

Fall 2015

THE COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COMMISSIONERS AND PROFESSIONALS



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National Commissioner's Minute

Relationships Matter, With a Special Thanks to Our Chartered Organizations

One of the great rewards of serving as your national commissioner is that I meet so many outstanding volunteers and professionals who live the Scout Oath and Scout Law every day. Over the years, many of these people have become great friends. The relationships that we form in this program are unique. We instinctively understand that we are bound by something larger than ourselves. Looking back on a lifetime of faces, I am amazed and gratified by the great relationships that are part of our Scouting experience.

Relationships matter, particularly in Scouting. We see them every day and they fundamentally transform our lives. It seems appropriate as we start a new school year that we should take a moment and say a special thanks to those who make the Scouting program possible. Let's start with our chartered organizations, which look to us to deliver a quality Scouting program to the youth affiliated with their organization and community. In doing so, they trust us with those relationships, and we need to be ready to deliver on our commitment to our chartered organizations and the constituencies they serve.

There are a lot of other kinds of relationships in Scouting that mean so much to us. Our volunteer-professional partnerships are a prime example. Recently, our 12th Chief Scout Executive, Wayne Brock, retired after 43 years of service to the youth of America. Our personal relationship spanned a lot of years, from my time as local council president to region president to the national Key 3. Thank you, Wayne, for your extraordinary service and friendship. The commissioner corps looks forward to supporting the leadership of our 13th Chief Scout Executive, Mike Surbaugh.

I recently enjoyed rekindling a number of volunteer to volunteer relationships at our first College of Commissioner Science Dean's Retreat held at Scouting University. When you get a group of Scouters together who are lifelong friends, it does not take long for the miles between us to drop away. The event was a huge success. It is a product of a remarkable collaborative effort between Scouting University and our training team, led by Tim Acree, from the Commissioner Service Task Force.



Tico Perez
National Commissioner

Now it is time to build a Scouting relationship with new families across America. We have a new adventure-based Cub Scouting program, designed by parents and volunteers to be both exciting and timely in its program content. Scouting has never been more relevant. The new program is easier to execute for our leaders and more fun for the boys. Cub Scout activities and a revised advancement program are front and center, but everything is aligned with the aims and mission of the Boy Scouts of America. Remember, growing Cub Scouts is the foundation of growing the Boy Scouts of America.

God bless.



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Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind

Scouters, no doubt, will recognize the four words helpful, friendly, courteous, and kind. We instinctively know why they are listed in this order. When we talk about commissioner service, we often speak in terms of the commissioner being a friend to the unit. We should all strive to become the trusted advisor that the unit leadership, unit committee, and, yes, the chartered organization recognize as a talented and passionate volunteer resource.

While the unit leadership and the unit committee may get a lot of our attention, perhaps now would be a great opportunity to ensure that our service to the unit includes a good dose of being helpful, friendly, courteous, and kind to our chartered organizations and their representatives. As we know, our units would not exist without our chartered organization relationship. Our chartered organizations are critical to our ability to serve youth in our local communities, and we as commissioners, along with the rest of the Scouting community, should make sure they understand the support and appreciation that we have for their critical role. An extra thank you is appropriate.

You may discover additional ways that we can support a unit or otherwise bring more Scouting opportunities to a local community. Recent changes allow Scouting's members and parents to select local units chartered to organizations that best meet the needs of their families. When a unit, a chartered organization, or a parent turns to the local Scouting community for support, we want to make sure we are ready to respond with great opportunities that meet the need of every Scouting family. Part of our role as commissioners is to support the district committee and the district membership functions, and serve as a communications link between our identification of a need, such as for a new unit or a new home for a prospective Scout. We can be part of the support role that helps ensure that we have quality units to meet the demands for Scouting in the community.



Scott Sorrels
National Commissioner Service Chair
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A good starting point for you to understand the hallmarks of a properly organized and sustainable unit is the [Unit Performance Guide](#), and it should be required reading for all commissioners. Scouting knows how to organize and support quality units that embrace the chartered organization and provide Scouting memories that will last a lifetime.

As we make our visits during this new Scouting year, let's make an extra effort to say "thank you" and to be helpful, friendly, courteous, and kind to our chartered organization and unit leadership. They are on the front lines of serving youth. Thank you as commissioners for being the glue that makes our program work for so many young people.



