

Winter 2016

# THE COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COMMISSIONERS AND PROFESSIONALS



[www.scouting.org/commissioners](http://www.scouting.org/commissioners)

## National Commissioner's Minute

### Together, Let's Make 2016 a Historic Year

We enter 2016 with a historic opportunity to grow the Scouting program. I am tremendously encouraged by many positive indicators from across the country. While a glance at our 2015 membership reflects a small overall decline, that is not the real story. The real story can be found in the trends from the previous year. Across the board, the rate of decline slowed last year—in some cases, such as with Cub Scouts, drastically so—driven by both new incremental recruitment and higher retention rates. In fact, our percentage of both units and youth retained in the Scouting program is the highest percentage that we have seen in years. For that achievement, each of you is due heartfelt congratulations.

Our new Chief Scout Executive, Mike Surbaugh, has identified three key reasons that have helped us lay the groundwork for success: First of all, through the efforts of our entire organization, we have been able to pull together as a Scouting family. I know from my travels that the enthusiasm of the commissioner corps is incredibly strong and that together we are focused on driving retention in 2016.

Second, we launched a successful new recruiting campaign—"Build an Adventure"—that supported council recruiting across America. The creation of Scouting Wire ([scoutingwire.org](http://scoutingwire.org)) and the addition of the Marketing and Membership Hub on the site provide a central, one-stop location for marketing and recruiting information that's accessible to volunteers and professionals alike. This has allowed councils to be more focused and strategic on recruiting and retention. One indicator is that from October through December, we recruited more new Cub Scouts than during the same months the previous year, with an average of more than 5,000 incremental new Cub Scouts per month.

Third, we have begun evolving the quality of our programs so that we are delivering a high-energy Scouting experience that reflects the interests of youth today while also representing our key Scouting values and methods.



Tico Perez  
National Commissioner

As commissioners, we are well positioned to support the BSA's strategic mission. Over the past eight years we have evaluated every aspect of the commissioner delivery system. Our methodologies have evolved and are now supported by an integrated platform that is designed to drive retention success.

Our simple approach as commissioners starts and ends with four objectives: supporting unit growth through the Journey to Excellence; contacting units and capturing their strengths and needs in Commissioner Tools; linking unit needs to district operating committee resources; and supporting timely charter renewal. If we execute on these four objectives, we will drive retention of our units and the youth they serve.

You have heard me say time and again that the commissioner corps owns retention. The great news is that our collective efforts are working, but a higher retention percentage does not tell the real story. Behind each unit that we retain, there is one human success story after another—a new Eagle Scout, a young woman who chooses a career because of Law Enforcement Exploring, or a Cub Scout who develops character and leadership skills that will fundamentally shape his and our future.

God bless.

Tico Perez



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