

Winter 2013

# THE COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COMMISSIONERS AND PROFESSIONALS

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## How Commissioners Support the Membership Function

*By Ellie Morrison, new-unit organization and retention committee chair, and Scott Sorrels, national commissioner service chair*

Just like in the children's story "The Three Little Pigs," too often we have, like two of the pigs, built units out of straw and sticks. It doesn't take a Big Bad Wolf to blow most of those houses down. We have, obviously, built some units out of bricks, and for the last several years the BSA has worked to determine just what those bricks are.

There are a number of bricks: at least 10 youth to begin with, at least five adults, a unit commissioner specializing in new units from the very first organizational steps. Other bricks include leadership training, an annual program plan, and a financial plan—in short, all the things that make a good foundation for a unit. The *Unit Performance Guide* identifies all of those bricks and prescribes a method to get them all in place. It contains the information that volunteers and professionals need for organizing a solidly built unit. The guide can be found by clicking here and will shortly be released as an e-book.

But even these units made of brick can fall prey to the Big Bad Wolf, particularly if the "mortar" (read "good commissioner service") between those bricks isn't being delivered on a regular basis. It is the commissioner that makes all the difference. Your service is critical to the survival and strength of these units.

The truth is you can't do it alone. The Big Bad Wolf is still out there, wearing many different faces. The entire district committee is there to support you. It has the information to help units, but it needs you to identify which Big Bad Wolf has shown up at the door. Your job is to determine what help is needed and provide the link between the committee and the unit. The membership chair is already working toward the same goal: a district committee that is a viable organization focused on the units in its care. If we work together, no amount of huffing and puffing can blow our house down!



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## Implementing the New-Unit Process

Our process for starting and sustaining high-performing quality units calls upon the assets of Scouting's membership and unit service functions. (See the *Unit Performance Guide*.) Implementation requires a partnership between our membership, unit service, and professional teams, as well as the following five components.

**Champions:** Both membership and unit service need a volunteer to work with a designated member of the professional staff to lead the implementation effort. Working together, they can ensure that the resources needed for successful implementation are available.

**Assessment:** Are the membership, unit service, and professional teams prepared to implement the new-unit process? Is market data available to identify where new units are needed and which groups can be potential charter partners? In what areas do additional volunteers need to be recruited and trained, including those needed to serve as new-unit organizers and new-unit commissioners? Are district operating committees prepared to support the initiative?

**Plans and Goals:** What is the plan and what are the target dates to address the needs identified by the assessment? How many new units will be formed, and where? How many new-unit organizers and new-unit commissioners must be recruited? How many additional unit commissioners must be recruited to enable experienced unit commissioners to be reassigned as new-unit commissioners while maintaining effective service for other units?

**Communications:** How will membership and unit service communicate, within the district and up and down the council's organization, regarding implementation progress, formation of new units, and adjustments needed for continued improvement and success? How will accomplishments, both individual and team, be recognized?

**Measurement:** How will progress be objectively evaluated? Possible measurements could include the number of new units formed, the percentage of new units with new-unit commissioners assigned, JTE scores for new units, and the retention rate for new units, among others.

Once champions have been identified and market analysis data collected, much of the work on assessment, planning, and goal setting can be accomplished in a one-day conference that brings the council and district teams together.



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## Recruiting New-Unit Commissioners

The new-unit commissioner is one of the key players in our process for starting and sustaining new units. (See the *Unit Performance Guide*.)

Effective recruiting is essential to effective unit service. We intuitively understand that a “servant’s heart” is an asset every commissioner should have. Specific unit service positions may require other skills. For example, our administrative commissioners need particularly strong organizational, communications, and leadership skills. What should we be looking for when recruiting new-unit commissioners?

After a servant’s heart, *experience* in Scouting *and* in unit service may be the most important characteristic a new-unit commissioner can have. While we expect them to fulfill traditional responsibilities such as developing relationships with unit leaders and assessing unit strengths and opportunities, serving a newly formed unit adds additional dimensions to unit service. We look to our new-unit commissioners to put in place a functional succession plan of leadership for the new unit and to be the key contact for the unit Key 3. New-unit commissioners serve as a coach, mentor, and consultant to that Key 3. Effective *listening*, *organizational*, and *communications* skills will serve new-unit commissioners well, too.

Perhaps Yoda, the Grand Master of the Jedi Order in the *Star Wars* series, can set an example for new-unit commissioners. He expected much from and continually supported those he advised, counseled, and developed, but he did not do their work for them. It was Yoda who told us “Do or do not; there is no try” (a great concept when thinking of unit visits) and “Always in motion is the future.”

