

Staging Recognition Meetings



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RECOGNITION MEETINGS

What Is a Scouter Recognition Meeting?

A recognition meeting is a planned opportunity to present a message of thanks for efforts and service. It is an opportunity to show that it is important to be in Scouting—and fun, too. In short, a recognition meeting should “. . . create and maintain conditions so that boys intensely desire to belong, and adults of character desire to give leadership.”

The responsibility for planning, promoting, and conducting a recognition dinner will vary according to your council or district organization. It may be the responsibility of the activities and civic service committee or an ad hoc committee established just for the purpose.

Following are some results of a good meeting:

- Scouters, particularly unit leaders, are happier when they have a feeling of support. At a recognition meeting they can see that others are interested.
- Chartered organization heads become impressed and informed. Their fuller cooperation is gained through understanding.
- Leading citizens, invited as guests, become enthusiastic about Scouting and lend support.
- After seeing the program of the evening, participants return home with a clearer appreciation of Scouting, the uniform, *Boys' Life*, what a district is, the “why” of a local council, and many other things that contribute to greater understanding of Scouting and how it can affect the lives of boys.
- A properly publicized meeting will gain community goodwill, understanding, and financial support.

You Can't Beat Food

Two types of recognition dinners are the catered dinner and the potluck dinner. Their purposes, program content, and order of business could be identical, but the planning and the results are greatly different. The potluck dinner provides an opportunity to recognize more people.

Catered Dinner

A catered, banquet-style buffet or served dinner is one in which all the food is provided, and is covered in the cost of the dinner reservation ticket. It may be held in a hotel banquet room, school cafeteria, or church where auxiliaries or other groups can serve dinner. Or a commercial caterer can provide service any place where tables and chairs can be set up.

Potluck Dinner

A potluck dinner involves many more people in every step of preparation, and requires a great deal more advance planning. However, the greater time requirement of the meal is more than offset by an increased total attendance, a larger representation from each unit, and an informal atmosphere that lends itself to the purpose of fellowship and that “at home” feeling.

A complete description of the potluck dinner can be found later under “Potluck Dinner.”

HOW TO HAVE AN OUTSTANDING RECOGNITION MEETING

A Plan for Organization

The purposes of a recognition meeting are to change attitudes and to motivate people to further or continued action. These purposes can best be met when the meeting has been planned carefully. Recognition meetings are logically the job of the activities committee, if the council and district are so organized but under certain circumstances the council president or the district chairman may need to appoint a special committee. While volunteers can carry much of the load, the primary responsibility for a successful meeting *must* lie with the professional staff.

The designated committee, planning well in advance, should be sure that a specific date for the recognition dinner is included in the council calendar.

Selecting the Place

The success of the dinner depends to a large degree on the kind of facilities available. In selecting a meeting place, thought should be given to such details as:

- A convenient, central location with ample parking space.
- “Neutral territory” that is acceptable to all religious faiths.
- Rental charge—can it be included in the ticket price or underwritten by a “friend of Scouting,” or can the council budget subsidize it?
- A room size that fits the anticipated audience.
- Physical facilities—will the room be adequately heated or ventilated by the time the people arrive? Is there a checkroom or can coats be left in a schoolroom or on extra tables provided along the walls? Will there be adequate and marked toilet facilities? Is smoking permitted? Is there adequate lighting?
- Is there a stage? Will it be adequate for the speakers and the planned ceremonies? If there is no stage, is a podium available? Is the lighting adequate, and can it be adjusted so that the speakers can be seen easily by all?
- Will a lectern or even a music stand be available for speakers’ notes? Will there be a suitable place for a pitcher of water and a glass for the speakers?

- Is there a built-in PA system? Will it be necessary to rent one? Who will operate it? Are the acoustics and size of the room such that a PA system may not be necessary?
- Are kitchen facilities convenient and adequate?
- Is the room or hall appropriate for the use of audiovisuals?
- Does the organization have an adequate supply of tables and chairs? If so, will there be an extra charge for setting up and storing away? If not available, where can they be secured? Will they be delivered?
- How early on the day of the meeting can the room be set up? By what time must it be restored to its original condition, and by whom?
- When should the reservation for the facilities be made? Is a deposit required? (In some areas, for large or often-used facilities, a year in advance is not unusual.)

Build a Work Schedule

Recognition meetings require careful scheduling of the preparation work to be done. Deadlines must be established. Avoid conflict with existing dates of other major projects and events. Assign each item on the work schedule to an individual. Reproduce the work schedule and distribute it to those involved as a reminder of their obligations.

The work schedule in figure 1 suggests tasks necessary to prepare adequately for the recognition meeting. To the right of each task is the approximate time before the meeting by which the task should be completed. Adapt the work schedule in figure 1 to your plans, and then the chairman can follow up to see that each task is completed on time, or make adjustments to the schedule when necessary.

Date and location should be established nearly a year in advance to ensure the council’s obtaining the best possible location and to set the date in all calendars of council events.

Develop Job Specifications

The recognition meeting committee structure is a simple one (see figure 2). However, since many things will happen

WORK SCHEDULE

Scouters' Recognition Dinner

Steps	Date Due Months	Assigned To
Establish date and reserve location.	-10	_____
Council president or related officer appoints dinner general chairman—job specs written up for dinner committee—work schedule developed with staff "ramrod."	-5	_____
Chairman recruits committee that may include Scouters and non-Scouters, men and women, and youth members.	-4½	_____
Budget developed.	-4	_____
Executive staff member assigned as adviser to each dinner subcommittee.	-4	_____
Committee meets to confirm date, time, place, and present budget, and to set price on individual tickets or table reservations.	-3½	_____
Tentative dinner program developed.	-3½	_____
Budget approved by council finance committee.	-3	_____
All dinner subcommittees recruited.	-3	_____
Contract with caterer.	-3	_____
Speaker or feature confirmed. (Popular speakers and prominent master of ceremonies [MC] should be lined up a year in advance.)	-2½	_____
Tickets to printer.	-2½	_____
Physical facilities arranged for tables, chairs, stage, PA system, stage lights, first aid, parking, printed program, etc.	-2	_____
Special awards and recipients determined—citations written.	-2	_____
Promotion letter or bulletin with reply ticket order mailed—article in council news bulletin.	-2	_____

NOTE: This same basic schedule can be adapted to district dinners.

More . . .

Figure 1.

Steps	Date Due Months	Assigned To
Develop ceremonies, recognitions, etc.	-2	_____
Order special awards, statuettes, plaques, etc.	-1½	_____
Follow up promotion letter with personal contacts to those units not ordering dinner tickets.	-1½	_____
Special citations to printer.	-1	_____
Follow-up story in council news bulletin.	-1	_____
Memo to executive board regarding their duties at dinner.	-1	_____
Invite special guests by mail.	-1	_____
	Days	
Program to printer.	-14	_____
Review dinner program agenda or outline with presiding officer or MC.	-14	_____
Start intensified publicity of the event with feature photograph of speaker (if using one).	-10	_____
Write detailed script and review with presiding officer or MC.	-8	_____
"Ramrod" meets with executive staff to firm up all details.	-5	_____
Order flowers for head table—special corsages or bouquets.	-3	_____
Ceremony rehearsals.	-2	_____
Attendance figures confirmed with caterer (if any).	-1	_____
Decorations up.	-1	_____
Programs delivered to hall.	-1	_____
Stage set for ceremonies.	-1	_____

More . . .

Figure 1.

Steps	Date Due Days	Assigned To
Visual equipment (if any) preset and tested.	-1	_____
Dress rehearsal of ceremonies completed—crew and performers standing by.	0	_____
PA system tested (mikes live, sound level adjusted, etc.).	0	_____
Recording unit (tape or records) working and manned.	0	_____
Script checked with presiding officer or MC.	0	_____
Copy of presiding officer's or MC's script available.	0	_____
All awards in place.	0	_____
Awards checked with presenter.	0	_____
Copy of award recipient list, citations, etc., available.	0	_____
News media called and handouts ready. Photographer ready.	0	_____
General greeters arrived and in position.	0	_____
Special-guest greeters arrived and in position.	0	_____
Invoker and speaker or feature escort arrived and in position.	0	_____
Programs distributed to tables.	0	_____
Place cards set at head table.	0	_____
Cloakroom (if any is required) opened and manned.	0	_____
Traffic and parking arrangements set.	0	_____
Thank-you letters mailed.	+1	_____
Critique for next year on dinner—recommendations.	+5	_____

Figure 1.