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Commissioner Recognition Update

A team of commissioners from across the country is hard at work revising unit service recognitions. Their work was interrupted by the development of Commissioner Tools and the Unit Service Plan; it became evident early on that both would impact recognition opportunities. The team plans to complete revisions by the end of this year. The results of their work will be posted on the commissioner [Awards and Recognition Web page](#) as soon as possible.

The goals for revising commissioner recognitions include:

- Requirements reflective of contemporary unit service tools, techniques, and processes
- Requirements consistent across all recognition opportunities
- Electronic access to reference materials, requirements, record keeping tools, and certificates
- Requirements that enable roundtable commissioners to participate fully in unit service recognition opportunities

Unit service recognitions will fall into one of the following categories:

1. **Commitment:** Recognition of a Scouter's commitment to serve. Examples would include a badge of office and participation in a commissioning ceremony.
2. **Development:** Recognition of a commissioner's effort to develop the knowledge and skills needed to provide effective unit service. Examples would include the Trained Leader emblem, Arrowhead Honor Award, Commissioner's Key, and Doctorate of Commissioner Science Award.
3. **Impact:** Recognition of the impact a commissioner's service has had upon units and the youth he or she serves. Examples would include the Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service and the Distinguished Commissioner Service Award.



Larry Chase
National Commissioner Service
Recruitment and Retention Chair
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Unit service recognitions will also fall into one of the following classifications:

1. **Selection:** Recognition that results from an individual being recruited and selected to serve in a unit service position. A badge of office and participation in a commissioning ceremony would be examples.
2. **Application:** Recognition that results from a Scouter's decision to pursue recognition with a defined set of requirements. Examples would include the Arrowhead Honor Award, Commissioner's Key, Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service, and Doctorate of Commissioner Science Award.
3. **Nomination:** Recognition for which there are guidelines, rather than requirements, and for which commissioners must be nominated. The District Award of Merit and Silver Beaver are conceptually similar. As the highest award given to a commissioner for commitment, development, *and* impact, the Distinguished Commissioner Service Award would belong here.



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As in the past, each unit service recognition opportunity will usually include prerequisites that reflect the development process for commissioners. Prerequisites for the Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service, for example, will include:

- Being registered as a commissioner
- Having earned the Arrowhead Honor Award
- Providing unit service over two consecutive years
- Having exhibited a high degree of Scout spirit

The work being done by this dedicated team will provide all commissioners a simple and unified approach to well-deserved recognition. Our commissioners, including those who deliver quality roundtables to unit leaders, work hard to help our units better serve more youth through Scouting. They deserve timely recognition of their commitment, their development, and their impact. Our revised recognitions will do just that.



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Recognizing Unit Service Can't Start Too Soon

We often think of providing recognition to commissioners for work done over a period of time. In fact, we can't start too soon to recognize the commitment and effort of Scouters who understand the impact unit service can have in enabling units to better serve more youth through Scouting. Our revised recognitions for unit service are designed to reinforce that.

Badge of Office

It's a simple thing, but the badge of office worn by a commissioner is an opportunity to provide timely recognition to a Scouter who has committed to help serve units. It can have impact when given in private and be even more powerful when presented publicly. In either case, it's an opportunity to express appreciation and remind everyone present why the commitment to serve is important and the potential that commitment offers.

The requirements for a unit service badge of office aren't complicated:

- A volunteer application of a unit service position has been submitted and approved.
- A background check has been successfully completed.
- The Scouter holds a current certificate for Youth Protection training.

While not a requirement, it is assumed that all commissioners will complete position-specific basic training as soon as possible.

Commissioning

Just as commissioners and professionals share a unique design element of their badges of office—the "wreath of service"—they also are the only individuals who are commissioned by the Boy Scouts of America. As a result, commissioning is another opportunity early on to recognize and celebrate a Scouter's commitment to serve as a commissioner and to help units better serve more youth through Scouting.

The requirements for commissioning are simple:

- The Scouter has been duly appointed to serve as a commissioner (the requirements to receive and wear a commissioner's badge of office have been met).
- The Scouter has completed position-specific training.
- The Scouter has received an orientation (describing responsibilities, what success will look like, what key first steps are to be taken in this new role, etc.).
- The commission is for one year and must be renewed annually.

Commissioning ceremonies are a great opportunity to recognize the commitments of individuals as well as the commitment of an entire team to unit service. They can be a powerful reminder of the importance of unit service and the impact it can have upon the youth we serve through Scouting.