Recruiting new-unit commissioners presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Finding the right combination of skills will likely require that we ask our best, most experienced unit commissioners to serve in this new role. Those are the same commissioners who serve multiple units already; now we’re asking them to serve only one. That means additional recruiting of new commissioners to enable continuing service to all units. The opportunity? New-unit service offers a new, exciting challenge to experienced commissioners: to help a unit Key 3 build a unit right, from the ground up.

New-unit commissioners are an investment in Scouting’s future. They will help ensure the efforts made to form a strong new unit will result in the retention and growth of those units during the critical first three years of their existence.



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## National Commissioner Minute

My fellow commissioners,

Welcome to 2013.

I am excited to tell you that 2013 will involve an intense focus on membership recruitment at all levels of Scouting. We as volunteers own membership and it is up to us to ensure that we experience membership growth in 2013. We are all in the membership business!

You have no doubt heard me say that commissioners own unit retention, and that primary mission will not change. Commissioners need to continue to deliver quality unit service while we all work together to recruit and empower volunteers to lead the membership drive. You will also see an increased focus on the importance of a strong district committee. As commissioners, we serve as the key link between the many resources of a functional district committee and the unique needs of each unit. We have built this concept of linkage as part of our "simple and unified" mission statement and position description:

*The retention mission of the commissioner corps is best achieved by providing an adequate number of trained unit commissioners who provide a link to district committee resources in support of a quality unit program.*

We can achieve that retention mission statement by focusing on our most important roles:

- Supporting unit growth in the Journey to Excellence criteria: JTE measures performance characteristics that unlock the door to a successful unit.
- Linking district committee resources to the unit: Unit commissioners should support the district committee's delivery of a "catalog of services" to support the specific JTE elements needed for a particular unit's health and success.
- Visiting units and logging the visits into the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS): Our core task remains visiting the unit. UVTS input feeds critical information to the district committee to help link resources to the unit.
- Supporting on-time charter renewal: The commissioner's focus is the retention of the unit.



*Tico Perez*  
National Commissioner

Finally, the commissioner corps is fully supportive of the concept of the new-unit commissioner, as outlined in the *Unit Performance Guide*. The concept of assigning a new-unit commissioner on a one-to-one basis to each new unit, through the first two recharter cycles, is a proven and approved best method that results in dramatically increased new unit retention.

Together, we can bridge the gap to increased membership in the BSA.

Thank you all for the service you provide to youth in your local councils.



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## The Critical Role of Deploying District Committee Resources to Support Unit Success

"The retention mission of the commissioner corps is best achieved by providing an adequate number of trained unit commissioners **who provide a link to district committee resources** in support of a quality unit program."

Embedded within our retention mission statement is a concept that is the subject of an increasing amount of focus—and with good reason. That concept is that a primary role of the unit commissioner is to provide a **link** to district committee resources who can provide support for a quality unit program. What do we mean by providing a link? Providing a link does not mean that the commissioner is supposed to become the expert on all Scouting matters. That goal, while laudable (and no doubt pursued by many zealous Scouters), overburdens our commissioners with unrealistic expectations and can only lead to frustration on the part of our commissioners and unit leadership. In an ideal Scouting world, we are supposed to be able to identify a unit's needs and bring relevant resources to the unit. Said another way, rather than becoming the source for all things advancement-related in a district, we should link to the volunteers who are subject-matter specialists in the area of advancement.

A growing topic of discussion is the importance of ensuring that the district committee has sufficient resources to perform its unit support and membership roles. My experience indicates that the quality and depth of our district committees vary widely, often even within a council. The raw numbers tell us that we have more than 41,000 volunteers deployed in district functions (compared to more than 30,000 unit commissioners), or more than 22 volunteers, on average, per district committee. Separately and collectively, that is a lot of volunteers who are available to support unit success. In order to have an impact, however, that district committee has to be full of volunteers who feel empowered to perform their roles and who, along with unit commissioners and unit leadership, have been sufficiently trained to credibly provide subject-matter expertise.

You will see an increasing emphasis on the importance of the role of the district committee. What can we do to support the improvement of district committee effectiveness? First, we should continue to educate other Scout volunteers on our respective roles, emphasizing that as commissioners we fervently believe in the need for strong, empowered subject-matter experts



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at the district committee level. By trying to fill that void ourselves we only perpetuate the lack of resources to support unit success. Second, we should lead and support efforts to identify and recruit more volunteers to serve at the district committee level. Third, we should look for opportunities to showcase district committee expert resources to our unit leadership through roundtables, council and district training events, and regular unit dialogue. Finally, we should openly talk about the importance of volunteers in recruiting and retaining membership and support the efforts of the district committee to build and deploy a volunteer base to recruit new members. A strong, functioning district committee is a unit commissioner's "best friend" in providing resources to support unit success. And we are the link!

