

A PUBLICATION FOR COUNCIL COMMISSIONERS AND SCOUT EXECUTIVES

THE COMMISSIONER

www.scouting.org/commissioners

Donald D. Belcher serves as national commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America. Don is the retired chairman of the board and CEO of Banta Corporation. He is an Eagle Scout, Silver Beaver, Silver Antelope, Silver Buffalo, Distinguished Eagle Scout, and James E. West Fellow, and a member of the 1910 Society and Founders Circle. Don has served as Central Region president, council president, and in a variety of other local and national responsibilities. He became a Cub Scout over 50 years ago in Kansas City, Missouri.



“The role of the unit commissioner is to help every unit be successful. Unit success is defined by the unit achieving Quality Unit status and demonstrating an improvement in the retention of its members.”

New Podcasts Available on Commissioner Web Site

National Commissioner Don Belcher will provide a series of messages on the commissioner Web site beginning in December 2006. You can access them from www.scouting.org by clicking on the lower left-hand corner under “Commissioner;” or go directly to the Web site: www.scouting.org/commissioners.

The first messages in the series will be (1) Centennial Quality Awards Program and the Commissioner’s Role; (2) Importance of Monthly Unit Visits by Commissioners; (3) Five Pillars of the National Strategic Plan and Their Relevance to Commissioner Service; (4) National Parent Initiative Emphasis; and (5) Membership Validation Process and the Importance of Unit Health Reviews.

The podcasts are designed for many uses:

- Listen from the convenience of your home or office. It could be an assignment for next month’s meeting. You can download the MP3 audio files directly from the page for use on your computer or digital music player.
- To present at monthly commissioner meetings or roundtables, depending on the subject:
 - Listen to the message as an opening or closing to set the stage.
 - Provide for discussion on a specific topic and listen to the message first as a way to stimulate discussion for training on the topic, or play the message to wrap up the discussion.
- Use as an extension of basic training, at commissioner conferences, at the college of commissioner science, or other key council and district gatherings.

District Operations Online Training Coming Soon

Any Scouting professional or volunteer knows that the most effective way to operate is when a district committee meets with an agenda calling for 20 to 30 minutes dedicated to break-out meetings of the operating committees, followed by the committee chairs reporting on (1) what the members of the operating committee accomplished the past month and (2) what the members of the operating committee plan to accomplish the next month.

In order to lead district executives, district chairmen, and other members of the district committee



Special Last-Time Recognition for 2007 Quality Unit Award

Due to many requests from councils needing to recognize their units for what they accomplished during 2006 or the unit's past charter year, we have created the last 2007 Quality Unit emblem. For units rechartering in December 2006 and in early 2007 that accomplished the requirements for the current Quality Unit program during 2006, they can apply to earn the special emblem.

Units will complete the 2006 Quality Unit form by filling out the first column, "Past Charter Year," with what they accomplished. This form will be approved by their district leadership at the time of rechartering. If a council needs additional forms to complete, you can order more from the National Distribution Center, or you can print your own from ScoutNET on BSA Info under Program Group, then under Leadership Support Service. You will scroll to the bottom of the page; the forms are printable for each type of application.

The unit will be able to purchase the special emblems through a Scout shop or their council distributor, or councils can order them for the unit directly from the National Distribution Center.

The emblems will be available beginning in December 2006. There will be no ribbons, lapel pins, or unit plaques available for this recognition.

Providing a Baseline for Measurement of New Centennial Quality Unit Awards

As you analyze the data needed to establish a baseline for the commitment of the new Centennial Quality Awards program, you will want to reference data that is available through the council office in ScoutNET.

The baseline for units should be established using the same date councilwide. Since units can begin earning the award after October 31, 2007, and the commitments are being made now before year-end in some councils, your council leadership needs to establish a date to

select as the baseline (the beginning point from which "to improve").

This is necessary since you do not know how the unit will end the year in key measurements.

Depending on your unit rollout date, we suggest an October month-end to be used as your baseline. The units will establish their commitment based on a minimum of 10 months, through October 2007, and a maximum of 12 months, through December 2007.

What is used when meeting next October to evaluate the award achievement?