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Celebrating Excellence in Unit Service

The Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service was established to recognize the effort and impact of *direct* service to units by commissioners. While its requirements are being revised to reflect current unit service tools, techniques, and processes, its intent will remain unchanged. The new requirements and a revised progress record will be available on the commissioner [Awards and Recognition Web page](#) as soon as possible.

What has changed?

- Excellence requires preparation. General requirements help guide that:
 1. Providing *direct* unit service over a minimum of two years
 2. Exhibiting a high degree of Scout spirit
 3. Earning the Arrowhead Honor Award
- The new requirements reflect the four objectives shared by commissioners:
 1. Supporting unit growth through the Journey to Excellence
 2. Contacting units and capturing their strengths and needs in Commissioner Tools
 3. Linking unit needs to district operating committee resources
 4. Supporting timely charter renewal
- The Unit Service Plan is a key element:
 1. Working collaboratively with the unit Key 3, identify opportunities for improvement
 2. Working collaboratively with the unit Key 3, develop SMART goals to address those opportunities and demonstrate linkage between unit needs and district operating committee resources

- Commissioner Tools has been incorporated:
 1. The results of the Collaborative Assessment and the plan's SMART goals are recorded in a Detailed Assessment.
 2. Continuing, periodic Detailed Assessments over two consecutive years report progress and update the Unit Service Plan.
 3. Both on-site and other significant contacts with the unit are recorded in Commissioner Tools.
- Consistency of service is recognized. Some unit commissioners serve multiple units and, in doing so, consistently record their contacts in Commissioner Tools and ensure that all units renew their charters on a timely basis.

Continuing personal development is an important element of excellence; those criteria remain much the same as in the past.

Also unchanged is a focus on direct service to units. Any commissioner can earn the Award of Excellence, but it must be earned through providing *direct* service to at least one unit that the commissioner has agreed to serve as its unit commissioner.

Some commissioners are already working toward achievement of the Award of Excellence under the existing requirements. They should complete that work. Commissioners who have already started under the existing requirements will have up to two years to complete them after the new requirements are published on the Awards and Recognition Web page.

The Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service is our premier recognition of *direct* service to units. Those who meet its standards demonstrate the impact that commissioners can have when working collaboratively with a unit's Key 3. The requirements are challenging, but the results are rewarding.



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The Volunteer—Professional Relationship

We have often mentioned the need to foster a great relationship with the unit Key 3 when providing unit service. There is another relationship that needs to be cultivated as well in order to provide great unit service. That relationship is the one you have with the professional staff member assigned to work with commissioners. This professional may have a title like district executive, district director, director of field service, or some variation.

It is important to create a working relationship so that the professional knows he or she can count on you for certain aspects of service. Whatever you agree to do to provide unit service and subsequent feedback to the commissioner corps and the professional, you should keep your promise. Show through word and deed that you can be counted on to guide the unit or units assigned to you.

Providing feedback to professionals will let them know that all is well with the unit, and they can focus on other units that may need help.

Be courteous of professionals' time. They work flexible hours so they can meet their commitments in the evenings while still trying to have a family life. Discuss their schedule and what means of communication will work for you both. Be sure to find out when they are on vacation so you can respect that time unless there's an emergency. In this age of instant communication with text, phone, and email, it is easy to accidentally barge in on a well-earned vacation.

Take your professional out for coffee, breakfast, or lunch, and buy the meal once in a while. Show that you consider your relationship one of mutual respect and friendship.



Darlene Sprague
National Commissioner Service
Resources Chair
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Take the time to find out what your professional enjoys doing when not busy with Scouting. Does he or she have hobbies or favorite activities? Learn about his or her family and what it was like growing up. Remember that the professional may not be from your area.

It is more fun to work alongside someone when you are friends. And that friendship can last long after he or she serves in your district or council. I speak from experience.



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Note: This month we have an article from a guest contributor. We are pleased that Joe Schaeffer has agreed to share his article.

Friend of the Unit

By Joe Schaeffer, Assistant Council Commissioner, Las Vegas, Nevada

Foghorn Leghorn was a Warner Bros. cartoon character, an adult rooster from Kentucky who was always full of himself. When making a speech for a senatorial election, he began, "My friends—and don't tell me you're not my friends; nobody can tell me who my friends are!"

We all aspire to friendship. Can you be friends with a gallon of gasoline? A quart of milk? An inch or a yard? Of course not—these are **units!** Oh wait! **Commissioners** are a friend to the unit! A Scouting unit is an entity made up of components such as committees, families, leaders, and Scouts—all **people!** Commissioners may be working with multiple units! That is a lot of people. How can we become friends with all of them?

