

Winter 2019

THE COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COMMISSIONERS AND PROFESSIONALS



www.scouting.org/commissioners

National Commissioner's Minute

"Ensuring a great Scouting experience" has been my mantra as your national commissioner. So many good things have been happening across the country that make those great Scouting experiences a reality. Thank you for all you have been doing.

Every day there is a new opportunity for kids to have a great experience. More boys and girls all over the country are participating in Scouting and growing and learning as a result. I'm excited to see the new opportunities for kids: Sea Scouts, Venturing, STEM, girls in packs and troops—the list goes on.

And so does our opportunity to serve. Today more than ever we need commissioners actively serving their units, making sure that kids are getting that great Scouting experience we all want them to have.

All of us have had a great Scouting experience—that is the reason we are commissioners now. We want to be sure today's youth have those same experiences.

So take a moment. Think back. What are some of your great Scouting memories?

Choose one.

Savor the memory for a moment.

What was it about that experience that made it so wonderful?

Make sure the units you serve are providing those same things—caring, connected leaders of character who are building competence and confidence. That's what makes Scouting great. That's what we're going for.



Ellie Morrison
National Commissioner
esmorrison@sbcglobal.net



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Prepared. For Life.®

It's All About Units

It's easy to get distracted ...

A conversation about "commissioner service" starts and before we know it, we're talking about technology, training, data, Journey to Excellence, roundtable, program, charter renewal, detailed unit health assessments, Unit Service Plans, change, challenges, and on ... and on ... and on.

It's easy to get distracted ...

"Unit service" is one of Scouting's four functions (along with program, membership, and finance) for a reason: Units are where we find the youth. Without an adequate number of strong units, Scouting won't accomplish its mission or fulfill its vision. Scouting's units need constant attention to grow and thrive.

That's why commissioners exist; everything we do must be focused on those units. That's where the program that attracts and retains youth—and adults—is delivered. That's where the magic happens that enables Scouting to develop character, leadership, and citizenship. "Unit service," the work we do as commissioners, is all about those units.

Commissioners should have a key role in starting new units. We covered that in our last issue. We use many of the tools and techniques we talk about to partner with membership volunteers and commissioned professionals to ensure that new units get off to the best possible start.

Units are fragile; new units particularly so. We've all seen one of our "super" packs/troops/crews/ships/posts/clubs suddenly struggle. Without engaged commissioners, new units don't get the support they need as they begin to establish themselves; units at risk too often fail; and what appears to be a minor issue with a super unit grows into something that threatens its existence. We *must* partner with other elements of district and council operations to ensure we're providing units with the necessary resources to address their needs. In this issue, you'll hear about ways commissioners can help sustain units.

Your National Commissioner Service Team is continuing its *simple and unified* approach to unit service discussed in our last issue. To strengthen the team, we've added two positions: one to focus on starting and sustaining units and another to focus on the programs those units deliver. You'll be introduced to two great volunteers and learn how they will help us all focus on units as you read on.

Don't get distracted. Read this issue and all other communications we send you with just one thing in mind: *It's all about units.*

On the uptrail ...



Larry Chase
National Commissioner Service Chair
lhc@chasehome.net



Welcome, Sue Simmons!



Sue Simmons

Commissioners play a key role both in helping new units get off to a great start and in helping them grow and thrive. They work closely with the district membership team to get all the pieces in place to form a new unit and then continue to build relationships with unit leadership to help them celebrate the unit's strengths and address its needs. The detailed unit health

assessment and Unit Service Plan are two of the tools the team has developed to support starting and sustaining units. The need for more and stronger units is greater now than ever before, and there is more work to be done to ensure commissioners have the resources needed to support that effort. That's why a starting and sustaining units chair has been added to your National Commissioner Service Team, with Sue Simmons joining the team in that role.

Sue began her Scouting trail like many volunteers—as a den leader in a local pack. Her trail continued through leadership

positions in a troop and a crew and then on to district and council responsibilities. She served as a district committee chair and as vice president of district operations for the Northwest Suburban Council (Chicago), which merged into the Pathway to Adventure Council, where she continues to serve as an executive committee member and council commissioner.

Sue has also helped train other leaders at all levels, including serving as a Wood Badge staff member. A Vigil member of the Order of the Arrow and a Silver Beaver recipient, she considers attending a national jamboree with her son and canoeing in the Boundary Waters with her daughter to be among her most memorable Scouting experiences. Professionally, she holds a management position with a home care agency committed to enhancing the quality of life for its clients.

Many of you will have an opportunity to meet Sue in the coming year as she helps us deliver a new impact session and a new weeklong conference on starting and sustaining units. You're in for a treat—and you'll quickly understand why we're thrilled to welcome her as a member of your team!

Look for her first article in this edition of *The Commissioner*.

Welcome, Steven Lee!



Steven Lee

Program is Scouting. Each program offered by the BSA is uniquely designed to attract a specific group of youth and provide the opportunity for them to have fun; they don't join for character, leadership, and citizenship development, but that will be the result of their participation. Without attractive, effective program, Scouting can't accomplish its mission or fulfill its vision.

Commissioners don't deliver program, but they need to know about it; engaged commissioners work collaboratively with unit leaders to ensure each unit delivers the strongest possible program so it can attract, retain, and serve more youth. Your National Commissioner Service Team has always worked closely with your national program committees. It's increasingly important that unit service partner with program to provide the best possible support of units. That's why a program chair has been added to your National Commissioner Service Team, with Steven Lee joining the team in that role.

Steven's Scouting trail began like many of ours: He volunteered to serve in a local pack when the first of his sons joined Cub Scouting. An offer to serve as derby chair quickly expanded to serving as a den leader (a role he ultimately filled for each rank), advancement chair, pack committee member, and assistant Cubmaster. His engagement has increased as his sons have grown: The younger one has joined Cub Scouting and the older is now a member of Scouts BSA. Having served as pack trainer, Steven now serves as unit trainer for a troop and has attended

Philmont Training Center and taught at University of Scouting for the San Diego-Imperial Council. He also currently serves as a district membership chair.