In the summer of 2007, councils will be sent from the National Council a bulk shipment of ribbons to present to qualifying units for the Centennial Quality Award. At that time, we will also send an "Achievement and Award Order Form" to be used by commissioners and unit leadership to measure their success with achievement of the award and an order form to request the award ribbon and details of when, where, and how much the cost will be to order uniform emblems, lapel pins, and unit plaques.



District Operations Online Training Coming Soon

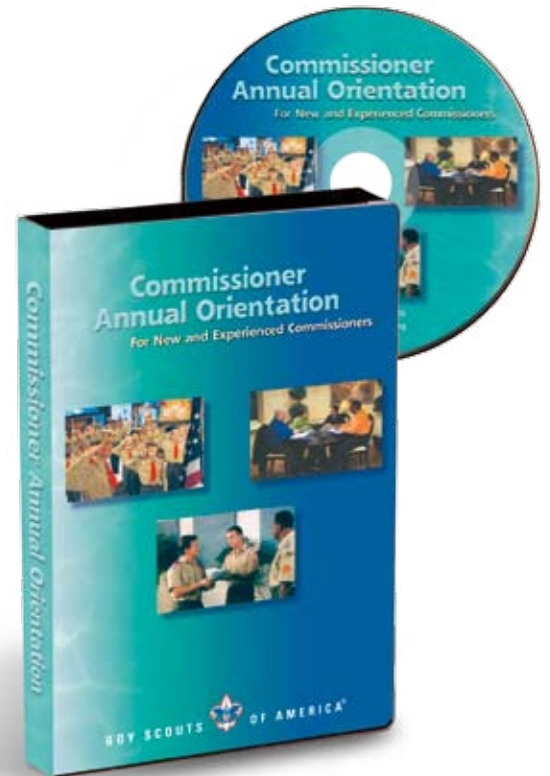
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down the path of being successful at having coordinated district committee meetings, and to succeed at the methods of recruiting to full strength in the operating committees, a state-of-the-art online training is being developed. The District Committee Training module consists of a presentation followed by an interactive exercise in which the student tries their hand at organizing and staffing a district committee. This simulation begins with a small committee with only a handful of members, and the student is challenged to build a fully staffed committee that addresses each of the critical functions. It will be fun and it will be informative. Plans are also in the works for this training module to be available on CD-ROM.

Critical Steps Need to Be Taken in Support of the Centennial Quality Awards Program Commitment

Between now and February 15, 2007, it is critical for each commissioner to be involved directly with all units in the council. The time taken will help create action plans for each unit with the commitment to achieve the Centennial Quality Unit Award, as well as the Centennial Quality District and Centennial Quality Council awards.

The tools available to assist commissioners and other key council and district leadership are (1) the Centennial Quality Awards Program Implementation packet—all components available on www.scouting.org and from ScoutNET on BSA Info; (2) unit, district, and council award commitment forms; (3) the *Commissioner Annual Orientation*



DVD, with utilization of the Guidelines for Unit Action Planning Meetings and the unit self-assessment tools; and (4) new podcasts on the commissioner Web site on key subjects relating to providing quality unit service.

Boy Scouts of America – National Council

http://www.scouting.org/nav/enter.jsp?s=cm

scouting.org

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA® NATIONAL COUNCIL

Commissioners

Commissioners—In the Boy Scouts of America

Commissioners are district and council leaders who help Scout units succeed. They coach and consult with adult leaders of Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, and Venturing crews. Commissioners help maintain the standards of the Boy Scouts of America. They also oversee the unit charter renewal plan so that each unit reregisters on time with an optimum number of youth and adult members.

Roles the Commissioner Plays

A commissioner plays several roles, including friend, representative, unit "doctor," teacher, and counselor.

The commissioner is a **friend** of the unit. Of all their roles, this one is the most important. It springs from the attitude, "I care, I am here to help, what can I do for you?" Caring is the ingredient that makes commissioner service successful. He or she is an advocate of unit needs. A commissioner who makes himself known and accepted now will be called on in future times of trouble.

The commissioner is a **representative**. The average unit leader is totally occupied in working with kids. Some have little if any contact with the Boy Scouts of America other than a commissioner's visit to their meeting. To them, the commissioner may be the BSA. The commissioner helps represent the ideals, the principles, and the policies of

UNIT COMMISSIONER

ASSISTANT DISTRICT

Basic Commissioner Manuals

Other Commissioner Resources

The Commissioner
A newsletter for the council commissioner, the council Scout executive, and council professional adviser to commissioners

Commissioners at the Philmont Training Center

National Meeting Presentations

Products for Commissioner Identity

Scouting Information Center
Other BSA Web Sites
Local Councils

Words of Wisdom

Stephen Covey says his motto is: "Live life in crescendo." This means: It is simple. The most important work you'll ever do is always ahead of you, not behind you.