RECOGNITION DINNER

Organization Chart

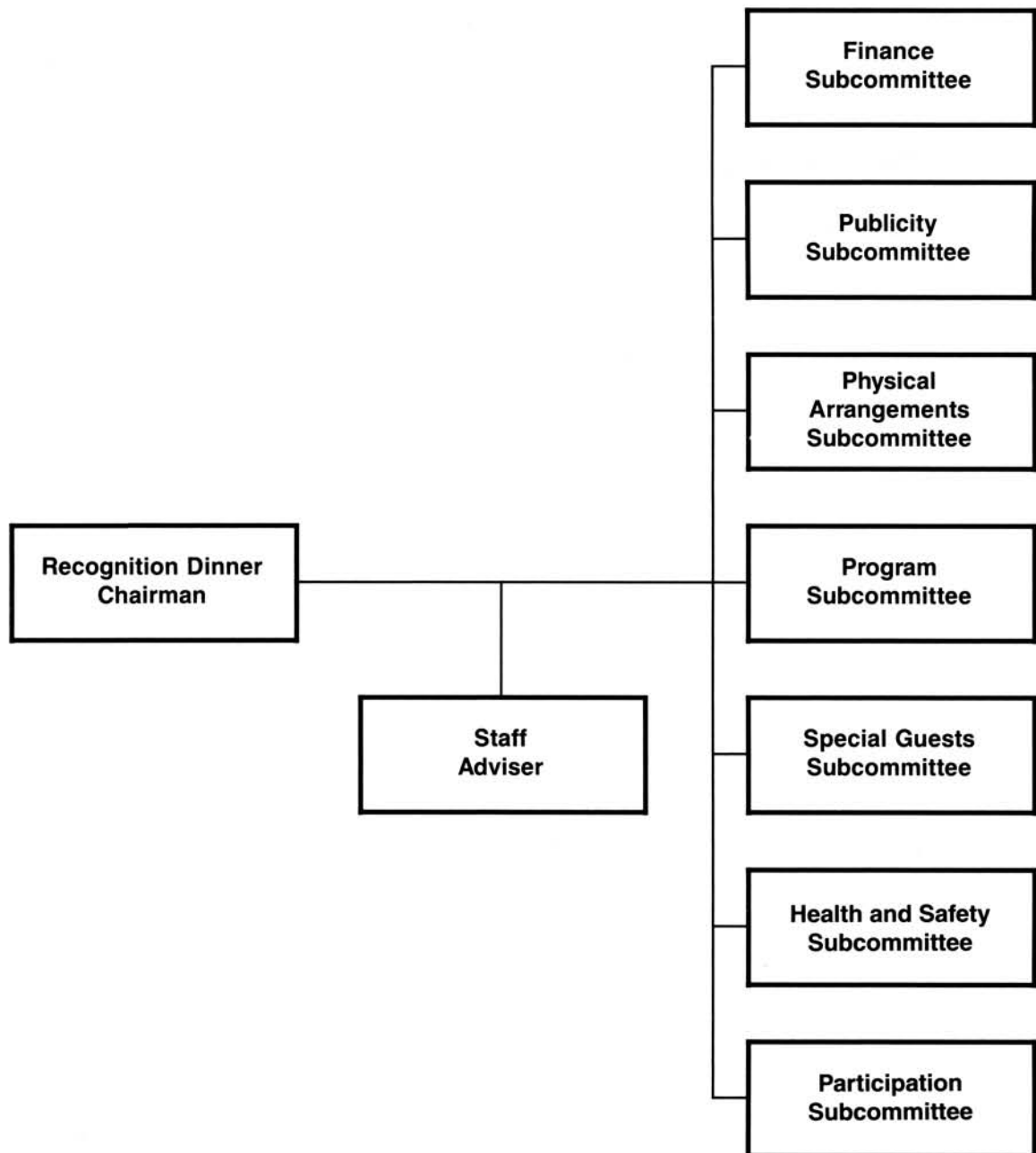


Figure 2.

at the same time, the members must understand their responsibilities thoroughly. Prepare descriptions of responsibility for all committee members. The sample descriptions of responsibility below can be adapted to your committee structure and needs.

The Recognition Dinner Committee

This committee, shown in figure 2, is composed of a chairman; a staff adviser; and the subcommittee chairmen for finance, publicity, physical arrangements, program, special guests, health safety, and participation. This group is an executive or steering committee. They will select subcommittee members to put the plan into action.

No later than five months before the recognition meeting, the council president or district chairman appoints the dinner chairman, who should be a community leader capable of recruiting top flight people. The chairman may or may not be a Scouter, but must have an appreciation of the value of Scouting and the purpose of the recognition meeting.

At an early date, the recognition dinner chairman and the staff adviser select and recruit the chairmen to head the various subcommittees. The earlier they are contacted, the better the chance of their accepting the assignment and doing a good job.

Recognition Dinner Chairman

The recognition dinner chairman, working closely with the staff adviser, has these responsibilities:

- Select and recruit the best people for committee members (subcommittee chairmen).
- Preside at all steering committee meetings.
- Follow up with each committee member to see that items on the work schedule are completed.
- Coordinate operations at the dinner.
- Send thank-you letters to key participants.

The subcommittees have the responsibilities described below.

Finance Subcommittee

- Prepare dinner budget.
- Secure agreement of dinner committee and approval of finance committee on the price of tickets or table reservations.
- Obtain tax permit or tax exemption certificate, where needed.

- Have tickets printed.
- Arrange for sale of tickets.
- Arrange for collection of tickets at the dinner.
- Work with council finance committee to “project sell” portions of the budget.
- Prepare final audit of recognition dinner expenditures and income.

Publicity Subcommittee

- Develop a plan for advance publicity through major publicity media.
- Give press announcements of dinner, committee, program, etc.
- Give advance story to press, radio, and TV of dinner program, personalities, etc.
- Provide for press coverage at dinner.
- Prepare handouts for press representatives who cover the dinner.

Physical Arrangements Subcommittee

- Develop floor plan for dinner—locate stage, lectern, tables, etc.
- Check facilities for guests—arrangements are made for special guests to be greeted and seated upon their arrival.
- Organize a service crew to distribute programs, place table numbers, and perform miscellaneous duties. Order of the Arrow members or Venturers might be appropriate for the service crew.
- Set up tables and chairs according to the floor plan.
- Put up decorations.
- Make arrangements for parking.
- Make arrangements for dismantling the hall after the dinner. If this task is not done by a paid group, professionals and volunteers will have to do it.
- Provide technical staging support for the program subcommittee.

Program Subcommittee

- Determine the theme and basic pattern for the meeting.
- Develop a meeting agenda built around a reasonable time schedule—a one- to one and a half-hour program.
- Arrange for printing of programs.

- Recruit a master of ceremonies.
- Prepare the ceremonies for the meeting.
- Secure a song leader, organist, speaker, etc.
- Arrange for scripting the program.
- Arrange, in liaison with the physical arrangements subcommittee, for technical staging support; i.e., spotlight(s) and operator(s), sound reproduction equipment and materials, PA system, special lighting, etc.
- Arrange for recognitions—personnel, awards, ceremony, etc.

Special Guests Subcommittee

- Develop a special guest list—community opinion leaders, United Way leaders, Friends of Scouting supporters, etc.
- Send invitations to those on the list.
- Follow up mailed invitations with phone calls or personal contacts.
- Arrange for reception of the special guests at the dinner.

Health and Safety Subcommittee

- Exercise any precautions necessary to protect the safety and welfare of all participants.
- Check with the local fire department or other regulatory authority on fire regulations.
- Arrange for well-marked lavatories.
- Make recommendations concerning the health and safety factors of any aspect of the meeting.
- Post “No Smoking” signs, if needed.
- Publicize the location of fire extinguishers, fire boxes, exits, etc.
- Arrange well in advance with police for parking and any necessary outside traffic control both before and after the event.

Participation Subcommittee

- Develop written promotional materials—council bulletin notices and letters of invitation to all Scouters.
- Follow up with additional information.
- Review signup list of all units.
- Contact by phone or personal visit those not signed up and “sell” them on sending Scouter representatives.
- Enlist commissioner staff support in promoting the dinner.

The Program

Some folks will attend any meeting. Many will come to a Scout gathering because of the thrill in a crowd and the friendly atmosphere. Some may come reluctantly—but most of these people will come a second time if they know they’ll have a well-organized, thrilling program, full of inspiration, based on their first experience.

Two factors that can make or break any recognition program are:

1. The person who presides at the meeting.
2. The program that is planned (see figure 3 for a sample program).

The chairman or master of ceremonies for the evening must be the best person available. It does not necessarily follow that because a certain person is council president or district chairman, he or she must conduct the meeting. The one chosen to preside should have the ability to be pleasant, gracious, and businesslike, and have a good sense of timing. The planning of the program is equally important. It should be built around a time schedule, and the master of ceremonies, within certain limits, should adhere to the schedule. Audiences do not appreciate a program that drags on and on. “Always leave them wanting more.”

Even though the presiding chairman may have participated in planning the program and is thoroughly experienced with all its aspects, a detailed agenda and cue sheet should be developed that provides information about each element, including the time allocated. It goes without saying that the council president, district chairman, or executive staff member should thoroughly discuss the agenda with the master of ceremonies in advance. Under no circumstances should the program be left to chance. The same is true for all participants. Someone responsible should review their parts with them. They all must understand what they are to do and how much time they are allotted. If there is any question about the ability of a person to correctly say what must be said, his speaking part should be written for him.