Thanks for all you do for Scouting.



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## 12 Points for Retention

The differences between employees and volunteers are obvious, but sometimes the similarities aren't as clear. But similarities do exist. For starters, both employees and volunteers will likely seek alternatives when they find themselves routinely giving far more than they are getting from their relationship with an organization. And in both cases, turnover is problematic.

We invest significant effort in identifying, recruiting, and training volunteers to serve as effective commissioners. Turnover hurts. A part of the solution may be as close as the values of our Scout Law: Consistently practicing all 12 of them in our volunteer relationships can have a positive impact.

Think of just one, loyalty, and how administrative commissioners can use it effectively to retain team members. Writing recently for *Inc.* magazine, Brent Gleeson, a former Navy SEAL, spoke of the positive impact leaders can have on their teams by consistently demonstrating loyalty in just four ways:

**"Never throw anyone under the bus.** As a leader, redirect praise to your team members and protect them from criticism. If you need to talk to a team member about a misstep, do it behind closed doors.

**"Never leave anyone behind.** Instill in your team the belief that every person on the team is as important as the next. Include everyone in the celebration of success. And don't blame any one person for a failure. Publicly thank people ... for their contributions to the team.

**"Try to be as candid as possible with your [team members], and never lie to them.** Loyalty is built on trust. If your people don't believe you're being forthcoming with them, they won't trust you with their backs.

**"Give [team members] your unconditional support.** Don't turn your back on them if they mess up. Help them figure it out, and be as loyal during the bad times as during the good."

There are 11 more points to the Scout Law that can be equally effective in helping us increase retention of those commissioners we work so hard to identify, recruit, and train. Put them all to work.



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## Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service Knot to Be Available



The Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service was introduced at the May 2011 National Annual Business Meeting. Its purpose is simple: to recognize volunteers who are providing excellent commissioner service with a knot and to let those commissioners lead by example. The award recognizes and celebrates commissioners who use contemporary tools and techniques to provide the level of service our units need to be successful in Scouting's second century.

The award knot has not been available as its requirements are intended to be completed over the course of two consecutive years. Also, one of the requirements was participation in or staffing of one continuing education event for commissioner service and credit cannot be given for service prior to the date the award was introduced.

But with the second anniversary of the award's introduction rapidly approaching, that is about to change. Volunteers who have successfully completed the requirements for this award will be able to purchase the knot from BSA Supply starting May 1, 2013. It should also be available for purchase from Scout Shops by that date.

[Click here to review the award requirements.](#)



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## Training for Commissioner Service

Position-specific basic training and updated Commissioner College courses were posted on the Commissioners website last year around Thanksgiving. While there have been some minor changes made based on feedback from participants, the comments have been overwhelmingly positive. Overall, the training has been well received.

**Basic Training Update**—A new Council Commissioner Basic Training course was added to the Commissioners website right before Christmas. This course is a bit different from the other courses in that it is more than just a presentation. This training contains “action items” for the council commissioner to perform. These are activities that help the council commissioner form a better understanding of the role. For example, the council commissioner is asked to find out who the other officers of the council are, when they meet, what meetings they plan to attend, how they will develop the organization, the current commissioner ratio, and how many new units are planned for next year, among other questions. The goal is to have the council commissioner understand the leadership role within the council and help facilitate outstanding unit service. Thanks to Dave Fornadel and Larry Chase, who were the primary developers of the course.

Note that we are currently considering technology to make this course a self-paced learning module.

**Commissioner College Update**—Section III, Chapter 4 of the *Administration of Commissioner Service* manual was updated and posted to the Commissioners website at the end of the year. This update has been a long time coming and it covers many new topics such as how to conduct a commissioner college using the Internet and conference calls. That information should enable commissioner colleges in remote areas. It also has information that the college deans should find helpful in planning for the college.

The college courses are being reviewed and will be updated on the website as the review team finishes each degree. The plan is to update each of the courses to be more consistent in font, style, and presentation. In addition, each course will be reviewed for alternative methods of instruction and will incorporate feedback that has been received as well as changes in the program like JTE. The update should result in more consistent course offerings and more complete and up-to-date information. Additional courses may also be considered.