New friends are generally categorized as acquaintances, someone you know and who knows you and you know a little about each other. Let's look backward a little. Do you have friends from many years past that you see only occasionally yet when you get together it is like old times? This is a **relationship.**

In making friends with a unit, what we really seek is a **RELATIONSHIP!** Relationships are built; they don't just happen. You can't be friends with someone you do not know or someone who does not know you. So the first part of a relationship, just like a friendship, is an introduction. Others need to know and remember your name and you need to know and remember theirs. You need to ask questions about their lives, past and present, so that you

can find common links. Answers to questions need to be forthright; questions need to be friendly. Having done this, you have made an acquaintance of someone.

The object is to build the friendship to a point where each is comfortable with the other and to like each other. This is the beginning of a relationship. When your paths cross, you greet each other openly and are genuinely friendly. Meeting on multiple occasions gives you the opportunity to exchange views. Out of these exchanges, two or more people begin to build a respect for each other's views and out of that respect seek out each other in times of need. If you can accomplish that, you have made a real friend and have a relationship!

Friends can count on each other in time of need. Advice may be sought after and taken because people understand and trust each other.

Commissioners can be very busy with **UNITS** that could use assistance. Units do not need assistance; people do! If, as commissioners, we invest our time wisely recognizing the **people** in the units and developing a real **relationship** with them, our roles will become easier. Unit leadership will respond to commissioners' desires and their own needs because of that relationship.

A little time building a good relationship with the **people** in a unit could save the commissioner many hours of frustration in the future. Invest your time wisely in creating relationships—the return on investment is worth it.



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Questions and Answers

What is the status on enhancements to the current unit online chartering renewal? How will this impact maintaining the lapsed unit option?

One of the drivers for the acquisition of cloud-based Scoutbook early this year was the desire to utilize this unit management application for enhancing online registration and the renewal of charters and membership registration. During the course of the next 18 months, the BSA will continue to scale Scoutbook so that it will be capable of handling the millions of potential youth, leader, and parent users. Just in the past six months the number of Scoutbook users has increased from 200,000 to more than 400,000. Other features will continue to be rolled out that ultimately will lead to the release of the registration renewal feature, which will be conducted through Scoutbook. Providing units a two-month extension to renew their charters, referred to as lapsed unit status, continues to be an option that many councils wish to maintain. This option will be revisited on a regular basis going forward to identify solutions that best meet the needs of all stakeholders.

Will Commissioner Tools have the ability to print out a Unit Service Plan?

A subsequent version of Commissioner Tools will have the ability to print out a Unit Service Plan based on the data that is collected during the Collaborative Assessment with the unit Key 3 and the unit commissioner. The development team will be getting the specifications for this very soon and it will be submitted for development.

How often is the Upcoming Commissioner Colleges section on the website updated?

It is updated every time the newsletter is published. Deadlines for submission of information are September 1, January 1, and April 1. Send information to darsprague@roadrunner.com. Please include council name and city, date, time, location, contact information, and a link to a website or a PDF flier with details.



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Commissioner College Schedule

The College of Commissioner Science program is a great way to get additional training. The Commissioners website provides a listing of colleges of commissioner science that we receive information about.

Please check the list, found on the [Commissioner Training page](#), if you would like to experience a college outside of your area or if your council does not currently run a college.

Note: To have your council's college listed, please send information to Darlene Sprague at darsprague@roadrunner.com.



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Commissioner Training Update

Basic Training Courses

All Commissioner Basic Training courses were updated at the beginning of the year.

College Courses

All Commissioner College courses were updated at the beginning of the year as well. We will soon be forming a committee to start work on a master-level roundtable curriculum. We are also considering a couple of new courses on using the information in Commissioner Tools.

LDS Orientation

The LDS orientation course is awaiting completion by the production team of Scouting University. Unfortunately we missed our target date for production and have now been slotted behind the new Cub Scout program training that is being developed. Hopefully this training will be the first to be posted to the new learning management system Scouting U is developing.



Tim Acree
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Philmont Training Center— 2015 Commissioners Week and Week 8



Commissioners Week at the Philmont Training Center was Week 2: June 15–21. A unit commissioner conference was also offered during Week 8: July 26–August 1. The summer of 2015 was probably one of the wettest on record for northern New Mexico and cottonwood trees were in full bloom—at least during Week 2. As the photos below show, it looked like it snowed in June! The entire ranch was the greenest it has been in well over 10 years and the entire area was very beautiful.