By no means is there any one program pattern that must be followed. Variety is desirable. However, certain elements should be given consideration each time because of what they can contribute to the recognition dinner. Paramount among these elements is inspiration—the “lift” or stimulation the audience should take home. This can often be provided by opening and closing ceremonies and through simple recognitions and expressions of appreciation to such individuals or groups as special guests, unit leaders, commissioners, chartered organizations, district officers, or individual organizations that may have helped Scouting. One caution—make sure those who are to be recognized are present. Nothing falls flatter than a tribute paid to someone who is absent. Someone must have the responsibility of checking who is or is not at the dinner.

Youth Interviews

Try interviewing a few youth members on stage at your next dinner and get a variety of laughs and inspiration that you can't get any other way. Scouting people like to see the results of their hard work. In interviews, the young people can be made to come alive before the audience—to show up as interesting, real people. The secret—the right interviewer and a few of the right young people (no more than five).

Select some prospects for such a list as this:

- A Scout who went to camp last summer
- The council's 5,000th (or some number) Cub Scout
- A Lifesaving Award winner
- The Order of the Arrow lodge chief
- A recent Eagle Scout
- A Boy Scout or Venturer who attended a national jamboree or other national event
- The newest Webelos Scout

Meet your prospects, and select a few who can converse interestingly. Then, find a person who can interview effectively in front of an audience—a radio personality, a skilled teacher, or a reporter, for instance. Provide time on the day of the dinner for the interviewer to meet each young person informally, to chat at length, and to find the right questions to ask.

Many councils select youth members who are good communicators, as well as outstanding Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, or Venturers to be included in the program as narrators, presenters, or speakers—or even as the master of ceremonies.

The Pageant

Do you have a new theme or program to introduce or a story to tell? The pageant technique is used less often, but when well used is one of the most effective ways to inform an audience. It is a combination of informative narration woven around simple, live action on stage. Proper lighting,

SAMPLE RECOGNITION DINNER PROGRAM

6:45	Predinner Program	Live or recorded music. Continuous slide program in outer lobby.
7:00	Opening Ceremony	Set the tone for the evening.
7:03	Invocation	Clergyman or youth member who has earned religious medal.
7:05	Dinner	Dinner music (live or taped) could be considered.
7:50	Welcome	Welcome and introduction of MC by council president, district chairman, or dinner chairman.
7:53	Remarks	MC sets stage for the program to follow.
7:55	Introductions	Introduces officers, special guests, and others who will not have a part in the program.
8:00	Recognitions	Special recognitions of key Scouters (ask to stand in audience). Call attention to those recognized in printed program.
8:05	Group Singing	Or some "seventh-inning-stretch" type of stunt as a change of pace.
8:10	Reports	Highlights by president, chairman and/or executive. Possible slide support.
8:15	Installation	Council or district officers installed in impressive ceremony. Brief remarks by new president or district chairman.
8:20	Special Feature	Guest speaker or entertainment. If both are programmed, adhere to time schedule.
8:40	Awards	Silver Beaver, Award of Merit, or similar awards.
8:55	Benediction	(Optional) Clergyman or youth member.
8:57	Closing Ceremony	Wrap up the program with inspiration.
9:00	Good Night!	

Everything must be scripted.

Figure 3.

simple props, a good narrator, and well-chosen musical backgrounds can involve your audience in the events, and a stage full of Scouts provides color and atmosphere and an audience link that nothing else can duplicate.

A note of caution: Unless well staged, a pageant could easily cause a negative reaction. Make certain that adequate rehearsals are held. It is recommended that the pageant be not more than seven minutes in duration and, like other parts of the meeting, be scripted to avoid running overtime.

Promotional Methods

The annual recognition dinner is an important morale-building function. Because it is, every effort should be made to ensure good attendance. So, who should you invite?

In general, invite all registered Scouters, their personal guests, and selected special guests—but no children. Recognition meetings are adult affairs. Only boys recruited for a service detail, ceremony, or dramatization should be present.

Since this function often pays tribute to unit leaders, direct promotion to the chartered organization representative or the unit chairman, suggesting that the unit leader and spouse be honored as the guest of the chartered organization, the parents, or the unit committee. If the recognition dinner is one at which awards will be made that range from unit roundup and program awards through training keys or Silver Beaver awards, the Scouting public in all its classifications should be invited.

Effective Methods of Promotion

Perhaps two of the most important keys to promotion are in the hands of the participation (sometimes called promotion or attendance) subcommittee and the publicity subcommittee.

External General Publicity

- A general story from the publicity subcommittee to all newspapers in the council area. Release successive stories to community papers with more details to heighten interest and encourage maximum attendance.
- Local newspaper and radio/TV spot announcements or interviews provided by the publicity subcommittee. (See figure 1 for specific timing.)

Internal Communications

The participation subcommittee handles internal communication. Its job is very important, and involves the following methods (see figure 1 for specific timing):

- Person to person—the subcommittee makes contact by personal visit, telephone, or personal letter with all Scout units to help them fully understand the program of the recognition meeting. The subcommittee (one member for every five units) keeps units informed of current activities available and assists them in making plans to participate. If the recognition meeting is to be a potluck dinner, recruit a hospitality promotion subcommittee. (See the information on potluck dinners in the back of the booklet.)
- Publish an announcement of the dinner, its purpose, and its date well in advance in the council bulletin with follow-up details in next month's bulletin.
- The promotion chairman keeps the commissioner staff alerted to the status of their units signing up for the dinner and encourages their assistance in stimulating attendance through normal unit visits.
- Mail a special invitation, along with announcements or reminders, directly to unit Scouters in addition to scheduling in the council calendar and announcements in the council bulletin. Include the cost of the mailing in the dinner budget if funds are not allotted in the council budget. Time the releases so that unit people have all necessary information with which to plan at their monthly committee meetings.

Letters can be written to:

- Chartered organization representatives. Explain plans and purpose. Suggest that organizations honor the unit leader and spouse. Encourage them to bring the organization head and spouse, unit committee and spouses, den leaders, and assistants.
- Organization heads. Explain the meeting plans and purpose, and include a copy of the letter written to the chartered organization representative.
- Chairmen of unit committees. Explain the meeting plans and purpose. Include copies of letters written to the chartered organization representative and organization head.
- Unit leaders. Make provisions to invite den leaders and assistant unit leaders. (They should never be omitted.) Encourage each unit to form a group and attend.
- Commissioner staff. Include copies of all letters sent to unit personnel. Encourage the commissioner staff to meet, welcome, and usher their people to the proper tables, and to handle any inconvenience or problem that arises with them.

Items Affecting Attendance

The dinner fee and the method of handling reservations can affect attendance at the dinner. The participation

subcommittee should give careful thought to both to achieve maximum participation.

Fees

Establish a fee as low as possible to encourage the largest attendance and still make the dinner self-supporting. Factors such as the following will govern the size of the fee:

- Are there rental charges for the facility, tables, chairs, and PA system, or fees for custodial or other services?
- If you are having a potluck dinner, will the dinner committee provide paper tablecloths, napkins, sugar and cream, and coffee?
- Will expenses for decorations, ceremonies, speakers, promotion, or printing have to be included in the fee?
- What about the cost of special touches to dress up the meeting—flowers for the head table, special awards to be presented, and so on?
- How much will staging support items (lights, stage platform, audiovisuals, etc.) cost?

Reservations

Key the following items to the work schedule:

- A plan for receiving reservations by units rather than by individuals or couples—except for the special guests to be invited.
- Provisions to accommodate late registrants on a waiting list after seating capacity of the meeting room is

reached. Those on a standby list who cannot be accommodated should be so advised.

- A postcard form to acknowledge acceptance of the reservations or to inform the applicants of the necessity of placing them on a waiting list. Send such notices promptly.
- Refunds—if units cancel in time to be replaced by others, refunds should be made. However, if cancellations come too late or if units fail to show up, refunds should be made only if expenses can be met. Establish and announce a deadline beyond which refunds cannot be made.
- Any announcement or invitation must state clearly the services that the fee covers. This is especially true in the case of potluck dinners, for example:
 - Will the tables be rectangular or round? What is each table's capacity (six, eight, or 10 persons)?
 - Will the tables be covered and will paper napkins be furnished?
 - Will the fee cover coffee, cream, and sugar?
 - Will garbage cans be available?
 - Will signs identifying the unit by number or name of sponsor be provided? If not, should a size limit be placed on those provided by the unit?

Ground Rules

A single-page "Ground Rules" information sheet should be provided for units at the time council and district program calendars are distributed to all key Scouters. See figure 4.

SCOUTERS' RECOGNITION DINNER "GROUND RULES" INFORMATION SHEET

WHAT IS THE SCOUTERS' RECOGNITION DINNER?

This dinner is held annually during Scout Anniversary Week. All adult Scouters and their spouses are invited. The program will be both entertaining and inspirational. All unit leaders will be recognized, especially those who have earned training awards and veteran ranks. A highlight of the evening will be the presentation of the Silver Beaver Award to leaders for outstanding service to youth.

DINNER RESERVATIONS

The dinner is held potluck style; therefore, tables are reserved for units. Each table seats 10 persons or five couples. Each couple at a table brings a different item of food in sufficient quantity for 10 people so that a well-balanced meal is the result.

A nominal fee is charged for each table to defray the costs of hall rental, tables and chairs, decorations, and program items.