**NOTE:** Now that the Commissioners website has all the courses posted, the Dropbox site will be decommissioned at the end of February. The Dropbox links will no longer be active at that time.



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### National-Level Training

**Sea Base**—Special thanks to Dave Fornadel and Kresha Alvarado of Circle 10 Council for the outstanding unit commissioner course that was taught at Sea Base on January 13–18.

**Philmont**—Commissioner Week at the Philmont Training Center is Week 3: June 23–29. You should have received a personal invitation from our national commissioner, Tico Perez, to attend PTC during this week. At PTC, you will have the opportunity to meet and share ideas with Scouters from across the nation. The conference faculty is composed of some of the most talented and skilled commissioners in Scouting. There will be five courses focused on commissioner service as well as some special activities just for commissioners. The fourth annual PTC Commissioner College will be held on Friday. Plan to attend and 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](mailto:tim.acree@comcast.net).



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## Philmont Training Center

The national commissioner conferences take place each summer at the Philmont Training Center near Cimarron, New Mexico. Commissioner Week is scheduled for June 23–29, 2013. For more information, see the Philmont Training Center flier.



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## UVTS Isn't Just for Tracking Anymore

UVTS is the name the Unit Visit Tracking System was given at its inception, but UVTS should be called "USES," to quote my friend Larry Chase at Philmont this past summer. It is a tool that when used properly has many **uses**. Let's explore this a bit further.

**Point 1**—When adding a visit, are you putting in a good description of the visit? When you look back at your entries, will "Talked with the Scoutmaster" really be useful? Wouldn't something like "Spoke with the Scoutmaster about having someone from the District Advancement Committee work with the new troop advancement chair to properly maintain advancement records" be more **USEful** to you or anyone else reading this entry?

**Point 2**—After entering the basic information about unit number, date, attendance, and type of meeting, are you completing the Comments section? Did you know you can put in comments based on the visit, and/or add comments based on the unit? Take a second look. How **USEful** would these comments be to you when you look back, or to an assistant district commissioner or other administrative commissioner?

**Point 3**—Did you mark all the Quality Indicators that apply? I contend that it isn't really a visit unless you can check off at least one indicator. Maybe add some comments about the indicators you selected. Wouldn't that be **USEful** when it came time for the self-assessment meeting?

**Point 4**—Have you used the Focus function? A focus is a note or comment you can add to the unit visit record to help you in your ongoing planning, such as reminders, notes about upcoming visits, etc. Commissioners can view, add, edit, or delete a focus they created. I don't know about you, but I have a lot going on these days, and some reminders are always **USEful** to me.



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Try to look at the UVTS (or "USES") tool as something you as a commissioner can use to your advantage. If the visit is important enough to make an entry, why not make it something **USEful** to you and your readers!

Send any questions about UVTS to [darsprague@roadrunner.com](mailto:darsprague@roadrunner.com).



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## Colleges of Commissioner Science Across the Nation

The College of Commissioner Science program is a great way to get additional training. A feature now available on 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.

To have your council's college listed, please send information to Darlene Sprague at [darsprague@roadrunner.com](mailto:darsprague@roadrunner.com).



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## Questions and Answers From the Field

The National Commissioner Support Team frequently gets questions from those in the field. Here are a few we have picked for this issue reprinted from actual questions sent to the team. Please continue to ask us questions; we are pretty good about providing a quick response.

### **How can I earn a doctorate if my council doesn't offer a college?**

Contact a college in a neighboring council that you could attend. Explain the situation to the dean and ask to be considered for the doctoral program. You may want to forward a transcript of courses and degrees earned to show your progress. Most colleges have reciprocity and should welcome you. Once you are approved and complete the requirements, that council could award the doctoral degree.

### **What is the difference between a doctorate of commissioner service and the doctoral knot?**

The degree and the doctoral knot (also known as the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Award) are two distinct items. The degree is awarded by the local council as part of conducting a college. If the council has followed a standardized course curriculum, you may qualify for the knot assuming you have met the tenure requirement. There are additional requirements for the knot beyond the degree. For example, tenure is usually not required to earn the degree, but five years of experience is required for the knot.

### **Is the doctoral knot a service knot?**

The doctoral knot requirements signify a level of experience as well as completion of a course of study. It is possible to travel to other councils and complete your doctorate within a year. However, you would not be an experienced commissioner. Thus the knot has a tenure requirement, but that does not make it a service knot.

*Some inaccurate information about the commissioner knots was posted on another Scout-related site. The commissioner knots are NOT going away or being consolidated. The only definitive source for Scouting awards is Awards Central; don't trust any other source.*



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## Roundtable Changes

At the October meeting of the National Commissioner Cabinet, three items relating to roundtables were approved. They are now recommended as standard operating practice and are explained below.