We had another outstanding week of conferences this year. Special thanks to our excellent faculty. **The Council Commissioner** was taught by Larry Chase, Miriam Olynick, and Charles A. Morgan III. **District Commissioner and Assistant District Commissioner** was taught by Dave Fornadel, Dave Lown, and Rick Hillenbrand. The **Unit Commissioner** faculty was Steve Swain and Darlene Sprague. **Effective Roundtables** was conducted by George Costigan and Emily Campbell. **Advanced Leadership Skills for Administrative Commissioners** was taught by Bob Johnston, James D. Libbin, Joe Domino, and Tom Hunsaker. The Week 8 **Unit Commissioner** conference faculty was Kresha Alvarado and Kandra Dickerson.



Darlene Sprague and Steve Swain



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The attendance for the 2015 conference is listed below:

Week 2: June 15-21	Students	Faculty
Advanced Leadership Skills for Administrative Commissioners	29	4
The Council Commissioner	19	3
District Commissioner and Assistant District Commissioner	31	3
Effective Roundtables	13	2
The Unit Commissioner	11	2
<i>Subtotal</i>	103	14
Week 8: July 26–August 1	Students	Faculty
The Unit Commissioner	14	2
<i>Total</i>	117	16

This year we also had a most extraordinary event. The Effective Roundtables conference participants put into practice what they learned and conducted a roundtable for the councils around the Philmont area. The more than 80 attendees who came to find out what a model roundtable was all about included five people from the Great Southwest Council who came out to Philmont to attend and three Philmont Scout Ranch staff members. Attendees loved having the opportunity to see how the different programs split up and covered their program-specific material, and were eager to take back what they saw to their home districts and councils. This was the first time ever that a PTC conference held a roundtable that was open to the neighboring councils.



Tico Perez and Emily Campbell

Another change this year was that the last 45 minutes of each day was used for “end-of-day conferences.” On Monday Darlene Sprague led a session on “Why All the Changes?” Tuesday Rick Hillenbrand gave an update on Commissioner Tools and Larry Chase discussed the new Unit Service Plan. Thursday Bob

Johnston asked about “aha!” moments and facilitated open discussion. Friday Tim Acree continued the “aha!” moments discussion and gave a brief overview of the new learning management system. All sessions allowed for interaction and open discussion. Due to the positive response, this concept will likely be continued next year.

A new conference titled Advanced Leadership Skills for Administrative Commissioners was offered this year. A special thanks to the faculty—Bob Johnston, James D. Libbin, Joe Domino, and Tom Hunsaker—who were asked to teach this conference after the unfortunate passing of Johnny Cain, who was to be the lead instructor. They did a phenomenal job of recovering and leading the conference with a very short lead time. The well-received conference covered a number of leadership skills that can be applied to commissioner service, such as relationship building, coaching, and mentoring. To further enhance your leadership skills, plan to attend this course in 2016.

Philmont 2016

Consider attending national-level commissioner training in 2016 and you will be glad you did! Every district and council deserves a well-trained commissioner staff. Commissioners Week at the Philmont Training Center for 2016 will again be Week 2, which is June 12–18.

Week 11, which is August 14–20, will feature a conference titled **Key Concepts of Commissioner Service in Scouting’s Second Century**, and it will be open to all unit, roundtable, and administrative commissioners.

A new conference titled **Delivering Commissioner Service to Changing Communities** will be offered, which will focus on the changing demographics of communities and how to provide commissioner service to those communities. More units are being formed in Scouting’s underserved markets and this conference will discuss how to successfully deliver on the mission of Scouting by better understanding the opportunity and challenges that these new units face. Consider this



Tim Acree speaking at the end-of-day conference



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conference if you serve or want to learn more about multicultural communities. This conference will feature some special guests with expertise in the topic.

Of course all of the conferences offered in 2015 will be offered in 2016. Click [here](#) to view the 2016 Philmont Training Center brochure. For more information about

PTC, click [here](#). Please consider making a personal commitment to attend one of the conferences offered next year. You will not be disappointed!

If you have any questions about commissioner training, please contact Tim Acree, national commissioner support staff chairman for training, at tim.acree@comcast.net.