PROMOTION SCHEDULE

December—Promotion letter and reply ticket order mailed to all units.

January—Target date for table reservations.

February—Scout Anniversary Week—Scouters' Recognition Dinner.

We hope that you will put this in your program plans for February. It will be a great evening. See you there!

Figure 4.

EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES

Atmosphere and Environment

The right atmosphere and environment will help you attain your meeting objectives. Attention to detail here may well make the difference between an average and an outstanding event.

Theme

An appropriate large display or decoration in the lobby or entrance to the hall and at the head table or stage can quickly establish the theme or motif of the meeting. Large hanging mobiles, Scouting banners mounted on cloth, oversized photographs, large signs identifying the council or district, and replicas of Scout emblems make good central motifs. A motif can be made even more effective by repeating it throughout the hall. These motifs are usually small reproductions of the original. You can also use the motif on invitations, tickets, printed programs, letters, and menus.

Decorations

Table decorations of many varieties add warmth to both the room and the program. Be careful, however, to caution units that table decorations should not be so tall or elaborate that they interfere with the diners' view of others. If you plan a table decoration contest, remember that people are human—there might be some grumbling about the judges' decisions.

Decoration, though, can be more than table decorations. The following suggestions should stimulate the imagination of the committee in charge.

- Flags—American and unit.
- Unit displays—Cub Scout themecraft; a camping display; photos of summer activities; mannequins dressed in correct uniform; a display promoting a forthcoming camporee, trip to Philmont, jamboree, Scoutorama, training activity, etc.
- Charts showing district progress in advancement, membership, camping, and Friends of Scouting can be informative. It is a good idea to have a fully informed Scouter on hand to interpret the information depicted on the charts.
- Poster pictures of badges of rank; recruiting posters; slogans of the movement; Scouting banners mounted on cloth (available from the Supply Division); Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing posters; etc.
- Printed programs at each setting add color and lend a personal touch. (Additional information on this subject follows.)

The Printed Program

Certainly the printed program will include the agenda of the evening. It might also acknowledge the dinner committee. Given enough space, it may include one or more of the following items: incoming and outgoing officers, recognition of veteran Scouters, names of those who have earned recognition in training, an explanation of the need for financial support, a recruiting plan, songs for the evening, highlights of the year ahead, or a roster of chartered organizations.

A printed program should be attractive, inviting, concise, and artistically laid out. Secure the help of experts, if possible, in writing copy and designing the printed piece. Local printers can often be very helpful. Don't overlook the variety of colorful Scouting—subject program covers available from the Supply Division.

No matter how well the printed piece is conceived, all is lost if it is not well produced. If it is to be printed by mimeograph or the offset process, be sure stencils or duplicators are well prepared: Watch for stencils that are poorly cut, and don't plan to print on both sides of thin paper. Conservation on paper cost is a poor saving if print shows through.

Recognitions

Any planning for annual recognition gatherings should include a discussion on the values of presentations, for there are two broad and basic purposes of such recognitions.

One is to provide recognition and appreciation for Scouting assignments well carried out. The other is to inspire the audience through a “moving” theme or an interpretation of the purposes of Scouting.

Scouting thrives on the volunteer principle. The individual who serves faithfully is particularly deserving of recognition. Any presentation involving appreciation must be planned—not simply thrown together. Recognition loses its worth when it is either overdone or given too lightly. Certainly, the element of dignity must be present.

A few moments of recollection about the nature of each Scouter being honored will pay big dividends in the effectiveness of the recognition. An individual of real worth is not especially impressed by lavish praise. Ask yourself or someone who knows each Scouter well, “What are their feelings toward their own accomplishments?” Sometimes a citation or what is said may be of greater value than any material award. To some, a plaque, a statuette, or a gift of Scouting jewelry might be of greater value since the honoree can display it more easily than a citation. So, determine all you can about the volunteers to be honored, and select the method of recognition accordingly.

By all means, be sure the recipients will be present. Should they be told in advance, or will their modesty cause them to shy away from the publicity? If the recognition is to be a surprise, secure someone who can keep a secret to ensure that the recipients will be present. Unusual circumstances such as last-minute illness should be the only legitimate reason recognition would be given without the presence of the honored volunteers.

Consider the many individuals and groups for whom recognition may be valid. Listed below are a number of possibilities and a suggestion around which you might build a statement of appreciation.

Unit Leader	Virtually all other Scouters and all services of the council are occupied with the business of making them successful. The hopes of youth and Scouting’s effectiveness depend on them. They respond favorably when they learn that they are not alone.
Den Leaders	They hold an essential place in the Cub Scout program and are the medium through which the Cub Scout program reaches boys. We owe them encouragement and commendation.
Unit Committee Members	They have a responsibility, though frequently unspectacular, that is vital to the life of the unit and success of the unit leaders. Their will-to-do can be stimulated by thoughtful recognition.

Chartered Organization Representatives	They are members of the council and represent Scouting in their organizations. Their involvement in district operation can influence what happens for and to young people.
Heads of Chartered Organization	Scouting owes much of its effectiveness as a movement to the understanding support and goodwill of these individuals.
Commissioners	Their job is unit service and quality program. They back up the leader and extend the service and influence of the executive staff members. They are indispensable to Scouting’s method of operation.
Merit Badge Counselors	Often unsung, these people exert a life-changing influence on boys. Recognition of the merit badge counselor at an appropriate time is needed. The service these people provide is at the heart of the whole advancement program.
District and Council Scouters	These people are key leaders. The effectiveness of well-chosen leadership is felt down through the ranks. Appreciation must be sincere but not necessarily elaborate.

Still other individuals or groups may on occasion merit recognition: outstanding parents, a youth member who has performed some feat of heroism, an outstanding recruiter, a donor of dollars or materials, a person of unusual influence, those who have earned training recognitions, veteran Scouters, and nominees for the Silver Beaver Award. Others might be leaders or committee members of newly organized units, or a spouse whose understanding contributes so much to the effectiveness of a volunteer’s service. In every case it may be said, “They are needed and appreciated.” Therein lies the value of the sincere and properly planned “pat on the back.”

Ceremonies

A ceremony can set the tone of the meeting or provide a dramatic conclusion. It can provide the interpretation of some facet of Scouting. In any case, it should always provide inspiration and stimulation. Factors that must be taken into consideration in the preparation and staging of a dramatic ceremony to make it effective are:

- It should be short and simple.
- It should be in keeping with the principles and objectives of our movement.

- It should be so impressive that it will encourage others to learn more or to do more.
- Spoken parts should be in easy-to-understand language. The “action” should carry the ceremony with a minimum of narration.

Plan an opening ceremony that involves “our product”—youth members. This may be the only opportunity that some council and district Scouters will actually have to see young people in uniform—in action!

The Values of Ceremonies

Several specific values are derived from ceremonies. They can open a program, set the theme, or create the atmosphere for a meeting. They can be the closing of the program and summarize the meeting theme or simply send each participant away with a thought-provoking idea or message. A special event can also highlight the purpose of a program of emphasis.

A ceremony used in connection with an award needs to be dignified and simple. It supports the presentation and should never overshadow it, the presenter, or the recipient. It should set the stage, not steal the show.

Some ceremonies, significant to the purpose of the meeting, might include Charter Day celebrations or the celebration of a special holiday. A solemn ceremony paying last respects to an old American flag to be destroyed might fit into a Flag Day or Independence Day celebration. These ceremonies become major contributors to the program’s purpose and need to be carefully thought out and dramatically executed.

A ceremony can simply close a great meeting with a special touch that reaches into people’s hearts and minds and sends them home thinking about the importance of the movement and its inherent strengths. It can be the quiet moment that dramatizes some truth, the moment that makes each person attending stop and search inside for his own motive or contribution.

Audiovisual Support

The technical support for staging the recognition meeting is requested by the staging subcommittee, a subcommittee of the program subcommittee. You will need technical support for lighting, sound, music, and script for almost every Scouter recognition meeting. The staging subcommittee must be specific in requesting each type of support: stage, properties, visuals, intercom, stage sound, and lighting.

Stage

Before developing a ceremony, consider the space in which it will be presented. A stage or platform of some

sort is the most desirable so that observers seated past the first row or two can see. The size of the stage also limits the number of participants.

If there are no wings, portable screens, or curtains to the stage behind which actors can assemble and from which additional members can be added to the cast as the ceremony progresses, the script must be written so the performers can appear naturally from the audience and take positions on stage. The height, depth, and width of the stage dictate the size and quantity of stage properties, as well as the size of the cast.

Properties

Scenery and other properties need not be elaborate, expensive, nor even realistic. It is only necessary to create an impression in the mind of the observer. Some properties can be borrowed, and others may be created by high-school drama classes. A local artist or others can often be helpful, and many Scouters will lend a hand to build any necessary framework or scenery.

Visuals

Examine the room to determine positioning of projectors. Think first in terms of rear projection, since it eliminates much trouble “out front” where projectors and cords get in the way. Rear projection will make the ceremony much more impressive. Then, too, you can use it with “houselights on out front” and combine live action with the visuals.

Where you are cramped for projection space backstage, you may be able to use a mirror.