- 1. Assistant Council Commissioner–Roundtable:** This person reports to the council commissioner and conducts an annual councilwide roundtable planning meeting followed by a midyear review. This process will bring some standardization to district roundtable in terms of material content by promoting the use of national roundtable guides, which should help keep meetings interesting and focused on assisting units. It is recommended that this person visit the district roundtable from time to time to review content and attendance.
- 2. Assistant District Commissioner–Roundtable:** This person reports to the district commissioner and works with the district structure but needs to be responsive to and work in cooperation with the ACC roundtable to see that the annual planning and midyear review programs are well attended by the district program-specific roundtable commissioners. In addition, this is a perfect position from which to see that national roundtable guide materials are being used so that proper program materials are being given to units. This person could also be the moderator for roundtables held at the same time and place for all program levels within a district. This gives a dynamic to the meeting with broader social opportunities and sheer numbers, both of which can provide energy to an event. The assistant district commissioner should visit program-specific roundtable groups on at least a quarterly basis to evaluate content and attendance and report such to the district commissioner at commissioner meetings.

In large councils, there may be a need for more than one ACC roundtable in order to adequately cover a huge number of districts or a large territory. In small councils, one may be fine or perhaps may not be needed at all. Or in these smaller councils, perhaps an ACC roundtable is needed but the ADC roundtable isn't. One or the other seems necessary to give better oversight to the roundtable program because lack of oversight appeared to be one of the factors contributing to poor performance. These two positions will also promote the use of technologies to most effectively reach units that do not or cannot attend normal roundtable meetings. The positions of assistant council commissioner and assistant district commissioner currently exist in some councils, but this specific assignment pertaining to roundtable responsibilities



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has not previously been formalized. Thus, specific job descriptions have been developed and are posted on the Roundtable Support section of the national commissioner web page. No new patch will be created.

- 3. Assistant Roundtable Commissioners:** Program-specific roundtable commissioners for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and Venturing crews are responsible for the development and delivery of their monthly meeting agenda and program items. All others who assist these individuals are deemed assistant roundtable commissioners. That negates the need for a staff position. Most importantly, it allows the assistants to pursue the normal roundtable training and awards structure. Each program-specific roundtable commissioner would be able to have as many assistants as needed; i.e., Cub Scouts may need several to facilitate their program breakouts while others may not need as many. Thus, each could have as many as they deem appropriate based on district size, attendance numbers, and breakout groups formed. The current staff patch will be redesigned to reflect this change.



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## MyScouting Tools Introduced

The first phase of MyScouting Tools has been introduced. MyScouting Tools is a dynamic tool for all Scouting leadership and eventually Scouts to obtain and maintain their current information.

To access MyScouting Tools, a Scouter simply logs into MyScouting.org and clicks the link located on the landing page. A "toolkit" is equivalent to a BSA organization structure. For example, if you're part of a unit, your unit will appear as a toolkit.

MyScouting Tools has two main levels of access: My Dashboard and Roster Manager. A unit leader or adult volunteer can access the My Dashboard tool, where announcements and calendar dates will appear. Under My Profile, leaders and volunteers now have the ability to update their contact information. This is a huge enhancement because updates to phone numbers, email addresses, and other contact information are immediate.

The unit and district Key 3 will have a second level of access. The Roster Manager tool lets them view and export their roster information and make contact updates for anyone on their roster.

Under Calendar, reminders and announcements are easily created and will appear on the dashboards of other leaders with the click of a button. Calendar events become more than just a date and time on the calendar. By formatting the event, a leader can add additional information, even if it's just a reminder to bring a sleeping bag!

A tutorial and FAQs are available on MyScouting to help.

This is just the beginning. We plan to roll out new enhancements every three to six weeks. For detailed information on what's coming and when, click on Release Details on MyScouting.



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## Jamboree-on-the-Air Participation Up Nearly 500 Percent

U.S. participation in Jamboree-on-the-Air surged in 2012 with 204 stations reporting their activities—up 200 percent from 2011. These stations reported 18,537 Scouts participating—up nearly 500 percent. Overall, the station reports represented 136 Scout councils and 41 states. More than 1,000 amateur radio operators across the country and around the world were involved in contacting all 50 states and 66 countries.