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Dean's Retreat

The first College of Commissioner Science Dean's Retreat was held August 28–30. The facilitators were Peter Matrow, Terry Chapman, Dave Fornadel, and Tim Acree. The retreat was held at the Scouting University Westlake Campus, which is the facility where professional Scouters attend their training classes and are commissioned. A total of 38 commissioners were in attendance.

Friday afternoon started with a tour of the National Scouting Museum and the national office.

After the tours, the group went to Hard Eight for Texas barbecue and then to a Texas Rangers baseball game, providing opportunities to get acquainted and for networking.

Saturday morning kicked off with Gary Butler discussing the importance of continuous training and how commissioners and the professional staff can work together. The focus of this retreat was group interaction and no PowerPoint presentations were used by the facilitators. We discussed the latest course updates featuring Commissioner Tools as well as the new roundtable courses. And there was an overview of the support information contained in the "General" folder on the College of Commissioner Science page. We also had a lively discussion about the differences between commissioner colleges and universities of Scouting.

Lunch concluded with an open conversation with Tico Perez, the national commissioner. We then continued our group discussion with an emphasis on tracking course and degree qualifications, doctoral thesis/project, the doctoral review committee, and the difference between the doctorate degree and doctoral knot. We wrapped up with additional discussion on marketing and promoting the college, our relationship with Scouting U, requirements and reciprocity, and using training codes.

Debra Kendrew provided an overview of Commissioner Tools just before dinner, which was catered at the facility.

Sunday morning Dr. Diane Thornton, chief learning officer for Scouting U, addressed the group and discussed how Scouting U is blending training with the professional staff and volunteers. Then Steve Yackel, team leader of instructional design, gave an excellent overview of the new learning management system.

The support from the staff at the Westlake campus was first-rate. The reviews for the weekend were outstanding, with almost everyone requesting a longer session. This was an experienced group of Scouters with more than 1,260 years of collective experience and an average of 34 years of service!

More photos and information are available at <https://www.facebook.com/BSAtrainingteam>.

The general consensus was that the retreat should be offered on a yearly basis. Next year's Dean's Retreat will be promoted more aggressively. Dates will be published in the next newsletter.



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2016 Commissioner Workshop at the Sea Base Conference Center



Want to spend time next winter somewhere warm? How about an epic Scouting adventure in the Florida Keys? Then plan to attend the Commissioner Service Workshop at Sea Base in Islamorada, Florida. The Commissioner Service Mission is the title of the 2016 Commissioner Workshop to be held January 17–23 at the Sea Base Conference Center.

This conference is designed to provide an open forum for sharing best practices and current ideas in your role as a commissioner. Whether you serve as a unit commissioner, a roundtable commissioner, or an administrative commissioner, this conference is for you. We'll discuss some of the best ways to accomplish our unit service mission: to help units serve more youth through Scouting and to convince unit leaders that their participation in the development and implementation of a Unit Service Plan is vital to helping them build a program that retains and recruits Scouts. We will discuss all of the tools and resources commissioners have to help them accomplish the unit service mission.

If you would like to attend commissioner training at Sea Base in January, register online at <http://BSA.kintera.org/2016FSBC> or by calling Scouting University at 817-430-5303. Click [here](#) for additional information about the conference and logistics.

If you have any questions about attending Sea Base, please contact Tim Acree, national commissioner support staff training chair, at tim.acree@comcast.net.



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Scouting U Launches New BSA LearnCenter