An excellent rear-projection screen can be made from white translucent polyethylene plastic sheeting such as the type used for packaging and in air mattresses. A thin cotton bed sheet will do almost as well. To get a brilliant picture, use a projector of at least 500 watts.

Careful rehearsal with audiovisual materials is essential, whether or not they are to be coordinated with live action. Such details as timing and smoothness of curtain operation, turning houselights on and off, and beginning the projected visual so that it is in focus and at the spot called for can make the difference between an impressive ceremony and an amateurish one.

Warning: Do not overuse projections—use them for impact.

Intercom

For large stage direction, use a headset telephone-intercom system. This is usually installed by the local telephone company. A good system is a six-station intercom

tying in the staging director with the PA system and house-lights operators, spotlight men, projectionist, and floor director. Walkie-talkies with earplugs can be used in conjunction with or in place of telephone intercoms. If these are not available, careful use of visual signals—hands, flashlight, or other—can be used effectively.

Sound System

- **Narrator**—A two-person team is better for ease of operation and insurance against a “no show” of one of them. Professional talents from TV or radio make excellent narrators. Amateur or college actors, toastmasters, MCs, etc., might also be used.
- **Sound cast**—This is a cast of concealed narrators providing the voices of actors supposedly speaking from the stage. Sound casts under controlled conditions are superior to mikes on stage. The professional or trained person mentioned above can implement this for you.
- **Recorded sound**—The use of recorded music and/or sound effects and having certain parts of the narration recorded is highly desirable. Such sound should be recorded under professional conditions.
- **Live stage sound**—This is sometimes called for when the performers can appear naturally before a microphone, such as in an opening ceremony, song leading, band concert, etc. Take care to have mikes “live” at the right time and “killed” when not in use.
- **Fidelity**—This depends upon the PA system used and acoustic design of the hall. Secure the best amplifying equipment you can.
- **Volume**—The volume level of the PA system requires constant attention by an operator. Assign sound monitors to various sections of the hall to relay reactions of sound volume to the show director, who in turn can direct the PA system operator to raise or lower sound levels.
- **Live or “canned?”**—Live music is preferred. (If using amateur musicians, check local union regulations.) It provides greater flexibility, for the music director can follow the meeting and synchronize the start and finish. Recorded or “canned” music can be extremely effective.
- **Breaks**—Fill-in music for breaks during narration can be handled by an organ, but an orchestra or recorded music can also be used if skillfully arranged.
- **Background**—Most recognition dinners rely on good background music to create a pleasant atmosphere during the meal. It can be a live orchestra, band, organ, or recording.
- **Concert**—This is a featured musical performance and, of course, must be live. It can be by an orchestra, band, combo, individual instrument, or vocal chorus and can

be used as a preopening to the dinner and/or as a short entertainment feature during the dinner program.

- **Exit music**—After the closing ceremony and when hall lights are up, peppy music can be used as the audience leaves. This can be live or recorded.

Lighting

Lighting effects must be arranged for the ceremony. Is the stage equipped with overhead lights or footlights, and can the houselights be controlled from switches backstage? The absence of elaborate lighting equipment need not be a serious deterrent. Many effective ceremonies have been staged by properly placing simple built-in reflector floodlights and spotlights, available from most hardware stores and electrical supply houses.

- **Various types**—Almost all dinner programs call for houselights and spotlights. Some require fixed spots. Others use floodlights, lilliputs, or other stationary illumination. More artistic pageantry might call for back-strip lighting, border and footlighting, shadowgraphs, or other special lighting effects.
- **Quantity**—The number of lights needed depends upon the size of the area to be illuminated and the distance from the light source to the stage action. Generally, two spotlights are used.
- **Safety**—Precautions must be taken in setting up and operating lights because of the heavy electrical current required. Lighting equipment areas should be off limits to everyone except the light crew.
- **Control**—Control must be absolute to create dramatic effects and cover any action errors that might occur. The staging director should have intercom or phone communications to the persons operating houselights, spotlights, and any special effects lights.

Mechanics of Staging

To make the necessary staging flow smoothly, the program subcommittee must:

- **Arrange stage traffic control**—establish entrances and exits, and supervise.
- **Develop a flow chart** to enable all to get to and from the staging areas without conflict.
- **Provide a stage crew.**
- **Set up an assembly area and a staging area** clearly marked with appropriate signs.
- **Locate these areas** to facilitate the flow of actors on and off the stage.

- Establish standby positions for actors.
- Mark positions on the stage where actors stand or sit. Wide masking tape marked with dark flo-pens will work well.
- Provide food and entertainment, if necessary, for actors awaiting their cues.
- Arrange for properties to be stored until needed.
- Have at least one “dry run” rehearsal for the staging crew. They must get the feel of the facilities and become familiar with the program.
- Check the intercom system.

Before the show, the director establishes contact with staging personnel:

- PA system operator
- Houselights operator (both PA system and houselights are often handled by the same person)
- Spotlight operator (two or more as needed)
- Projectors
- Floor director
- Assembly area director

Check key items at the last hour:

- Double check sound and lighting equipment—heat up arc lights in advance.
- Check narrator(s) for familiarity with the script and for the PA system volume required.
- Check personalities at the head table to be sure they are in place and ready to go.
- Start on time—proceed with the opening only after checking all stations.

Select a cast that has the interest and time to rehearse any action there may be. Usually, this means involving a dependable unit leader(s) who will see that the unit members are there and are on time. Give as much care as you can to selecting the “right” individuals, particularly the central figures of the drama. For example, don’t use an “outsize” boy if you are reproducing the McKinzie Tait Boy Scout statue.

- The program plus narration, sound, and lighting should be provided to the MC, staging director, and technical support personnel.
- In developing ceremonies, a minimum of narration is desirable. Quality counts—not quantity.



- The maximum use of lights and music is desirable in building up the dramatics of the program.
- Copies of the script should be reproduced and distributed to all staging personnel so that they will be familiar with the program and prepared to carry out staging directions instantly.

Ceremony Scripts and Scripting

In every council are Scouters and others who enjoy writing and have the talent to write original, timely scripts that fit your situation better than ceremonies that were written for another occasion and have to be adapted to your need. An advertisement in the council bulletin, a request for help spread through roundtables, or an appeal for help to the high-school or local college drama coach will sometimes produce the talent that can do the job. The same applies to quality slide photographers for visuals. The activities files of the local council should contain a number of scripts. However, if you produce your own script, use a proven form and be sure to:

- Time the script carefully.
- See that action cues are correctly placed and simple to follow.
- See that the action called for matches the narration.
- Recheck lighting, music, visuals, and sound-effect cues to see that they are properly spotted in the script.
- See that the script's cover sheet lists each item or prop needed as well as technical equipment and costumes.

If you give these items the attention they deserve, the ceremony should be exactly what you want, and staging and directing should be simple tasks.

The Day of the Meeting

The staff member assigned to work with the meeting committee, sometimes known as the "ramrod," completes the successful preparations for the meeting by making specific assignments for the day of the event. Assignments to fellow staff members are first presented to the Scout executive for clearance. Assignment of volunteers to jobs is made by the recognition dinner chairman.

Staff Ramrod

Staff assignments sometimes involve more than just the day of the event. One example is the assignment of advisers to recognition meeting subcommittees. Many of the staff, however, will receive assignments for only the day. This usually requires that they be in attendance at the meeting

location for a preparation period before and a cleanup period afterward. The ramrod should clearly spell out such assignments, including the reporting time and the extent of responsibilities. Arrangements should be made to have staff members' spouses transported to the meeting if volunteers have all-day assignments.

Take care in assigning volunteers for the on-the-spot service to make certain they are available and willing. Do not assume that someone asked for service can and will accept. Request on-the-spot leaders early enough to check with the individuals involved. Allow enough time to recruit and train replacements if necessary.

As in the case of executive staff members, the assignments for volunteers should be spelled out indicating the time needed and the extent of responsibilities. If assignments cover a meal period, indicate how these periods will be handled.

The staff ramrod should be as concerned about details on the meeting day as he has been with the meeting preparations. The key to an outstanding recognition meeting is careful attention to details. The best plans, promotion, and advance preparation can't produce the best event if on-the-spot leadership is sloppy.

Dinner Checklists

Checklists for the staff ramrod should be designed for easy checkoff to sharpen operation of the meeting. (See figures 5 and 6 for checklists for meeting preparation and for the day of the meeting.)

Followup

Every special event activity requires followup after it's over. Thank-you letters should be written to those who helped; a complete financial accounting made; a critique held of the event by its leaders; and compilation of the essential materials assembled (including the results of the critique) into a workbook for help in running similar events in the future. Like the event itself, these follow-up items should be executed in good style and on time.

The key to a good followup program is planning for it. Preparation of a thank-you list and perhaps even letters in advance of the event permits prompt recognition and a maximum effect of the thank-you notes.