Membership Validation Procedures Involve Commissioners

The annual Local Council Membership Validation Procedures are ready to be reviewed and the process engaged.

At the beginning of each calendar year, all BSA employees involved with the handling or processing of membership will review the procedures and will sign off, stating they will follow each step involved in the process. Council Key 3's and district Key 3's also sign off, stating they understand the process and plan on executing the steps to ensure every unit is receiving the support needed to qualify as a Centennial Quality Unit.

A major step in the procedures is No. 7: **"Conduct semiannual 'unit health' reviews"** (in January and July). The process is for the unit-serving executive to meet with their commissioner team to evaluate all units in the district. In January, it should be a part of the goal-setting process.



Units meeting the Quality Unit requirements last year would receive a grade of "good." For every unit not projected to be a Centennial Quality Unit in 2007, a plan is developed by the unit-serving executive and the commissioner team based on how each unit can be brought to Centennial Quality Unit status. Specific action should be identified monthly and progress reported as a part of the overall growth plan. Priority should be placed on units with "life threatening" problems. These make for action items at monthly district meetings.

Twice a year, unit status should be compared to the last report. **"Units not changing in status should be given immediate attention by the unit-serving executive's staff leader with help from the appropriate assistant district commissioner or district commissioner."** This should help in reducing membership losses and assisting more units to stay healthy. Better programming for more youth over a longer period of time will be provided.

The plan is shared with the council commissioner and the staff leader for each district. These plans should be kept on file by the registrar. Specific action should be identified monthly and progress reported as a part of the monthly commissioner staff meeting and at the quarterly council commissioners cabinet. Priority should be placed on units with life-threatening problems. It should be a regular agenda item to discuss the progress during the council commissioners cabinet as well.

Commissioners, *Boys' Life*, and Healthy Units

Boys' Life helps commissioners promote healthy units and deliver Scouting's ideals to Scouts, their leaders, and their families. Commissioners know that *Boys' Life* is essential to a well-rounded Scouting program; the good reading, the positive public relations in the home, and the Scout-themed editorial content in *Boys' Life* inspire Scouts to stay in Scouting longer, be more active in their units, attend district and council events, and advance in rank faster and more often than nonsubscribers.

Opportunities for the commissioner to promote *Boys' Life*:

- (1) **Subscribe:** Subscribe to *Boys' Life*. Be familiar with the major articles, especially Scouts in Action and Think and Grin.
- (2) **Unit Recharter:** Use the annual recharter as a time to encourage units to become (or maintain) 100% *Boys' Life* Units. Help leaders fully understand the importance of the Unit Budget Plan, No. 28-426. Any unit that conducts fund-raisers should be 100 percent *Boys' Life*.
- (3) **Roundtables:** Have your roundtable show a current copy of *Boys' Life* and share: "*Boys' Life* is good reading and good Scouting. Every home in the unit should get *Boys' Life*. You never know when a Scout will read an article in *Boys' Life* that will make a difference in his life forever." Be sure to review the *Boys' Life* "Helper" page in each issue of *Scouting* magazine; it is a direct link to advancement.
- (4) **Unit Visitation:** When visiting a unit, always have your current copies of *Boys' Life* and *Scouting* magazines. *Boys' Life* stories make good conversation starters. Your personal example will motivate others to read *Boys' Life*.
- (5) **Commissioner Meetings:** Keep track of and encourage 100% *Boys' Life* Units. Encourage all commissioners to earn the annual *Boys' Life* Commissioner Award.
- (6) **Scout Shows:** Set up a *Boys' Life* display. Give nonsubscribers a chance to sign up.

Boys' Life helps commissioners fulfill their mission of service to nurture healthy units.



Webelos-to-Scout Transition



The Unit Commissioner

The unit commissioner is the connecting link in the chain between the troop and the pack. Often, the same unit commissioner will serve both units in the same community.