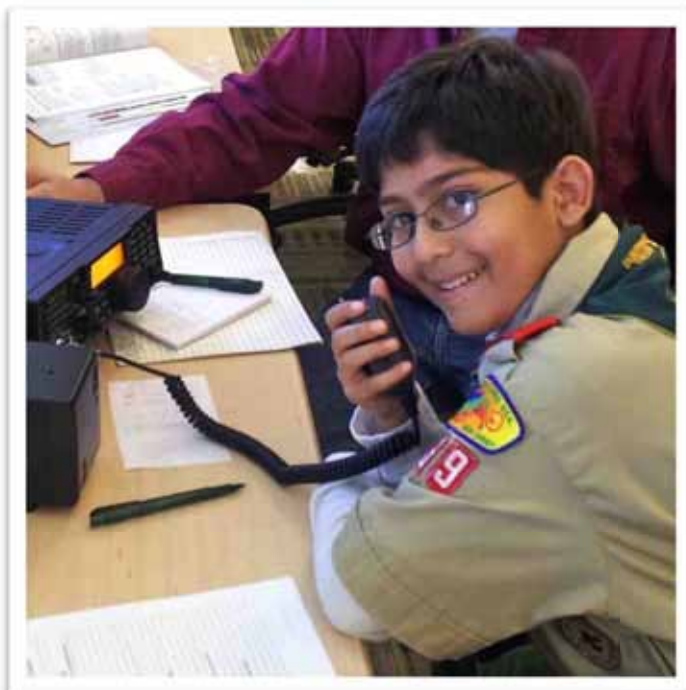
A list of stations is available on the JOTA 2012 Report page, as well as links to a full spreadsheet with individual station reports and a complete report of the 2012 event.

An overview video with photos of Scouts on the air is available on vimeo and on youtube.

### K2TD Event, Burlington County Council, New Jersey, using ICOM Loan Station

*"I do not think I can precisely express in words the wonderful experience for all involved, but in a very special way for all our youth, the Scouts. These young individuals had in about 30 hours combined lessons that will last a lifetime. They learned about geography, physics, math, languages, world citizenship, science, friendship, teamwork, and so many other skills that most kids their age are never able to experience. These kids' minds have been stamped forever with the experience of communicating with other human beings around the corner and across the world."*

—Max Stiles, BSA unit commissioner, after attending JOTA event



K2TD, Burlington County Council, New Jersey



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## New Train the Trainer

The Volunteer Development team has just released a new course to prepare trainers to deliver effective training for youth and volunteers.

The Fundamentals of Training course is the first phase of the three-part train-the-trainer continuum (T<sup>3</sup>, or T-Cubed) in the Boy Scouts of America. The course's purpose is to introduce teaching techniques and skills to new Scout trainers as well as help those Scouters, regardless of their experience, present effective training. It will also help those who may have trained for other organizations learn the BSA's training techniques and will help "freshen up" the skills of current BSA trainers. The course is intended for both youth and adult trainers.

The Fundamentals of Training is available for download on the Adult training page.

Upon completion of The Fundamentals of Training, new trainers will be able to apply the techniques across BSA's leadership development programs, from unit-level youth leader training taught by youth for youth to position-specific and supplemental training for adult leaders. Upon completion of this first part, new trainers are coached and mentored by experienced trainers as they become comfortable with and confident in their training skills.

The Trainer's EDGE is the second part of the continuum. As trainers develop their training skills, Trainer's EDGE provides an additional opportunity for trainers to enhance their abilities. Trainer's EDGE also supplements the training development sessions offered during faculty development for advanced leadership training courses and provides increased familiarity with the EDGE model that is used throughout the training.

The third part of the continuum is the Master Trainer course taught at one of the BSA's national volunteer training centers or at the regional level.



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## National Membership Recruitment Campaign 2013

In December, the National Council sent to all local councils resources for the 2013 recruitment campaign. The new materials include updated images and additional resources that volunteers and professionals working in field operations have requested. The focused theme is the once-in-a-lifetime experiences Scouts will enjoy and treasure forever.

These campaign resources include sample items that can also be found online on the Marketing Toolbox and at the Youth Recruitment link of the Membership Resources page. These items are also available on a disk that was sent with the materials. The disk includes resources councils can use to support and promote use of the BeAScout online recruitment and registration tool.



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## Become a Member of a Scouting Research Panel

The Research & Program Innovation department invites members of the Scouting community to be a part of our research panel. Members of the panel will receive surveys (no more than three to four per year) regarding new programs or proposed changes to existing Scouting programs. We invite all current Cub Scout parents, Boy Scout parents, Boy Scout and Venturing youth members\*, and registered volunteers to submit their information on the Research Panels page.