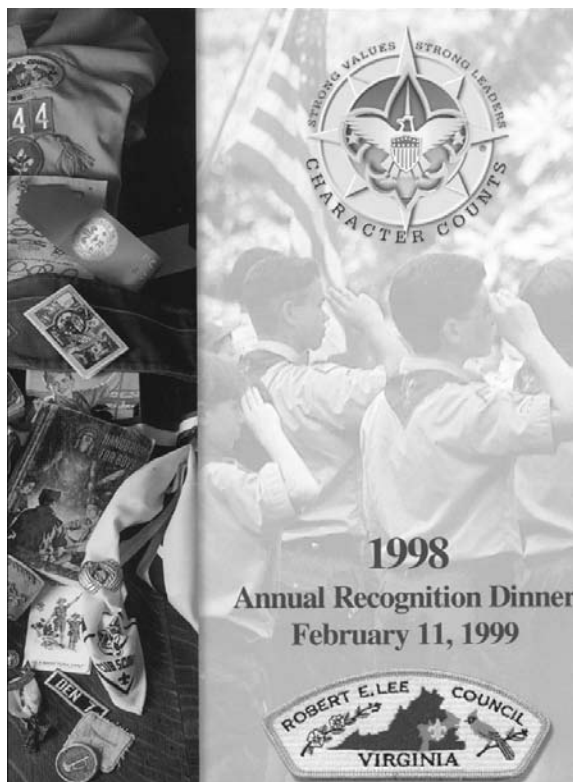
Arrangements for early billing of expenses and prompt turn-in of any income monies make it possible to perform final accounting during the month of the event or the month immediately following it. All bills should be paid by council check.

A critique scheduled in advance and within a two-week period following the event produces the best recollection of what to do again and what not to do. Setting a date on the planning calendar makes it happen instead of dragging it on beyond a reasonable time.

A word in the early stages of preparation for the event will enable your secretary to set aside an extra copy of the correspondence, printed materials, notices, forms, etc., related to it. When final accounting has been made and results of the critique written up, the parts can easily be bound into a workbook for reference the next time the event is to be held.

Summary

- For help in staging the ceremonies for your meeting, enlist the aid of someone capable of mobilizing the technical support you require—lighting, sound, visuals. You can find such a person at your local TV or radio stations, “little theater” groups, school dramatics department, or the like. Most will be happy to help out on a one-show project for the cause.
- Start the dinner with something special—a march to the head table followed by a ceremony to set the tone of the meeting. People busy with the cares of business or household problems must be brought into your meeting mentally and emotionally as well as physically.
- Create an atmosphere to support the purpose of the meeting with the opening ceremony.
- Insist on prompt food service if you are not staging a potluck affair. Let the maitre’d or food service manager know what time to start serving, and find out how long it takes to complete the meal service. Most food handlers will respond favorably to your desire to keep on schedule.
- Keep introductions to a minimum. Recognize special guests, but make certain the MC doesn’t give each one the “speaker of the evening” treatment.
- Keep extraneous remarks and announcements to a minimum. Lengthy remarks tend to upset or dilute the importance of the major features of the program.
- If a principal speaker is your meeting’s feature, be sure the speaker knows how much time you’re allowing for his part of the program. A good speaker appreciates this information and will follow your lead.
- If recognition ceremonies are involved, use discretion in the amount of time spent on each award and number of awards; two minutes spent on each of 20 recipients add up to 40 minutes, not including your introduction and summation. Recognize each with dignity, highlighting the more important awards. Scripting the presentations helps keep them brief.
- Close the program with a short, inspirational ceremony. If possible, relate it to the program of the evening. Send them away glad they’re part of the BSA team.
- When presenting audiovisuals to audiences of 300 or more, be sure to use auditorium quality projection equipment (borrowed or rented). Amplifier and projection lamp wattages must be adequate for the size of the hall.
- For audiences of 300 or more, be sure any projection screen you use measures at least 8 by 10 feet.



PREPARATION CHECKLIST FOR THE DINNER MEETING

Item	Person Responsible	Date Completed
1. Dining room or hall secured	_____	_____
2. Floor plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table layout • Service stations • Buffet tables 	_____	_____
3. Tables and chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where secured • Number needed • Transportation required • Setup crews • Teardown crews • Who returns them • Table covers and napkins 	_____	_____
4. Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table numbers or signs and blocks for signs • Unit numbers • Checkroom • Coffee or buffet signs 	_____	_____
5. Food service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potluck or catered meal • Caterer and menu selected • Menu items assigned (if potluck) • Dishes and utensils • Waiter service or buffet 	_____	_____
6. Coffee service (if furnished by council or district) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select coffee service • Determine quantity of coffee and number of thermos containers needed • Time of delivery • Location of coffee stations • Cream, sugar, cups, and coffee sticks or spoons • Who will serve coffee 	_____	_____
7. Cleanup <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuse containers needed; location 	_____	_____

More . . .

Figure 5.

Item	Person Responsible	Date Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanup tasks assigned 		
8. Guide service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth members • Adults 		
9. Sound system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head table mike • Stage mikes • Adequate speakers • The system works • Who operates • Cue sheet for operator • Records for dinner music 		
10. Lights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cue sheet for operator • Rehearse operator 		
11. Guests and seating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop list • Who invites • How to invite • Which guests sit with units • Guests at special tables • Guests at head tables • Place cards • Who meets speakers—location 		
12. Decorations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place cards, decorations, favors • Removal and storage of decorations 		
13. Printed program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy ready by _____ (Date) • Program of the evening • List of sponsors • District chartered organization roster • This year's Eagle Scouts • Newly qualified veterans • Training keys and awards • Committee reports • District officers • Commissioner staff • Dinner program committee • Thanks to all who helped • Arrangements for printing 		

More . . .

Figure 5.

Item	Person Responsible	Date Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for delivery • Delivery location • Proofreading 		
14. Promotion		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement of meeting in district bulletins • Announcement at all meetings in district • Special invitation mailed to units with complete details of time, place, plan of feeding, equipment district will furnish, what unit must bring, who is invited, suggested unit guests, etc. • Newspapers—dailies, weeklies • Story with picture of speaker • Veteran Scouter story • Invite editorial comment • Eagle awards to be presented • Silver Beaver, Award of Merit, or other awards • Story on work of district • Story on guests • Invite editor, photographer—reserve places • Copy of program for reporters • Radio and TV: Send advance news releases, prepare special spot announcements 		
15. Program of the evening		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda prepared • MC secured • Music and entertainment • Speaker secured • Presentations and awards • Song leader—accompaniment • Special feature • Ceremonies—opening and closing • Rehearsals scheduled • Review agenda with MC in advance of meeting 		

The circumstances surrounding the needs of different councils or districts will dictate the addition of other items or the exclusion of some suggested here. The important thing is that the dinner program be planned well in advance, with nothing left to chance.

Note: Not all the checklist items apply in every case. Some are only for a catered dinner, and others are only for a potluck dinner.

Figure 5.

CHECKLIST FOR THE DAY OF THE MEETING

Check When Ready	Items for Action
_____	Rehearsal of ceremonies completed—crew and performers standing by.
_____	Lights (house, spots, foots, special, etc.) tested—crews standing by.
_____	PA system tested (mikes live, sound level adjusted, etc.).
_____	Recording unit (tape or records) working.
_____	Script checked with presiding officer or MC.
_____	Copy of presiding officer's or MC's script available.
_____	All awards in place.
_____	Awards checked with presenter.
_____	Copy of award recipient list, citations, etc., available.
_____	Attendance figures confirmed with food handler (if any).
_____	Decorations up.
_____	Programs distributed to tables.
_____	Stage set for ceremonies.
_____	Visual equipment (if any) preset and tested.
_____	News media called and handouts ready.
_____	Invoker arrived and in position.
_____	General greeters arrived and in position.
_____	Special-guests greeters arrived and in position.
_____	Speaker or feature escort arrived and in position.
_____	Cloakroom (if any) opened and manned.
_____	Place cards set at head table.
_____	Traffic and parking arrangements set.

Figure 6.

HELPFUL TERMS

Becoming familiar with the following showmanship terms will help your staging flow more smoothly and give it a “professional” aura.

Audio—the sound part of the program.

Background—a set or prop or drape behind the performers.

Background music—music used as accompaniment to some activity or dialogue. It can be used to heighten the dramatic effect of the performance.

Blacklight—ultraviolet lamps that illuminate in the dark only those objects painted or covered with phosphorescent material.

Blowup—a photographic enlargement of written, printed, or photographic material.

Borderlights—a row of small floodlights mounted in a single housing hung overhead to produce general illumination.

Business—any stage action.

Busy—any scene or display that is too complicated, elaborate, or confusing.

Canned music—recorded music on tape or record.

Credits—titles in the printed program giving recognition to the persons responsible.

Cue—any of the following director’s signals:

“You’re on”—point with index finger toward the person being cued.

“Stand by”—open hand held up.

“Speed up”—index finger extended while making circular motion.

“Cut”—motion of slashing throat.

“Stretch”—pulling motion of hands (taffy pull).

Cut—to stop the action while directing or to eliminate part of a script.

Disc—a recording.

Dramatic lighting—special lighting effects to establish a mood, weather condition, or time of the day.

Dry run—a rehearsal without costumes, props, or sound and lighting support. Sometimes called a walk-through.