- 1 Be a catalyst in developing good relationships between troop and pack leaders.
- 2 Promote communication by scheduling a meeting of key volunteers.
- 3 Help plan a Webelos den visit to a troop meeting and other joint activities.
- 4 Keep the pack and troop on schedule as plans develop for the crossover ceremony at the blue and gold banquet.
- 5 Attend the crossover ceremony.
- 6 Be sure new Scouts have completed a Boy Scout application, they have a copy of the troop's activities, and they know when and where the troop meets.
- 7 Work with the pack and troop in their charter renewal process to help ensure Webelos Scouts are moved from pack rosters to troop rosters.
- 8 Work with the Webelos transition chair to follow up on those who have not yet joined a troop. Make sure they are invited to join a troop.



The Outcome

By planning and coordinating their efforts, the pack and troop can

- Help make the Webelos-to-Scout transition seamless.
- Give all Webelos Scouts a chance to experience the fun and excitement of Boy Scouting.



WHAT IS HAPPENING OF INTEREST . . .

- **National Parent Initiative** information goes LIVE on the national Web site www.scouting.org by the first of 2007. You will be able to access ideas and a choice of resources to use with your units in assisting them in securing more adult volunteers—help for the units and the districts: (1) a PowerPoint presentation explaining the program and (2) an Excel worksheet of specific tasks for units to share with their parents and chartered organization members on how to get involved in support of their unit. We will be adding ideas from councils, districts, and units that have tried and proven methods to involve parents and adult mentors with their units. If you have any ideas to share, send them to the address or e-mail on the back page of this newsletter.
- **Five VHS videos on commissioner and district operation training** have been converted to **ONE DVD**. You can purchase a copy through the National Distribution Center beginning December 15, 2006. It incorporates the following videos: (1) Highlights of District Operations (Part 1, How Districts Operate; and Part 2, Recruiting District Volunteers); (2) Unit Commissioner's Orientation; (3) Unit Problem Solving for Commissioners; (4) The District Nominating Committee; and (5) District Key 3 Orientation.
- **New Leader Essentials training** is being developed for online use. It is a project to be completed during 2007.
- **Council Executive Board Orientation Workshop** is planned for release in May 2007. It will consist of 18 modules supported by a DVD presentation, interactive sessions, and a workbook with tools to support council operations. It will provide an orientation for new and existing board members, as well as council committees.
- **Scouting for Youth With Disabilities manual** will be released in May 2007 and will combine the current five manuals in support of different disabilities. It will be loose-leaf to allow you to add additional resources. It will provide tools for councils, districts, and units to use in developing a local committee, how to integrate and work with youth with disabilities in units, and other resources to help serve the youth and their families' needs.

Commissioner Registration—Primary or Multiple

Annually, units recharter during an assigned month. It is the same for council and district Scouters. Each council selects the month when their volunteers will renew for the new year, usually December or January.

Some are already registered primary with their child's unit as a committee member or other adult position. You might ask,

“Where do I register my primary registration—with the unit or the district?”

As a primary registered commissioner, you receive the program helps for leaders in your issue of *Scouting* magazine, which helps you in providing support to your assigned units. If you register as a multiple as a commissioner and primary in a unit, you will only receive the magazine for that position. Either way, your tenure counts for both positions, and you are included in the count for your council's report with the National Council.

An Idea Worth Repeating . . .

(From Steve Derr of the Cochise District of the Catalina Council from a military newspaper in Fort Huachuca, Arizona)

“Soldiers and Scouts hone outdoor skills” was the title of the article, which shared details of how soldiers from the Military Intelligence Officer Basic Course (Company C, 304th Military Intelligence Battalion) volunteered time and service to help local Scouts at a recent fall camporee. They are expected to perform 100 hours of community service before graduation. They were not required to do the service, but many heard about the opportunity and jumped at the chance.

Their allegiance was fostered by their past Scouting experience. One soldier stated, “I want to give back to the program that gave me so much. The leadership and life skills I acquired while in Scouting have enabled me to start life 10 steps ahead of everyone else in every aspect of my life.”