Linking unit needs to district operating committee and other resources is one of the commissioner corps' five objectives. To achieve it, we must partner with operations (program, membership, and finance) at every level of our organization. Steven's experience in Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting and his service in membership adds perspective and experience to your service team that will enable it to strengthen partnerships and serve you better. Professionally, Steven serves as a software engineering manager. His experience with technology and data brings other, valuable resources to the team at a time when technology is becoming an increasingly important part of Scouting and unit service.

And there's a bonus! Steven's wife, Winnie, is equally committed to and engaged in Scouting locally while also serving as a member of the New Member Coordinator Task Force. New member coordinators are one of the new tools available to help strengthen units, and commissioners need to be familiar with the benefits the new position offers to effectively advocate it to unit leaders. Steven and Winnie share the role of diversity chair for their district.

Those of you who will be attending our upcoming National Annual Meeting or a commissioner conference at Philmont Training Center will have an opportunity to meet Steven. You're in for a treat—and you'll quickly understand why we're thrilled to welcome him as a new member of your team!

Look for his first article in the next edition of *The Commissioner*.



Simple and Unified Progress

Progress: a beautiful thing ...

In our last issue, you learned about your National Commissioner Service Team's "simple and unified" approach to unit service. Team members provided information about the SMART goals each had established, and we committed to providing periodic updates.

Progress is being made, but work remains to be done. Here's a summary:

Commissioner Recruitment and Retention

- New materials on how to identify and recruit unit service candidates and ask them to serve have been identified and were presented in an impact session in Phoenix and a Northeast Region webinar, meeting with positive feedback.

Commissioner Development

- A well-attended impact session with excellent reviews was held in Phoenix.
- Faculty has been selected and planning is underway for an impact session on Starting and Sustaining Units to be offered in Salt Lake City in March.
- A well-attended national conference with excellent reviews was held at Sea Base.
- Faculty has been selected and planning is underway for six national conferences to be offered at Philmont Training Center during Week 1 (June 9–15).

Commissioner Resources

- Launch of new web-based commissioner merchandise catalog.
- Initial revision of national website complete.
- February newsletter published.

Marketing and Communications

- Subject matter experts have been recruited to help manage unit service social media channels and provide input to communications strategy.
- Draft of 2019 communications calendar completed.

Program Support

- Volunteer recruited to serve as program chair.

Roundtable

- Members of Roundtable Breakthrough Team recruited.
- Progress made in making roundtable operations and program guides available through alternate channels.

Starting and Sustaining Units

- Volunteer recruited to serve as starting and sustaining units chair.

Technology

- 2019 detailed unit health assessment forms and screens implemented in Commissioner Tools.
- User testing of Commissioner Tools 2.0 started.

In addition, every team chair has been continually engaged in developing and strengthening relationships with professionals and volunteers serving on various national operations committees to enable the team to partner most effectively with them.

We're commissioners. Consider this to be the equivalent of an update of a Unit Service Plan. The SMART goals that your team chairs established address needs that were identified in a collaborative assessment of the team completed last summer. As in the units we serve, there are lots of day-to-day activities to be attended to that occupy your team; new issues and opportunities continue to arise and demand attention. Our SMART goals help us maintain focus on the work that is essential to ensuring you have the tools and techniques needed to help you ensure the units you serve continue to improve and better serve more youth through Scouting.



Better Communication Helps Commissioners Sustain Units

A successful unit needs information in order to serve youth better. A successful commissioner needs to focus on good communication in every commissioner role in order to provide needed information to sustain our units. In today's world, communication is more important and easily accessible than ever before, but is our communication being received?

Decades ago, communication options were limited. Printed material was a popular way to get your message out. Face-to-face opportunities at unit meetings and roundtable, along with networking at Scouting events, were all used regularly. Of course, phone trees and individual calls were also used.

Today we have so many more options. We now have electronic meetings, websites, social media, video calls, email, text, and a host of other technologies to get information to our units. We have never been in a better position to communicate.

Yet unit leaders are looking for more information from us and unit commissioners are wondering if they have all the information they need.

What do commissioners need to do? Here are four things commissioners should keep in mind to improve unit communication:

1. We need to get to the point. We need to recognize that unit leaders are busier than ever. If the big news impacting the pack is that leader training will "expire" at the end of the year, we need to say that quickly and concisely.

2. We should avoid jargon. Commissioners are often experienced Scouters who know YPT from JTE. But unit leaders may not have that depth of Scouting knowledge. Make sure your units receive the message you are sending by using words they will understand.

3. We need to find out how leaders wish to receive communications. One leader may wish to receive information via email, another may prefer social media, and a third may prefer texting. A Scouter may prefer face-to-face interaction but will check email on the weekend. We need to figure out a way to make all of that work by using multiple communication channels.

4. Fill the gaps! If a commissioner does not attend a meeting, have a plan to get the information to that commissioner. If a unit commissioner does not meet with a unit or a unit leader does not attend a roundtable, make sure there is a plan to get the information to unit leadership.

Of course, it all starts with administrative commissioners. Before a unit or roundtable commissioner can provide information to units, our unit commissioners need to be in the loop. All administrative commissioners need to view information gathering as part of their role and to push information down to the next level so that these commissioners have the information they need to serve units.



Mike Moegenburg
National Commissioner Service
Marketing and Communications Chair
mikemoegenburg@yahoo.com



Program Resources for Commissioners to Reference When Working With Units

If there is one thing commissioners know about Scouting, it is that where you go for information is ever-changing. We all know that the key to keeping Scouts in Scouting is a good program, but where do unit leaders get the resources to put on (or help members of Scouts BSA plan) a good meeting with lots of fun activities? Back when I started working in a unit, it was simple: There were a couple of good reference books and the Program Helps. Now in the digital age, everything is electronic and can be found in so many places on the internet.