**\*PLEASE NOTE:** By law we are not allowed to send surveys directly to youth ages 13 and under. However, if a younger Boy Scout would like to participate in our surveys, he can do so by having his parent register for the Boy Scout Parent Panel and indicate that their son is interested in participating.



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## SCOUTStrong™ PALA: Jumpstart Your Journey to Better Health for the 2013 National Scout Jamboree

An excellent way to start regular exercise and improve eating habits is to earn a SCOUTStrong Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA). The SCOUTStrong PALA is designed to motivate participants to be physically active on a regular basis by encouraging them to participate in activities they enjoy and to improve their eating habits.

To earn the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge Award, a participant is required to meet an activity goal of 30 minutes a day for adults and 60 minutes a day for those under 18 at least five days a week for a total of six weeks. The participants choose their activities and strive to reach their goals, logging their physical activity along the way. Participants can take up to eight weeks to complete the program.

You can learn more about the SCOUTStrong PALA at the SCOUTStrong PALA website.

Also be sure to visit the SCOUTStrong website for various articles, videos, and podcasts on wellness-related topics.



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## Western Region Serves Units with Unit Service Plan

In the summer of 2011, the Western Region Key 3 and board committed themselves to the principle that the future of Scouting depends in large part on the ability of councils and districts to provide units and their members with an awesome Scouting experience. Tom Fitzgibbon, our region director, suggested that we develop a process, using the Journey to Excellence scorecard, to guide unit commissioners as they help units to have an awesome experience by continuously improving. The result is the Unit Service Plan.

The Unit Service Plan is premised on the following:

- (1) commissioners are successful when a district's youth membership grows and units are providing a fun-filled exciting program for youth;
- (2) unit commissioners are the customer service officers who coach unit leaders toward success;
- and (3) units that continuously improve their Journey to Excellence scores will provide better program to the boys and young adults they serve.

The process is simplicity itself:

1. Using the unit Journey to Excellence scorecard, each unit commissioner identifies the best practices and needs of each unit.
2. The unit commissioner identifies services and resources that will help the unit improve its Journey to Excellence score.
3. Best practices are shared throughout the district as an additional resource for units.
4. The unit commissioner and the unit "partner" to improve the Journey to Excellence score.
5. The unit commissioner follows through, using district and council resources, to see that the promised services are provided.
6. Units are constantly evaluated and the process is repeated as results are obtained.

In addition to helping units improve their program, the Unit Service Plan defines the role of a unit commissioner, establishes a standard of success for unit commissioners, and empowers unit commissioners to manage unit service from the district. Further, as a result of the Unit Service Plan, districts are beginning to better fulfill their role in serving units.



*Jan Perkins*  
*Western Regional Commissioner*



Currently, the Unit Service Plan, together with training and support materials and a catalog of services, has been provided to Western Region councils. The plan is just beginning to be used by unit commissioners.

The Western Region is convinced that the Unit Service Plan will help units keep the promise that was made to youth members when they joined. Keeping that promise will enrich the lives of our youth members.