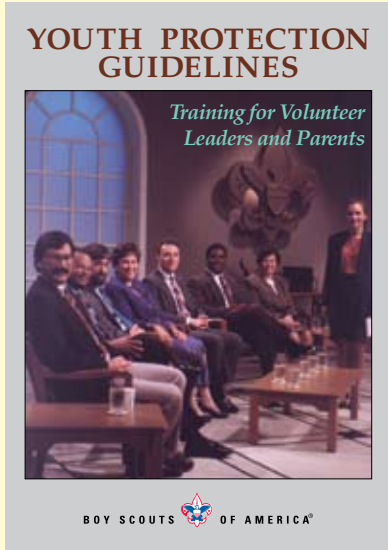
You might want to check into your local military bases, recruiters, local high school ROTC units, and local military units to see how they can possibly provide some volunteer hours to help your council and district.



Annual Unit Service Plan Actions for Winter 2007

Key actions supported by commissioners in providing a quality program in every unit:

WINTER SUPPORT. Conduct monthly unit visits, ensuring all units continue to provide quality programming. Continue to encourage all volunteers, especially the direct contact leaders, to attend training, including Fast Start, Youth Protection, and basic leader training.



NOVEMBER 15, 2006–FEBRUARY 15, 2007— New Centennial Quality Award Commitment. Commissioners work with their assigned units to complete the commitment form for the award and turn the signed copy in to their district executive.

JANUARY—Unit Health Reviews. As part of the membership validation procedures, the commissioner and the district executive meet to discuss all units. Each unit is assigned a unit health status related to its being a Quality Unit in the past. They will discuss the action plan that was developed to assist the unit in earning the Centennial Quality Unit Award for 2007 and how the district can support the unit.

2007 Centennial Quality Unit Award Commitment

"To improve the QUALITY of program in every unit in America!"

Unit Type _____ Unit Number _____
Chartered Organization _____

We, the youth and leaders, are committed to achieving the requirements for the 2007 Centennial Quality Award:

- We will have _____ percent of our direct contact leaders complete Basic Leader Training for their position, including Youth Protection Training.
_____ Last year's percent _____ This year's percent
- As one of the committed units in our district, our goal is to retain _____ percent of our members, recruit _____ new youth, and recharter on time.
_____ percent retained, _____ number new youth, and _____ rechartered on time
- As a participating unit in the national parent initiative, we commit to recruit _____ new adults to be active. _____ Actual number of new adults
- We had a minimum of 60 percent of our youth members advance in rank for Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting or earn Venturing recognition awards, or we improved by 10 percent over last year.
Percent advanced/earned _____ last year and _____ this year
- At least 70 percent of our youth members had an outdoor experience or one activity per month, or improve the percentage over last year.
_____ percent last year _____ percent this year
- We will conduct annual program planning and will provide the financial resources to deliver a quality program to our members.
_____ Yes _____ No

In support of a quality program experience, we confirm:

- We received _____ visits from our unit commissioner this past year.
- We supported the council by participating in Friends of Scouting and the annual product sale.
_____ Yes _____ No

Qualified for 2007: _____ Yes _____ No (Unit may qualify for the Centennial Quality Unit Award after October 31 in 2007.)

Reviewed and accepted by:

Unit leader Unit commissioner District executive

Unit Commissioner Box Score

As of October 31, 2006

| Region | Number of Units* This Year | Unit Commissioners Needed | Unit Commissioners Registered | Need to Recruit | Percent of Need Filled Last Year/This Year | Unit/Commissioner Ratio Last Year/This Year |
|-----------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| Northeast | 18,577 | 6,194 | 3,601 | 2,593 | 59.1%/58.1% | 5.1/5.2 |
| Southern | 28,905 | 9,637 | 5,359 | 4,278 | 53.9%/55.6% | 5.6/5.4 |
| Central | 25,681 | 8,565 | 5,645 | 2,920 | 68.7%/65.9% | 4.4/4.5 |
| Western | 43,297 | 14,434 | 7,661 | 6,773 | 54.2%/53.1% | 5.5/5.7 |
| National | 116,460 | 38,830 | 22,266 | 16,594 | 58.1%/57.3% | 5.2/5.2 |

* Does not include Explorer posts or Learning for Life groups

2007 Calendar Dates of Interest

May 30–June 1, 2007

National Annual Meeting; Hyatt Regency; Atlanta, Georgia—Plan on attending the commissioner elective!

June 24–30, July 29–August 4, and August 5–11, 2007

Commissioner Staff, District Operations, and Key 3 Conferences at Philmont Training Center are offered. (A new course has been added in 2007: Advanced Commissioner Service. Make your plans to attend! Make it a family vacation; bring a group from your council or district.)

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