I have recently been navigating the BSA website (www.scouting.org) and have found many new updates to the pages. The various program areas have been streamlined so all the information and resources about a program area are together. Whether it is information about joining (a parent's perspective) or resources for unit leaders, resources are now in one place. I have highlighted a few here, but it is worth commissioners taking a look and becoming familiar with these sites, so that when you work with your unit on a Unit Service Plan you can point them in the right direction.

- **Cub Scouting**—www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/
 - Den Meeting Resources—www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/den-meeting-resources/
 - Pack Meeting Resources—www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/pack-meeting-resources/
 - Pack Committee Resources—www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/pack-committee-resources/
- **Scouts BSA**—www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/
 - Troop Leader Resources—<https://troopleader.org/>
 - Troop Program Resources—www.programresources.org/
 - Advancement and Awards—www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/
- **Venturing**—www.scouting.org/programs/venturing/
 - Crew Resources—www.venturing.org/crew-resources.html
- **Sea Scouts**—<https://seascout.org/>
 - Resources for Leaders—<https://seascout.org/leader-resources/>
- **Exploring**—www.exploring.org/
 - Exploring Resources for leaders are at the bottom of the page
- **Family Scouting**—www.scouting.org/familyscouting/



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



Important Changes to Membership Card and Charter Certificate Printing Requirements

As it stands today, charter renewal is largely a membership validation and billing process. That's not insignificant, but it is becoming more administrative and lends itself to an automated process (Internet Charter Renewal). The work that plays a larger role in enabling a unit to grow and thrive is the work commissioners do to help ensure strengths and needs are identified and a plan is implemented to help the unit grow and thrive. In that context, discussing the results of the assessment and planning process with a representative of the chartered organization would likely have greater impact than a presentation of the charter certificate alone.

Completing charter renewal is cause for celebration: The unit is positioned to continue serving youth through Scouting, and commissioners should encourage that celebration—with or without a certificate. We need to have an engaged commissioner doing what we want commissioners to do today, as well as a unit that has a good understanding of what it is doing well and what it can do to be even stronger, and is working a plan to ensure its charter will continue to be renewed. The importance of the ongoing work of commissioners lies in strengthening units: collaborative assessment, planning, and execution.

The BSA is committed to streamlining basic operations by putting tools in the hands of volunteers. For several years now, individuals and the unit Key 3 have had access to print membership cards through *my.Scouting*. Functionality will be added to *my.Scouting* soon that will enable the unit Key 3+3 to print the unit charter certificate. Additionally, the district and council Key 3+3 will also be able to print unit charters. This "self-service" functionality allows volunteers to print

membership cards and the unit charter certificate in a timelier manner, which enhances the onboarding experience for new youth and adults.

Effective January 1, 2019, councils were no longer required to print and mail membership cards to council and district volunteers and traditional Scouting units. This is a change to the council membership validation requirement. In addition, councils will no longer print and deliver unit charter certificates.

Councils can choose to keep their remaining stock of BSA membership cards and charter certificates on hand to print cards and certificates for individuals and units that have no means to print.

Currently there is no mechanism in place for individuals participating in Learning for Life and Exploring to print cards or participation certificates. A council can choose to continue to print and distribute cards and certificates for Learning for Life groups and Exploring posts and clubs as a courtesy, but as of January 1, 2019, it is no longer a membership validation requirement.

Commissioners should begin communicating these changes to volunteers now. Units should be prepared to print their unit's membership cards and charter certificate for the current renewal period. Commissioners who wish to do a charter presentation should work with the unit to print the charter certificate for presentation.

Instructions for printing membership cards and charter certificates can be found [here](#).

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 darsprague@roadrunner.com.

Commissioner Merchandise Available at Scout Shop

The new commissioner assortment is now available. Go to www.scoutshop.org/shop-by-scout/special-collections/commissioner-items.html or click [here](#) for a flyer and order form.



Questions and Answers

We want to start a new troop for girls. We have a troop for boys and want to have a linked troop. What paperwork besides the girls' applications do we need to submit?

Starting a new troop, whether it is a troop for girls or a troop for boys, requires a New-Unit Application to be completed. You can share your troop committee with both units. All committee members will need to have Youth Protection training. They can be listed as a multiple on the second (new) unit.

Do we need all members of the unit Key 3 to do a detailed assessment?

Ideally all members of the unit Key 3 should participate in the collaborative detailed assessment. However, if that is not possible, then do the collaboration with those who can participate. Those participating should be sharing the views of the other members when doing the assessment. They should also check with missing members before committing them to actions in the preparation of the Unit Service Plan.

Why can't Philmont Training Center conferences be offered online (or across the country)?

There are several options for delivering training to commissioners.

Conferences at Philmont Training Center (and other BSA national venues such as the Florida Sea Base or the Summit Bechtel Reserve) offer a unique opportunity for training, learning, and development. The conference sessions are a combination of presentation, facilitated discussion, and experiential learning. The presentations, which make up a small portion of the conference, might be meaningful via an online offering. The discussions and experiential learning sessions would be much less meaningful in an online environment. Additionally, the opportunity to form meaningful relationships through shared experiences is challenging to replicate in an online environment. Finally, the national commissioner and all the members of the National Commissioner Service Team are on-site during Commissioners Week. We believe that these in-person conferences are a key opportunity for commissioners.

Your team recognizes that weeklong conferences at national venues are not an option for many Scouters. In 2018, impact sessions were added to the opportunities. These weekend sessions occur in cities in each of the four BSA regions and are conducted by national faculty. We offered four impact sessions in 2018 and four are planned for 2019. These sessions have been well-received and there is the potential to expand the number of offerings in future years.

We are always looking for new and creative options for delivering training and development opportunities. Any national-level online opportunities would supplement the in-person opportunities.

Where are the roundtable guides?

The roundtable guides have been posted on the Commissioners website [Roundtable Support page](#). They have also been posted on the Commissioner Facebook pages.

