a unit’s health.

Several reports are provided that offer the ability to track the distribution of unit contacts, inventory of priority unit needs, and inventory of potential commissioner recruits among others. Another welcome function is the roundtable meeting report that provides a method to input highly detailed, specific information on unit attendance and roundtable programming.

If you are the type of commissioner who is uneasy with new technology or the use of electronically based applications, or you just prefer to do things on paper, I strongly urge you to spend some time getting to know how to use this system. The Commissioner Tools is a vast improvement over earlier databases, and it has the potential to offer real utility and efficiency to commissioners in the performance of our job. Remember, if it wasn’t reported, it didn’t happen.

by Ray Ezell, Monticello District commissioner in the Stonewall Jackson Area Council

On August 12, this district commissioner made the first “detailed entry” in the BSA’s new, next-generation Commissioner Tools database. The rollout of this system marks an achieved (and long-awaited) milestone for the BSA commissioner service. It is envisioned that this system will substantially improve how some aspects of unit service are tracked, delivered, and referred for further action (i.e., help) by commissioners. The Commissioner Tools blends membership, training, unit assessment, and roundtable tracking functions in a faster, more reliable format to provide a system that can help effect an enhanced delivery of unit service among commissioners. Since live entry in the system came online in early August, it has not been without its share of technical challenges and glitches. However, the system has continued to undergo a series of almost daily refinements for appearance, user friendliness, and system operation to deliver a much more useful experience when the system rolls out nationally later this year.
Lines of Communication

In the last issue of *The Commissioner*, two of the hyperlinks were made incorrect when the link wrapped around to the next line, thereby adding a nonexistent space in the URL. As anyone who has ever typed a URL by hand can tell you, spelling counts when you use a URL. So for this issue of *The Commissioner*, I am repeating the links from the previous issue and adding a few additional communication outlets below (the BSA Roundtable Commissioners Facebook page and the Scout Commissioner Corner Yahoo Group).

- **Facebook** (the leading social networking site according to comScore.com):
  - **Commissioners of the Boy Scouts of America**—This is a “closed” group that you can join and is an official means of communication of the BSA, meaning the posts are less frequent but arguably of greater importance. Every commissioner should join this group. I will use this as my primary official information outlet.
    - [https://www.facebook.com/CommissionersOfTheBoyScoutsOfAmerica](https://www.facebook.com/CommissionersOfTheBoyScoutsOfAmerica)
  - **Commissioner Service (Boy Scouts of America)**—This is an unofficial and “open” group, meaning the posts are frequent and can be on a wide range of topics, which requires moderators to ensure the posts are appropriate.
    - [https://www.facebook.com/groups/bsa.commissioners](https://www.facebook.com/groups/bsa.commissioners)
  - **BSA Roundtable Commissioners**—Another unofficial and “open” group, which concentrates on roundtable commissioner issues. Members keep up a lively discussion on various topics of interest to commissioners, making it almost a virtual nonstop commissioners’ roundtable.
    - [https://www.facebook.com/groups/ScoutRTCommish](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ScoutRTCommish)

- **LinkedIn** (similar to Facebook but a business-oriented social networking site):
  - **Commissioners of the Boy Scouts of America**—This is a “closed” group that you can join. Several times a week someone will post a thought-provoking question that is great for keeping your commissioner skills honed when it comes to “how would you handle this situation?”

- **Yahoo Group** (similar to Facebook):
  - **Scout Commissioner Corner**—This is a “closed” group that you can join. While older than Facebook, there isn’t as much dialogue as on Facebook, which some might see as an advantage. However, two big advantages of this Yahoo Group is that this site indexes all messages, making it easy to find a historical post, and it has the ability to attach files to messages sent to the membership.
    - [https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Scout_Commissioner/info](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Scout_Commissioner/info)

In the not-too-distant future, when your council has changed over to the new Commissioner Tools, you will also have an internal communication tab within the Commissioner Tools under Discussion.
Key 3 Training and Organizational Excellence

Philmont Training Center is offering a unique session titled Creating Organizational Excellence in June 2015. This session will blend training on four disciplines that build healthy organizations, with the opportunity to see and experience those principles in action at Philmont.

This course will provide you access to see behind the scenes of Philmont. Observe how Philmont uses customer surveys to create a continuous improvement program that creates organizational excellence. Experience the magic of a back-country camp and learn how staff are prepared and trained for their role. Click here for more information.
## Unit Commissioner Box Score

**As of Aug 31, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Last Year</th>
<th>This Year</th>
<th>Last Year</th>
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<th>This Year</th>
<th>Last Year</th>
<th>This Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>15,253</td>
<td>14,639</td>
<td>5,085</td>
<td>4,881</td>
<td>3,843</td>
<td>3,693</td>
<td>1,242</td>
<td>1,188</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>24,333</td>
<td>22,384</td>
<td>8,111</td>
<td>7,462</td>
<td>6,736</td>
<td>6,215</td>
<td>1,375</td>
<td>1,247</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>21,507</td>
<td>20,448</td>
<td>7,169</td>
<td>6,818</td>
<td>5,485</td>
<td>5,236</td>
<td>1,684</td>
<td>1,582</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>41,225</td>
<td>40,585</td>
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<td>13,524</td>
<td>9,598</td>
<td>7,603</td>
<td>4,146</td>
<td>5,921</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>98,056</td>
<td>34,109</td>
<td>32,685</td>
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<td>75.2%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not include Explorer posts or Learning for Life groups*