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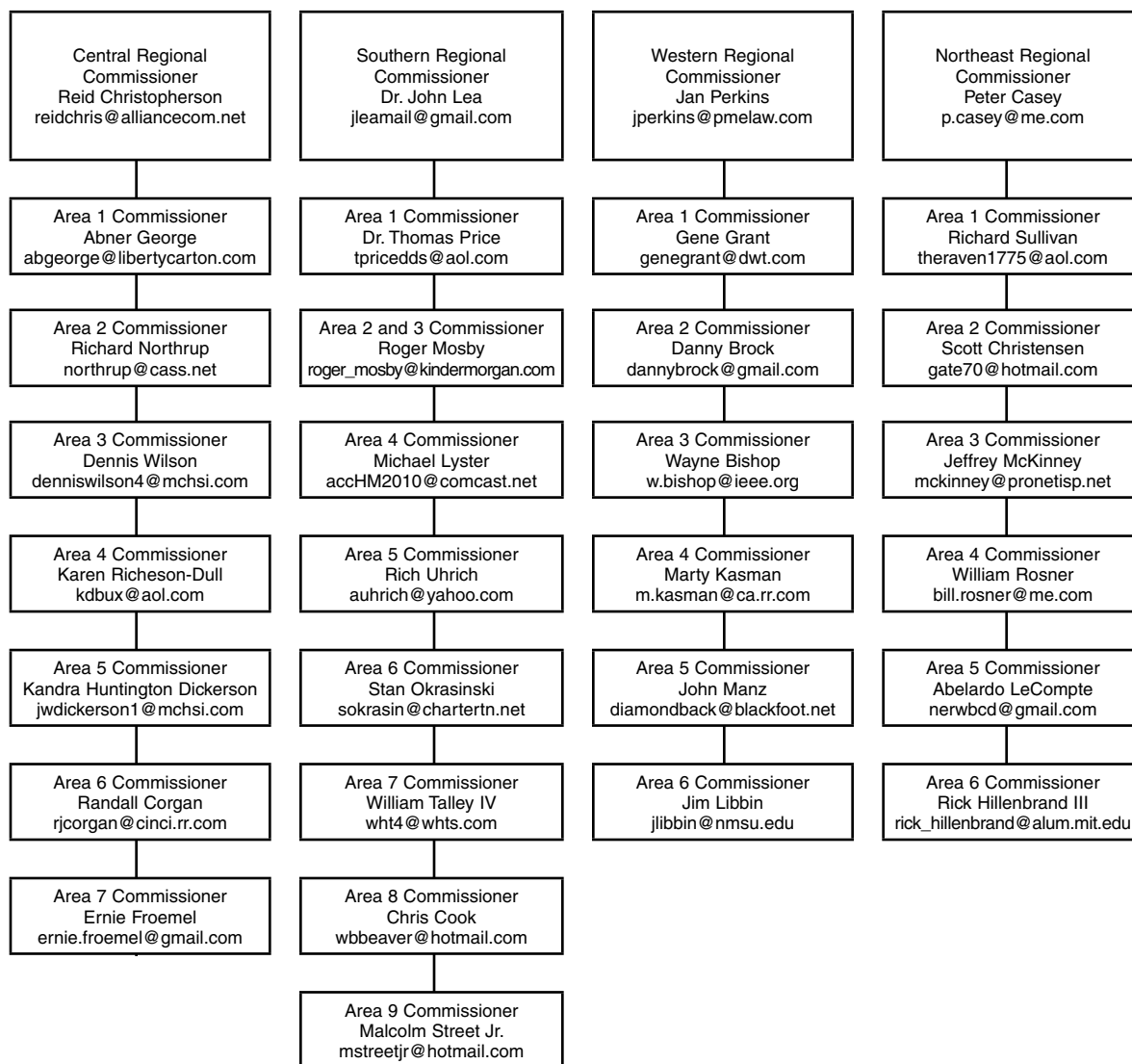
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## Regional and Area Commissioners Organization Chart



Updated January 10, 2013



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## Unit Commissioner Box Score

As of December 2012

Region	Traditional Units*		Unit Commissioners Needed		Unit Commissioners Registered		Need to Recruit		Percent of Need Filled		Commissioner Ratio	
	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year
Northeast	17,165	16,540	5,723	5,512	4,591	4,517	1,132	995	80.2%	81.9%	3.7	3.7
Southern	27,470	26,744	9,157	8,915	8,004	8,058	1,153	857	87.4%	90.4%	3.4	3.3
Central	23,968	23,157	7,991	7,718	6,753	6,320	1,238	1,398	84.5%	81.9%	3.5	3.7
Western	42,968	42,430	14,323	14,145	11,091	11,461	3,232	2,684	77.4%	81.0%	3.9	3.7
National	111,571	108,871	37,194	36,290	30,439	30,356	6,755	5,934	81.8%	83.6%	3.7	3.6

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



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## Calendar of Events

### National Executive Board and Committee Meetings—Irving, Texas

February 4–6

National Commissioner Task Force Meeting (invitation only)

### “Are You Tougher Than a Boy Scout?”

March

“Are You Tougher Than a Boy Scout?” will begin airing on the National Geographic channel. Marketing/Brand will provide councils with assets and resources to support program and recruiting activities.

### Pinewood Derby

May 15

60th anniversary of the Pinewood Derby

### National Annual Meeting—Grapevine, Texas

May 22–24

National Annual Meeting

National Executive Board and Committee Meetings

### Commissioner Week—Philmont Training Center

Week 3: June 23–29

The Council Commissioner

District Commissioner and Assistant District Commissioner Training

District Committee

Effective Roundtables

Focusing on the “Main Thing”

How to Conduct a Commissioner College

The Unit Commissioner

National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE)

Visit the 2013 Conference Schedule page on the Philmont Training Center website for more information.



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## 2013 National Scout Jamboree—Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve

July 15–24

2013 National Scout Jamboree

Visit the jamboree page for more information.

## National Executive Board and Committee Meetings—Salt Lake City, Utah

October 28

National Commissioner Task Force Meeting (invitation only)



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