Why did Cub Scouting and Scouts BSA online modules expire if you did not complete all online training?

As it appeared in Scouting Wire and Bryan on Scouting:

Why won't current progress count in the new learning plan?

It's not an apples-to-apples conversion. The learning plans are totally new and include content that reflects the BSA's move to welcome the whole family.

It sounds like the new training completely replaces the old, so will my existing training be valid if I complete it before December 31, 2018, and if so, how long will it remain valid?

Once position-trained, you are always trained for that position. If you completed the plan before December 31, 2018, you do not have to complete the new plan.

Note: If you change Scouting roles, you will need to complete the training for your new position.



Using Technology to Sustain a Unit—From a Unit Commissioner Perspective

For the unit commissioner, logging contacts in Commissioner Tools may seem like a trivial matter, or maybe, for any number of reasons, an inconvenience, but it is an important aspect of being a commissioner. The “health” of a unit can literally change overnight. Even a Gold JTE unit can suddenly find itself needing “life support.” The most immediate technology indicator that a commissioner needs to take action to help sustain a unit is a Commissioner Tools score of 2.5 or below, which is by definition a “unit at risk.” Establishing a close relationship with the unit’s leadership and logging frequent contacts—even a one-sentence simple assessment that documents an actionable piece of information—helps commissioners prioritize their actions when serving and sustaining units.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity Commissioner Tools provides a unit commissioner to help sustain a unit is the ability to collaboratively develop a Unit Service Plan with the unit’s Key 3. (As a reminder, Unit Service Plans can optionally be created as part of the detailed assessment.) The collaborative approach of assessing the unit’s strengths and areas for improvement gives the unit commissioner the ability to prioritize and focus on both immediate and long-term opportunities to work to make the unit stronger. Additionally, the Unit Service Plan provides a place to document detailed goals, accountability, and deadlines.

For the commissioner who has embraced the technology that the BSA offers, there are a number of other tools and reports that can be used to help sustain a unit. The *my.Scouting* Tools Member Manager and Training Manager give a commissioner intimate details about a unit. For example, at face value, a troop with 12 youth members might seem pretty typical, but what if a quick analysis of the Youth Member Age Report in Member Manager uncovers that the unit doesn’t have any youth under the age of 16? True story: I once discovered a unit in this exact situation. It doesn’t take much experience as commissioner to realize that a typical unit with no younger members is not recruiting effectively and is very likely on a trajectory to not renew its charter in two or three years. (The rest of the story: The unit I uncovered in this situation was actually saved through proactive commissioner action and in the years since has been on a firm

Using Technology to Sustain a Unit—An Administrative Commissioner Perspective

When I was a district commissioner, one of my greatest charter renewal frustrations and challenges was the annual “surprise” unit that did not renew its charter. The frustration was because the assistant district commissioner responsible for the unit swore that the unit had recently been visited, but the visit could not otherwise be confirmed, and the challenge was to prevent this type of surprise from recurring.

Fortunately, today the BSA has some modern technology tools that help us address units that might otherwise surprise us by not renewing their charter. The technology tool that is best suited to help the commissioner from losing a unit unexpectedly is



Rick Hillenbrand
National Commissioner Service
Commissioner Technology Chair
rick_hillenbrand@alum.mit.edu

footing.) Do you have a unit where the Scoutmasters don’t seem very adept at letting the youth run the unit? While we know that a trained Scoutmaster *should* know that ideally a unit is youth-led, a review of Training Manager might provide insight into what additional training—such as Wood Badge—might be appropriate for a unit that isn’t effectively implementing a youth-led program.

Newsletter articles are not the best way to learn what technology tools are available to help a commissioner serve and sustain units; an experiential setting would be better. If you feel that improving your technology skills could help you perform better as a commissioner, why don’t you attend an advanced training session in 2019 offered during Commissioners Week at the Philmont Training Center or during a technology impact session?

Commissioner Tools. Used to its fullest extent, Commissioner Tools: tracks commissioner AND professional contacts with each unit; provides a YPT, training, and membership “snapshot” of the unit; tracks roundtable attendance; monitors EVERY unit Journey to Excellence (JTE) metric; provides the ability for the commissioner to alert the district commissioner or assistant district commissioner of important unit health priorities that can provide advance notice of pending issues; and much, much more. Additionally, *my.Scouting* has numerous reports, and Commissioner Tools contains advanced reports for the extraction and analysis of the data entered into Commissioner Tools.



But before we can profit from any of the benefits that Commissioner Tools can provide, we need to actually log our unit contacts. Nationally through November 2018, our logged contact rate that meets or exceeds the district and council JTE scorecard unit contact metric was just under 17 percent. The “good news” is that this is an increase of 0.3 percent compared to 2017 (when a detailed assessment was not required by the JTE scorecard metric). The bad news is that this is an increase of 0.3 percent compared to 2017. It baffles me why our contact rate is so low when we teach that commissioners should contact their units at least once a month, and the JTE criteria is essentially a single contact every other month. The issue of low Commissioner Tools contact rates is a frequently recurring topic of discussion among the National Commissioner Service Team.

When comparing councils, and especially districts within councils that have diametrically opposing experiences documenting contacts in Commissioner Tools, the root difference between high-performing districts and councils and those that have room for significant improvement is, in a single word, LEADERSHIP. That is, measured results are higher in those districts and councils where an expectation is established, commissioner performance is measured and monitored, and commissioners are rewarded or otherwise held accountable. So, the first trick to using technology to sustain a unit is to *use the technology*. It seems obvious that if you don't use a tool, then you will never experience the benefits the tool can provide; this is why years ago I stopped using a rock to pound nails and bought (and use) a hammer.