Footlights—concealed row of small floodlights located in or on the floor (outside the curtain line).

Flow chart—a list of performers and properties in order of their appearance on stage.

Grids—marks on the stage floor or arena to locate performing units.

Intercom—a headset telephone line between the show director and the various staging crews.

MC—master of ceremonies.

Prop—any property actually used by actors in their stage business—usually carried onto the scene by the actors.

Sound effects—sound designed to create a realistic atmosphere.

Story line—a plot of the show.

Strip lights—a row of low-level small floodlights mounted in a single housing used to illuminate small areas at the rear of the stage.

Theme—the predominant idea running through the show.

Transition—a change from one scene to another accomplished through music, diversionary acts, etc.

Trouper—large arc spotlight drawing approximately 35 amperes of current.

POTLUCK DINNERS

Potluck dinners for Scouter recognition meetings have become increasingly popular in many councils and districts throughout the country. They greatly increase the attendance at such meetings, thus providing greater exposure for anything the council wants to communicate to its adult membership. In addition, the informality of this type of meal generates the kind of morale that builds council and district unity. These two reasons alone make the Scouter potluck dinner highly desirable.

Because the successful council or district potluck dinner requires a different approach in organizing and promoting it as a recognition meeting, it is given special treatment in this book. Using the instructions, the potluck dinner can be an outstanding success the first year it is held. Take no shortcuts—follow the plan as presented.

Why Councils and Districts Hold Potluck Dinners

- Because it is increasingly difficult to find “common ground” meeting places for large groups attending an annual meeting.
- Because of the almost prohibitive cost of meal service in many cases.
- Because it has been such a tremendous success in other councils—even metropolitan councils.
- Because it makes it possible for hundreds or even thousands to attend.
- Because it does away with the problems of individual ticket sales and a catered meal.
- Because it saves so much time in serving and clearing.
- Because it demonstrates to districts and units how to conduct their own potluck dinners.
- Because it is truly fun.

Potluck Dinner Instructions

Who Is Invited?

All the registered Scouters and their guests, Scout parents, and special guests.

It is recommended that youth members not be included unless they have some special part in the program.

How Is It Organized?

The dinner is organized by units. Each Cub Scout pack reserves tables and organizes the supper for the chartered organization representative, pack committee, Cubmaster, assistants, den leaders, and their spouses . . . each Scout troop arranges tables and supper for its chartered organization representative, committeemen, leaders, and their spouses . . . each Venturing crew has tables for its people . . . each district committee arranges tables for its members and spouses . . . each commissioner staff plans to be together . . . the members of the executive board and the council members at large have their tables.

How Many Tables Can a Group Have?

You should have not less than one table (10 seats), but you should have as many as needed. Some Cub Scout packs—with committee, leaders, den leaders, and spouses—will need at least three or four tables. Units from the same organization, such as pack and troop, may want to have their tables together. Instructions and suggestions follow on the recommended method of reserving tables.

What Is the Cost?

The cost varies, depending on local conditions and circumstances. In the majority of councils where rent and custodial service charges are a factor, experience shows that \$10.00 per table is a nominal charge. This charge provides hiring the table and chairs, paper table covers, PA system, lighting, platform decorations, speaker and entertainment features, promotion, and program.

Who Arranges Things for the Unit?

Although you can approach arrangements in a number of ways, generally, the following plan works well: Each pack, troop, crew, post, or other group should appoint a potluck supper committee.

Unit Chairman—in charge of promotion (with the unit hospitality chairman).

Hospitality Chairman—in charge of menu assignments and table setup.

Coworker—in charge of transportation.

Coworker—in charge of decorations.

What About Decorations?

Decorating for the potluck dinner can be fun! The council furnishes each table with a plain white paper cover. Each pack, troop, crew, post, and district is encouraged to decorate its table with a theme or idea—"Cub Scouts at Work" . . . "Boy Scouts in Camp" . . . "Hail to Our Scoutmaster" . . . "Trail the Eagle" . . . "30 Years of Scouting in Our Unit" . . . etc.

What About Eating Utensils?

Each couple brings their own dishes, cups, knives, forks, and spoons. The unit hospitality chairman should bring some equipment for guests—and for those who forget. A few extra serving spoons always come in handy. Paper plates and wooden or plastic utensils are also good to keep nearby.

What About the Menu?

Each table produces a complete meal for its 10 people (perhaps a little extra to exchange with neighbors). Hot dishes might include tuna and noodles, chicken and noodles, spaghetti and meatballs, meat pies, meat loaf with vegetable sauce, etc.

One couple brings a casserole or hot dish to share with 10 people. (Your favorite recipe for six or eight should be plenty.)

The second couple brings a salad, rolls, and butter for 10.

The third couple brings another casserole or hot dish.

The fourth couple brings relishes, coffee, cream, and sugar for 10.

The fifth couple brings dessert for 10 people.

Each couple brings serving utensils.

Other suggestions—a damp sponge for cleaning dishes; a can opener for those who bring cans or bottles; a Thermos of water and paper cups.

How Are Hot Foods Carried?

Carry the foods in the pans or casseroles in which they were cooked. Use plenty of aluminum foil and newspaper insulation. Use baskets and boxes, of course. There should be room near each table for stacking containers. Coffee should arrive in Thermos jugs. Some people will want to bring candle casserole warmers if live flames are permitted in the building. Check on it!

When Do You Set Up?

Doors should be open two hours before the scheduled starting time. Encourage people to come anytime after that to decorate tables. Allow plenty of time to bring in food so that all will be ready for the opening exercises and invocation.

Eating and Cleaning Up

Begin the meal as soon as the invocation and opening ceremony finishes. If you finish before the program starts, you can clean up eating utensils and serving dishes at that time. The council should provide heavy bags at each table to take care of waste. The "leftovers" can go home or be divided.

What About Guests?

One of the units of each chartered organization should invite the chartered organization head to be a guest. If it is a Catholic church unit, invite the pastor and the chaplain; if a Protestant church, invite its minister and spouse; if the congregation is Jewish, its rabbi and spouse; if a Mormon church, its bishop and spouse. Presidents of PTAs, clubs; commanders of veteran posts, etc., should be invited. Some units invite the unit leader and spouse as special guests.

The executive board or district personnel should be sure to include the mayor or the president of the town council and United Way officials.

How to Promote Attendance

In general, certain things must be done:

1. Break good news stories to the public. Set an attendance goal that attracts attention—"the biggest dinner ever to be held in your city, etc." The reason—to give parents and the community an opportunity to say "thanks" to Scouters, especially unit leaders. Break the story five to six weeks in advance. Continue with good publicity releases 10 days to two weeks in advance. Use local radio spot announcements and stories in daily and weekly newspapers.
2. The dinner chairman sends a letter of invitation (see figure 7) to the key unit Scouter with a reservation card (see figure 8) and a unit hospitality chairman appointment card (see figure 9) enclosed. Two months in advance, the participation committee (a hospitality chairman's group is often used—see figure 10) makes a direct appeal to the chairmen of all unit committees to reserve the tables they need and to appoint their unit hospitality chairmen immediately.
3. At the regular meeting of the commissioner's staff, two months before the dinner, go over all promotional plans and urge all staff to promote the dinner during their regular visits to units.
4. A good council bulletin story should be sent directly to all registered Scouters not later than four weeks in advance.

Guide Service

A unit number sign should be on each table. These can be taken down after the dinner starts so as not to obstruct anyone's view. In addition, service Scouts or Venturers may be provided with copies of a master list showing unit number, table location, unit leader's name, and chartered organization. This helps in locating tables for people who may know the unit leader's name or the name of the chartered organization but not the unit number.

Coffee Stations

If a council or district decides to provide coffee, set up stations in convenient locations around the wall. A big "Coffee" sign overhead will direct people to the one nearest them. Have a service corps on hand to pour coffee into pitchers.

Guest Food Service

Dinner for special guests can be handled in several ways. Here are some suggestions:

1. Executive board members' spouses provide potluck dinners for guests and themselves.
2. Catered service—
 - a. For all guests at special tables.
 - b. For only those at head table who are taking part in the program.
3. Special guests attending alone are assigned to various units. This is arranged in advance with the related unit hospitality chairmen.

Potluck Dinner Hospitality Chairman's Duties

Dinner Hospitality Chairman

1. Secures from district chairmen, through their district Scout executives, the number of district hospitality chairmen needed. Recruits with the help of the district chairman and the district Scout executive. (See figure 10.)
2. Meets with the district hospitality chairmen and goes over each item on the job specification sheet as well as the job specification sheets for the area hospitality chairmen and the unit hospitality chairmen.
3. Checks two months before the dinner to make certain each district chairman has recruited the area chairmen. Follows up on those not complete.
4. Checks with district chairman six weeks before the dinner to make certain that unit chairmen have been recruited. Follows up on districts not complete.
5. Checks with district chairmen four weeks before the dinner to make certain that each unit reserves at least one table. Follows up on districts not complete.
6. Attends dinner with district chairmen to help locate tables.