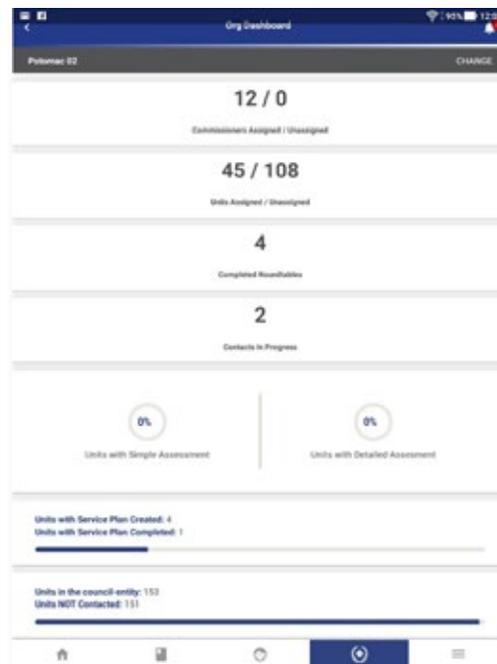
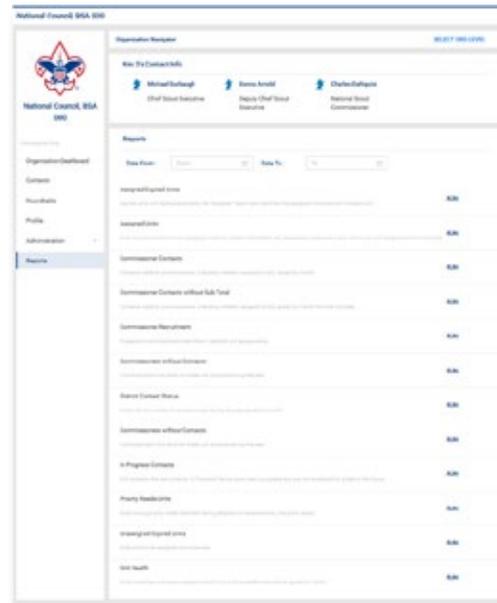
Coming Soon: Commissioner Tools 2.0

While it isn't possible to give a date for implementation yet, we can tell you that the development of Commissioner Tools 2.0 (CT2.0) is moving forward. BSA professionals led by Alma Redmond, the developers creating the code, and a cross-section of 14 commissioner volunteers began beta testing CT2.0 in late December; their second round of testing started in early January.

To help establish expectations for CT2.0, below is an excerpt from the testing precept we provided to testers and two sample screenshots. We'll keep you posted on plans for implementation of CT2.0 as additional information becomes available.

CT2.0 is NOT an opportunity to add major functionality enhancements to Commissioner Tools. Significantly, CT2.0 is a rebranding that is intended to provide no reduction in functionality but update the “how” and “way” Commissioner Tools is presented. The updated “how” part is the extensive use of common APIs (application programming interfaces) for both the mobile and web versions. The updated “way” part will be the way the same information is presented. An example is the WAY reports are presented as seen below, which takes the current list of 27 Commissioner Tools reports and provides the SAME reports with only 12 entries without any loss or addition, which should also improve the user experience.

- As possible, when either required or “easy,” some enhancements will be made. Some readers may be familiar with the term “Alteration Equivalent to Repair” (AER)—where it is easier to upgrade than fix the existing—which essentially describes most of the enhancements that will initially be found in CT2.0. Using the Reports example below again, this is one of those “easy,” AER-like enhancements where adding the user selectable date range eliminated 15 reports that essentially did the same thing for different calendar years.



Know Your Units!

Thank you, fellow commissioners, for all you do to support units and unit leaders to “be their best” when it comes to delivering quality program to the youth we serve. Our focus for this edition of *The Commissioner* is about sustaining units. I daresay that most of us have a story or two about an experience with a unit that was good until it wasn’t or that came very close.

My story is about an experience I had visiting a Cub Scout pack at the request of my district commissioner. (I was not a registered commissioner at the time.) It was the unit’s school/join night. I arrived and immediately noticed a very robust atmosphere with lots of excitement coming from the kids. Parents and families were visiting, and all appeared to be having a good time. When it was time for the meeting to begin, the Cubmaster stood in front of the group, welcomed everyone, and proceeded to announce (or perhaps give a reminder) that he would be stepping down. And he wasn’t planning on taking any new applications, anticipating that the pack would be short-lived. There were at least 11 or 12 new families in attendance with children who wanted to be Tigers. My jaw dropped and I listened as the conversations around the room were essentially “Now what?” I encouraged families of the Scouts to get together immediately and discuss, and before anyone left, they had a plan and new pack leadership!

The sustainability of units is not a given, no matter how strong they are or might have been. Units that dissolve leave a void that can be very difficult to fill! Worst of all, opportunities may be lost for the youth and families that were benefiting from Scouting. I realize that there are other units that may help to fill the void, but that’s not a given either. Families may struggle with finding that “next best fit” and decide to move on with their already very busy lives. An engaged unit commissioner can make a difference. Even a district commissioner corps that has a pulse on the units within the district can make a difference. Know your units! You’ll know what to do to help them better serve more youth. If you really know your units, that’s outstanding. If you don’t ...

Here is an action item that I’d like you to consider for your district commissioner cabinet meeting: Consider inviting other stakeholders to participate, including key district leadership such as your membership, training, and advancement chairs and selected at-large members. The district commissioner can run a unit health assessment. Do an inventory of your units. This inventory will help you “triage” your units. Determine where you may need to allocate the resources of your current commissioners to the units that need more attention. Do your best with the resources you have as you work your plan to recruit more commissioners. If you don’t have a well-defined recruiting plan, please see my “Partnering for Recruiting Success” article elsewhere in this newsletter.

We are at the best time of the year to see where we are, and especially as the Scouts BSA units for girls go live. If there were ever a time for doing our best to sustain units, our inaugural year for Scouts BSA is that time.



Kevin Baker
National Commissioner Service
Recruitment and Retention Chair
tubacaz@hotmail.com



Partnering for Recruiting Success: Identifying and Recruiting Great Commissioners

Your “commissioner recruitment initiative” begins with looking at your strengths and needs. I see partnering with your district committee as an effective strategy and a great place to start. Developing your plan is a next step, as well as having council- and district-level commissioners work that plan year-round. This is *your plan* for recruiting, engaging, and retaining more commissioners.