District Hospitality Chairman

1. Secures recommendations from district chairman and district commissioner for area hospitality chairmen.
2. Recruits area hospitality chairmen for district (one for every six to 10 units). (See figure 10.)
3. Contacts prospects and sells them on accepting the responsibility of area hospitality chairman.

4. Doublechecks with each unit chairman five days before the dinner to make certain a meeting was held to develop the menu and arrange for equal distribution of food. Reminds the unit chairman to call four to eight hours before the dinner to make certain everyone is properly informed of the time and place, what to bring, etc.
5. Checks to make certain that each unit in the district reserves a table. Follows up with the area chairmen in those areas where units have not reserved tables.
6. Doublechecks with each area chairman the day before the dinner and makes certain that units are ready for the dinner—menus, food assignments, table decorations, etc.
7. Reports to the place of the dinner early and assists area chairmen in receiving units that come in to set up their tables.

Area Hospitality Chairman—Assistant to the District Chairman

1. Contacts each unit committee chairman in the assigned area; checks to make certain that a unit hospitality chairman has been appointed for the unit in the assigned area.
2. Contacts unit hospitality chairmen and, if possible, meets with them to go over each item on their job specification sheet. Mails a copy of the job specification to each unit chairman for the hospitality chairman, making sure each has a copy. Answers all questions that arise, notes any that remain unanswered, and contacts the district hospitality chairman or local council service center for the correct information.
3. Checks to make sure that each unit reserves a table. Some units may want more than one table. Reservation cards and fees should be returned to the council service center.
4. Doublechecks with each unit chairman 5 days before the dinner to make certain a meeting was held to develop the menu and arrange for equal distribution of food. Reminds the unit chairman to call 4 to 8 hours before the dinner to make certain everyone is properly informed of the time and place, what to bring, etc.
5. Reports to the place of the dinner early, welcomes units to their tables, and assists them in setting up.

Unit Hospitality Chairman

1. Contacts the unit committee. Sells them on the dinner idea as a way of expressing thanks to the unit leaders and to tell their community that they believe in Scouting.
2. Explains how reservations will be made and the dinner organized.
3. Takes definite reservations and collects the prorata cover charge.
4. Asks for menu suggestions and decoration ideas from other couples.
5. Has committee members call on all who have not made reservations at the meeting.
6. Sends in a reservation for one or more tables, when a committee has an indication of the number that will attend.
7. Holds a committee meeting the week before the dinner to develop the menu and arrange for equal distribution of food.
8. Calls each couple and asks them to provide their designated share of the dinner. See “What about the Menu?” earlier in this book.
9. Checks with each couple 48 hours before the dinner to be sure everyone is properly informed—time, place, what to bring, etc.
10. Sees that the unit leader and spouse are invited as their guests; the committee provides table service, probably disposable paper plates and items.
11. Makes sure that the committee invites the organization head. Urges his or her presence with a spouse. Other influential people in the organization or neighborhood might be invited as guests with table service provided by the committee.
12. Appoints a special committee for table decorations.
13. Considers giving the unit leader a gift at the dinner.
14. Arranges for pitchers (if your council provides the coffee).

SUGGESTED PROMOTION LETTER

To: ALL UNIT CHAIRMEN

Dear Scouters:

Plans and preparations are being made for the annual Scouters' recognition dinner. This one will be held potluck style. Your committee and the parents of your members will not want to miss this opportunity to join in recognizing our adult leaders.

The dinner will be held on Saturday, _____ at _____ p.m.,
at the _____ hall, _____ Street.

The cost of a table is _____, which breaks down to _____ cents a person for a table of 10 people. This fee is to defray the cost of the hall rental, tables, chairs, and other services. Tables will go on sale _____, at the council office, _____. The tables must be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. A reservation fee of _____ a table must accompany the reservation.

Tables will seat 10 persons. Every family brings one item of food in sufficient quantities for all 10, and everything is placed on the table. Each family will be asked to bring a definite item of food so that a well-balanced meal will result.

Each pack, troop, crew, and post should appoint a chairman, who will make assignments of the food each person brings and be sure that the group will be well represented.

You can help by filling out the enclosed postal card, giving the name, address, and telephone number of your chairman. A district chairman will contact your chairman for additional details. Meanwhile, the enclosed job specification sheet of a unit chairman's duties will assist your chairman in understanding the job.

Ensure your unit of the tables you desire by sending in your order now with a reservation fee.

Cordially,

_____, Chairman _____, President
Potluck Dinner Committee TAKEANY COUNCIL, INC.

cc: Commissioners, Activities, Committee Members, Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, Venturing Crew and Explorer Post Advisors, Chartered Organization Representatives

Figure 7.

TABLE RESERVATION FOR TAKEANY COUNCIL POTLUCK DINNER

Saturday, _____

_____ of the _____
(Pack—Troop—Crew—Post) (District)

requests a reservation of _____ tables at _____ per table.

Check enclosed. Tickets should be mailed to:

Name _____

Address _____

Signed _____

Figure 8.

Dear _____:
(Chairman, potluck dinner committee)

Our potluck dinner unit chairman is:

Name _____

Address _____

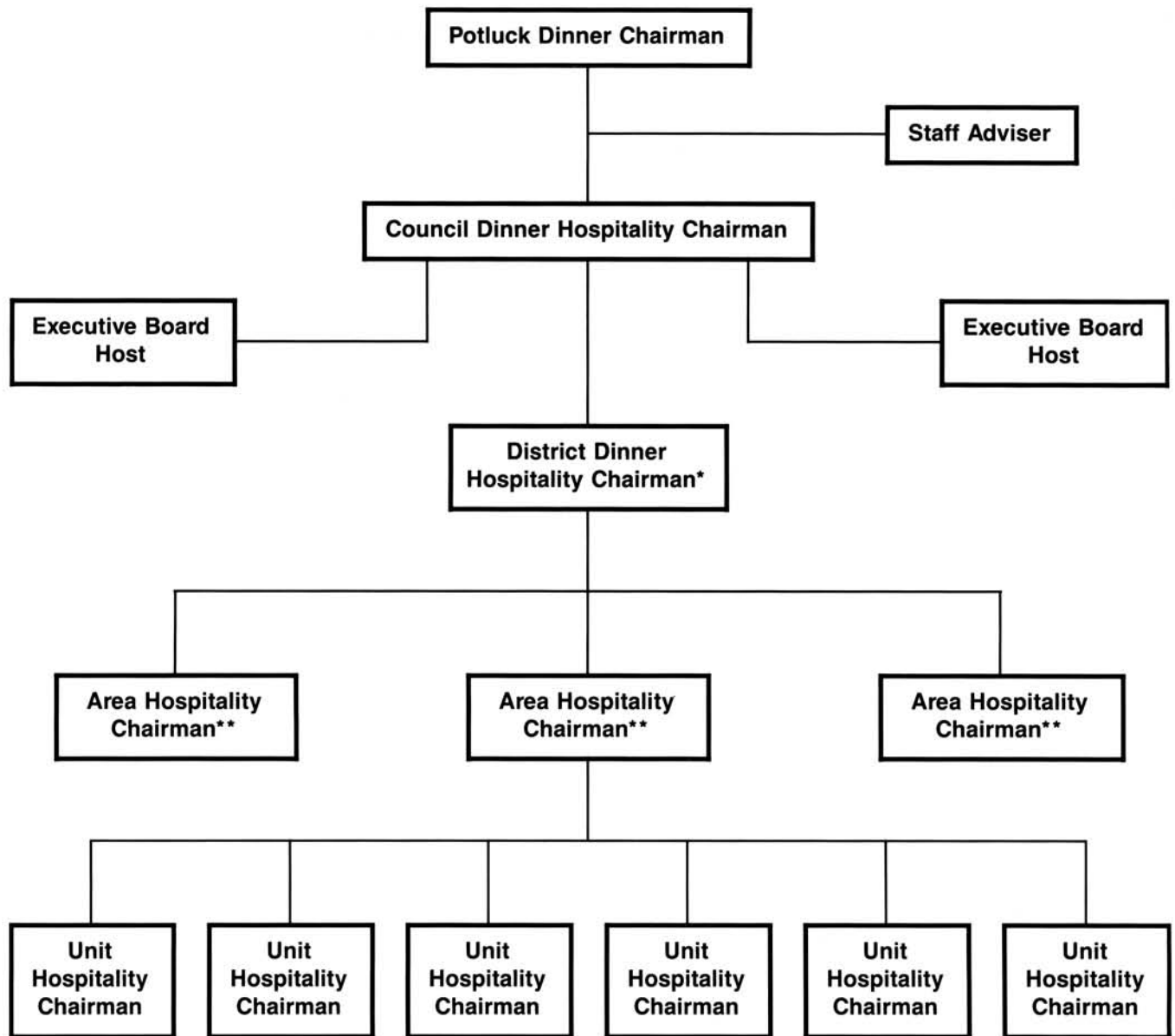
Phone number _____

Type unit _____ Number _____ District _____

Signed _____

Figure 9.

POTLUCK DINNER PROMOTION ORGANIZATION CHART



*One for each district in the council. If a large district, an assistant or cohost may be appointed.

**One for every six to 10 Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Venturing crews, and Explorer posts in the district.

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Figure 10.