We are at the best time of the year to see where we are, especially as the Scouts BSA units for girls go live. If there were ever a time for doing our best to build and sustain units, our inaugural year for Scouts BSA is that time.

If we had things running smoothly in terms of having enough commissioners serving units, we’d be talking about something else. But we don’t, and we aren’t. We need a lot more of us to provide service to units, which means to youth. Our focus NOW is about girls joining troops, troops that are not even a month old since going live on February 1. Sustaining these new units, as well as supporting and sustaining our existing units, is a top priority for our commissioner corps.

- You likely have:
 - A dedicated base of commissioners (all areas of service) in your council
 - Dedicated volunteers who believe that volunteerism is critical to success
 - The need to increase your base of commissioners
 - The need to bring in more volunteers
 - And the result—greater impact—makes a difference.
- Define your objectives.
 - Identify resources and techniques helpful in the solution.
 - Generate ideas and alternative solutions.
- Gain insights into commissioner culture and why developing positive relationships is critical to being able to make a compelling ask.
 - We must look at how we see ourselves.
 - How we think others see us ...
 - Or do they even see us at all?
- Going after younger volunteers is a smart strategy.
- Know more about why people volunteer.
- Understand what motivates volunteers and the skill set needed.
- Understand what we are asking a commissioner to do. Identify barriers and create solutions.
- Look at aligning need with skill and passion.
- Develop a sustainable commissioner recruiting plan using a SMART goal approach.

As I’ve said previously, we have dedicated volunteers, new and experienced. Tenure can make a difference in the level of volunteerism, but that doesn’t mean that commissioners need to be tenured.

- Recruit for character, not skill.
- Hire for attitude; train for skill.
- We need to explore beyond and rethink our status quo.
- Short-term “small bites.” The more specific the time limit, the more people you’ll likely get to join you.
- Don’t assume that “no” means “never.”
- Right person, right fit. Don’t just fill the seat.

We have greater clarity of position roles and responsibilities. Simplifying role descriptions is part of that focus. Our five-point commissioner service focus *is* our role description.

1. Supporting unit growth and retention
2. Meaningful contacts
3. Linking unit needs to resources
4. Timely charter renewal
5. Delivering effective roundtables

We know that volunteerism is critical to our continued success. It’s about the youth we serve.

- Volunteers want to make an impact and make a difference.
- We need a better understanding of why people volunteer.
- We have strong professional–volunteer relationships. We need to continue to strengthen these relationships by identifying and strengthening alignment, goals, and objectives.
- We have excellent tools and techniques to support recruiting commissioners. We need to be sharing our collective successes and stumbles as well. (Friendstorming, roster/list/data mining, alumni groups, nominating committees)
- We need to know more about barriers and creating solutions to these barriers.
- Do you have a process for making an “ask” that is realistic and compelling? We know that BSA volunteers are willing to give of their time, talent, and treasure.
- And we need to be willing to go to work to pull all of this together to serve more youth so that they have the best experience possible in Scouting.



Commissioner Development and Sustaining Units

Sustaining units has been a theme throughout this edition of *The Commissioner*. Commissioners play an integral role in this effort and we need to take every opportunity to improve our game. There are many specific activities that each of us can undertake to be better commissioners:

- Ensure that you have completed all phases of your basic training. If you haven't looked at the basic training in several years, taking the online training may be a good refresher.
- Actively participate in a local College of Commissioner Science or a local Commissioners Conference.
- Make plans to attend a national conference or impact session in 2019.
- Ensure that you are a lifelong learner by taking advantage of specific training offerings that directly or indirectly relate to your areas of interest in Scouting.
- Find related books on the topics that interest you. Share with others what you learned.
- Spend time establishing and maintaining relationships with your Scouting colleagues.

Take personal ownership of your development as a commissioner. You will be more effective in your role and you will be able to have a direct and positive impact on the units that you serve. That should result in stronger units that are more sustainable in the long run.



John Cherry
National Commissioner Service
Commissioner Development Chair
jcherry628@aol.com

Commissioners Week at Philmont Training Center

Commissioners Week at Philmont Training Center is June 9–15. Six conferences will be offered:

Strengthening Council Unit Service—Provides council commissioners and those who support them with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to confidently fulfill their responsibilities. Steve Serrot will serve as faculty lead.

Strengthening District Unit Service—Ensures a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of district and assistant district commissioners. Kandra Dickerson will serve as faculty lead.

Strengthening Unit Service—Guides participants in learning what a unit commissioner does when working with their units. Steve Swaine will serve as faculty lead.

Second Century Service—Provides all commissioners with the most current information about their continually changing environment and provides them with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to have an impact. Julia Farr will serve as faculty lead.

Starting, Sustaining, and Growing Units (NEW in 2019)— Prepares commissioners, membership team volunteers, and commissioned professionals to work together to establish the units needed to serve youth and empower those units to grow and thrive. Sue Simmons will serve as faculty lead.

Recruiting and Engaging Commissioners (NEW in 2019)— Provides tips, techniques, and best practices to develop and execute a plan to recruit and engage the commissioners needed to effectively serve every unit. It also enables participants to expand their network of Scouting resources. Jeff Bostwick will serve as faculty lead.

Click [here](#) for more information about the conferences, and make plans to attend one in 2019!



Second Century Service Conference at Florida Sea Base a Success

Twenty-three commissioners arrived at the Florida Sea Base on January 9 for a week of learning, fun, and fellowship. National faculty members Kresha Alvarado and Rick Hillenbrand led this group through the Second Century Service conference. Ellie Morrison, our national commissioner, was able to join the group for part of the week.

Here is what conference attendees had to say when asked: What was the best thing that happened during the conference week?

“Meeting commissioners from all over the country who are passionate about ensuring safe haven for all the youth we hope to serve—this gives me hope for the future of Scouting.”

“It meant a lot to me when we’re talking diversity and culture.”

“Sharing of knowledge and experience of the learners.”

“The unexpected friends I made.”

“Wow ... meeting everyone and learning.”

“Meeting and talking with commissioners from all levels of Scouting.”



Delivering Effective Roundtables to Help Sustain Units

Roundtables have long been one of our primary tools to help sustain units. They provide four core functions: a place to (1) distribute and (2) collect information, (3) a forum to provide continuous program training to unit leaders, and (4) an opportunity to develop and grow a network of Scouting resources.

A district's roundtable team can have a huge impact on units by helping ensure those units have knowledgeable, well-trained leaders. Units with knowledgeable, well-trained leaders are sustainable; they grow and thrive.

Healthy and sustainable units have fun together while they learn and experience new things. The acronym KISMIF (Keep It Simple, Make It Fun) is often used in Scouting and applies to roundtable, too. Roundtables provide an opportunity for sharing experiences, fun, and fellowship with other leaders and teaching the tools to provide these same opportunities for our youth. Youth at all levels of Scouting should be having fun; if they aren't, they will leave. Roundtables should always teach unit leaders how to make learning a fun experience for their youth.

Roundtables are the best tool available today in Scouting to distribute and collect information, provide continuous program training to unit leaders, and offer an opportunity to develop and grow a network of Scouting resources. When planned and executed well, they attract a greater number of unit leaders. Improved attendance increases the value of the roundtable experience. It is important to also remember that well-run and well-attended roundtables are valuable in developing positive relationships for both volunteers and professionals.

Effective roundtables also help sustain units by supporting district executives and volunteers in coordinating the four functions of Scouting within the district: program, membership, finance, and unit service. Roundtable's four core functions support the four functions of Scouting, too.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, roundtables should always focus on meeting the needs of local units in order to sustain those units. The district's roundtable team provides an opportunity to connect unit leaders to district and council resources that will help them address unit needs. This focus is even more important as we expand our Scouting programs to support girls and young women in Cub Scouting and in Scouts BSA.

We announced recently the formation of a Roundtable Breakthrough Team that will be exploring the best possible ways to deliver roundtable's four core functions. We hope to identify more efficient options to provide the same benefits to unit leaders and professionals. We'll keep you posted as that work proceeds. The one thing we know for certain is that we must continue to deliver those four core functions that help sustain units.

I cannot emphasize enough my thanks to each of you for all of the time and service you dedicate to Scouting and our youth. You may not see it right away, but you make a huge difference every day!



Scott McKenzie
National Commissioner Service
Roundtable Chair
samckenzie@hotmail.com



Documenting Effective Roundtables in Commissioner Tools



Because roundtables are a key part of Scouting's ongoing training opportunities, we have long seen the need to track what is offered and which units are attending roundtables.

The National Commissioner Service Team has updated the roundtable program and brought focus to the responsibilities of roundtable commissioner

positions. These responsibilities include properly using technology to support roundtables.

Tracking attendance in Commissioner Tools provides everyone some of the metrics used to measure the benefits of roundtable. These metrics are also utilized at the council, area, regional, and national levels to validate the effectiveness of our roundtable programs.

Right now, Commissioner Tools is not being fully utilized to record roundtable attendance. Please take the time to make unit attendance entries in Commissioner Tools after each roundtable has been held.

We need advance planning in order to create successful and sustainable units. As we expand our Scouting programs to

support girls and young women, we need roundtables to become more flexible, more efficient, and more effective in supporting our unit leaders.

To support this planning process, we also need to document our successes by properly recording unit roundtable attendance in Commissioner Tools. Yes, this documentation is being used, and yes, it does make a difference! Please make it a priority to record all of your units' attendance in Commissioner Tools.

Our youth cannot have a successful program without your support for our unit leaders. Local units need to be healthy and sustainable to ensure they are still around to support young men and young women for many years to come.

I thank you in advance for embracing technology and having someone on your roundtable team properly documenting the unit roundtable attendance in Commissioner Tools.

For further training on recording roundtable attendance in Commissioner Tools, please review the lesson materials in the College of Commissioner Science Course BSC 153: Roundtable and Commissioner Tools at www.scouting.org/commissioners/training/bachelors-courses.



What Is Really Needed to Sustain Units?

“What is really needed to sustain units?” That question has many answers: great program; active adults and parents; active youth; a recruitment plan; a succession plan; use of the Journey to Excellence; good communication within the unit, district, and council; a clear understanding of advancement; guidance in how to fund the Scouting program through fundraising; and passionate, inspired, trained leaders—just to name a few. Let’s not forget a unit commissioner and a district commissioner, as well as a district committee and council that have all the resources needed. I have listed only a few of the answers, and as commissioners we help our units determine *what is really needed for them to sustain their unit*.

Commissioners support units by assisting them in assessing their strengths and needs. We help them develop a Unit Service Plan and connect to district committee resources they need to implement the plan. That sounds so easy, but we know it takes time and the right relationship to make it work.

This is the perfect time of the year for district commissioners to assess the needs of the units in their districts. Are all the units assigned to a commissioner in Commissioner Tools? Did all the units have a detailed assessment and at least five additional contacts? Which units did not renew their charter on time? How many new unit commissioners will be needed? What training needs will commissioners have this year? How can district roundtable better serve the units? District commissioners need to assess, plan, and implement to sustain units.

Having a collaborative detailed assessment in the first quarter will help unit commissioners assist their unit in planning for the remainder of the year. We are welcoming girls into packs and troops; are these units ready? What do they need? Helping our units understand and implement the many new and exciting opportunities in the Boy Scouts of America is our role as commissioners. How can we help our units?

Another way to help our units is by creating a culture of trained leadership as a key component to sustaining a unit. We have all heard “Every youth deserves a trained leader,” and they do. I encourage all commissioners to review the training needs for your units. Work with the district commissioner and district committee training chair to schedule needed face-to-face training or support online training at my.scouting.org.

“What is really needed to sustain units?” All of the above and more. Commissioners, remember our objectives:

- Supporting unit growth and retention through the Journey to Excellence
- Contacting units and capturing in Commissioner Tools their strengths, needs, and a Unit Service Plan that enables continuing improvement



Sue Simmons
National Commissioner Service
Starting and Sustaining Units Chair
susan.simmons1@comcast.net

- Linking unit needs to district operating committee and other resources
- Supporting timely unit, district, and council charter renewals
- Supporting unit leaders by delivering effective roundtables that provide program ideas, relationship development, and timely communication

And our methods:

- The *Unit Performance Guide* methodology
- New member coordinators
- Unit Key 3
- The Unit Service Plan
- Journey to Excellence
- *my.Scouting Tools* (including Commissioner Tools)
- Continuous recruiting
- Assigning resources to greatest needs

With these tools in our commissioner backpacks, we are ready to help our units become strong, sustaining units.



Scoutbook Free for All Units

Scoutbook is free for all BSA units effective January 1, 2019.

Click [here](#) for more information about Scoutbook.

Scouts BSA Brand Guidance

With the launch of Scouts BSA comes the need for clarification about the name of the program. For a training session about the proper use of the Scouts BSA brand, click [here](#).

For an infographic that summarizes proper Scouts BSA branding, click [here](#).



Regional and Area Commissioners

Updated October 2018

Central Regional Commissioner Kandra Dickerson Jwdickerson111@gmail.com	Southern Regional Commissioner William H. Talley IV wht4@whts.com	Western Regional Commissioner Del Bishop dbishopjr67@comcast.net	Northeast Regional Commissioner Kenneth King kenking39@yahoo.com
Area 1 Commissioner Greg Nygren nygren5154@gmail.com	Area 1 Commissioner Bill Walley plcb@bellsouth.net	Area 1 Commissioner Kevin B. Baker tubacaz@hotmail.com	Area 1 Commissioner Craig Donais craig.donais@nhscouter.com
Area 2 Commissioner Mike Weber mfwieber112@comcast.net	Area 2 Commissioner Matt Walker mmwalker51@gmail.com	Area 2 Commissioner Richard P. Trentman commissioner@area2wr.com	Area 2 Commissioner Tom Bain bain@acm.org
Area 3 Commissioner Carm Walgamott walgamott@aol.com	Area 3 Commissioner Steve Allen sallen98@austin.rr.com	Area 3 Commissioner Judd Stiff jstiff@pacbell.net	Area 3 Commissioner Adrian J. Block ajblock1@gmail.com
Area 4 Commissioner Bruce C. Boyle bcb51@aol.com	Area 4 Commissioner Jim Thielen scouts@lamb-thielen.com	Area 4 Commissioner Rick TerBorch rterborch@earthlink.net	Area 4 Commissioner Russ Devore rbdevore@yahoo.com
Area 5 Commissioner Scott Erikson eriksonS@aol.com	Area 5 Commissioner James Blake jblake@clemsun.edu	Area 6 Commissioner Jeffrey S. Bostwick bostwick.jeffrey@gmail.com	Area 5 Commissioner Steve Perrone sperrone@ppciga.org
Area 6 Commissioner Jon Kerr jon.kerr817@gmail.com	Area 6 Commissioner Bill Greisner wagiii@windstream.net		Area 6 Commissioner Dave Short drshortwb@gmail.com
Area 7 Commissioner Jean Guzzetta jean.guzzetta@aurora.org	Area 7 Commissioner Susan Mary Long jlong7@nc.rr.com		
	Area 8 Commissioner Robert L. Spinks bspinks@okcu.edu		
	Area 9 Commissioner Jennifer Abbey jen.abbey1@gmail.com		



National Commissioner Service Team

Kevin Baker	Recruitment and Retention Chair	tubacaz@hotmail.com	Woodinville, WA
Gary Carroll	Staff Advisor	gary.carroll@scouting.org	Irving, TX
Larry Chase	National Commissioner Service Chair	lhc@chasehome.net	Atlanta, GA
John Cherry	Commissioner Development Chair	jcherry628@aol.com	Atlanta, GA
Rick Hillenbrand	Commissioner Technology Chair	rick_hillenbrand@alum.mit.edu	Romney, WV
Steven Lee	Program Chair	stevel0923@gmail.com	San Diego, CA
Scott McKenzie	Roundtable Chair	samckenzie@hotmail.com	Stansbury Park, UT
Mike Moegenburg	Marketing and Communications Chair	mikemoegenburg@yahoo.com	Sheboygan, WI
Ellie Morrison	National Commissioner	esmorrison@sbcglobal.net	Waco, TX
Susan Simmons	Starting and Sustaining Units Chair	susan.simmons1@comcast.net	Chicago, IL
Darlene Sprague	Resources Chair	darsprague@roadrunner.com	Niagara Falls, NY



JTE Key Performance Indicators

The Journey to Excellence Key Performance Indicators from December 2018 can be accessed [here](#).

Coming Events

2019

March 29–30

Commissioner Impact Session: Starting, Sustaining, and Growing Units

Salt Lake City, Utah

Click [here](#) for more information.

May 29–31

National Annual Meeting and National Executive Board and Committee Meetings

Gaylord Rockies Resort and Convention Center
Denver, Colorado

June 9–15

Week 1–Commissioners Week

- Recruiting and Engaging Commissioners
- Second Century Service
- Starting, Sustaining, and Growing Units
- Strengthening Council Unit Service
- Strengthening District Unit Service
- Strengthening Unit Service

Philmont Training Center

Click [here](#) for more information.

July 22–August 2

24th World Scout Jamboree

Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve, West Virginia

Second Half 2019

Impact Sessions

- Delivering a Great College of Commissioner Science
- Technology for Commissioners
- Recruiting and Engaging Commissioners