By Tim Acree and Steve Yackel, Scouting U Instructional Team Lead



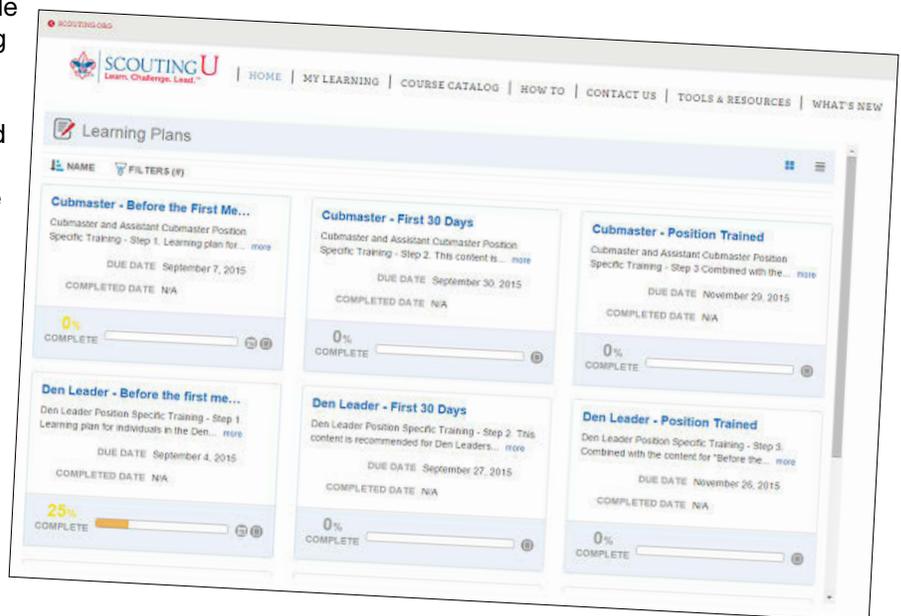
Connecting volunteers to the learning content they need when they need it is the purpose of the new BSA LearnCenter. In today's fast-paced world, Scouting volunteers want to know how to deliver quality Scouting programs to youth, but need to access training in short learning segments. Delivering a quality Scouting program makes volunteering as a leader rewarding. When the Scouting program is delivered as designed, leaders get to see the youth become more confident and resilient as they begin to learn and practice leadership at all levels.

The BSA LearnCenter is designed to provide new and robust methods of delivering learning to leaders. Position-specific training is now delivered in three parts called learning plans. The content for each learning plan is designed for the specific position and is recommended to be taken before the first meeting, within the first 30 days, and within 90 days to complete position-specific training. The training program is self-paced, allowing the volunteer to complete the training as quickly as he or she would like.

The first content offered in the new BSA LearnCenter is for Cub Scout leaders. This content supports the program changes to Cub Scouting. To access the training, log into My.Scouting.org. Create an account if you are a new leader, and select the Online Training button on the home page.

The BSA LearnCenter will host commissioner-specific content starting in the fourth quarter of 2015. We will start with video training content for Commissioner Tools, building a Unit Service Plan, and a new orientation course for commissioners of LDS units.

Keep up to date on new content by selecting the What's New tab in the BSA LearnCenter. New content will be added regularly to support our volunteers.



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The Model Roundtable

A unique opportunity occurred as part of this summer's Commissioners Week at Philmont. In previous years there had been a conferencewide Commissioner College planned for all participants. This summer brought a change in plans that created a new challenge!

Effective Roundtables course participants, who had varying levels of Scouting knowledge and commissioner experience, were informed on Monday that their task was to deliver a model roundtable to all the conference attendees on Thursday evening. After about 20 seconds of dead silence, the class enthusiastically accepted the challenge and the week was underway. The course instructors covered components of an effective roundtable, and then time was set aside to work the material into the plans for Thursday night.

Participants created displays, complete with informational fliers, for the Model Roundtable midway. They created mailboxes containing all the handout information for attendees that model how to set up roundtables in their home districts. They broke up coverage of the four roundtables, drafting faculty and Philmont Training Center staff to help deliver Boy Scout, Cub Scout, and Venturing roundtables and a Varsity huddle. The students recruited Scouts and Venturers to conduct the opening ceremony. Materials were gathered from the National Park Service about Living History programs and the Junior Ranger program, and this became the Big Rock topic for the event. Class members invited everyone they met to be part of history—the first Model Roundtable offered at Philmont.

In addition, as part of the overall Commissioners Week, the Effective Roundtables class generated data on sample units regarding roundtable attendance for entry in Commissioner Tools. That sample data was then acted on by students in the other commissioner classes.

While participants passed out numerous wooden nickels to PTC staff and students as a reminder of the time and location, there was no firm idea about who would actually attend on Thursday night. Like so many events in our normal lives, meetings often conflict with other events. That was also the case at PTC, with three other events on the schedule demanding attention.



Daniel B. Maxfield
National Commissioner Service Roundtable Chair
dbmaxi05@gmail.com

Thursday evening more than 80 people chose to attend and find out what the model roundtable was all about. They included not only PTC conference attendees but also some folks from the Great Southwest Council who drove in for the program and some Philmont staff members.

The evaluations that were filled out were overwhelmingly positive! Participants were thrilled to see that you can run a roundtable that isn't a 90-minute infomercial of announcements. People were impressed not only with the information provided by the National Park Service but also with the demonstration of how the Big Rock topic actually works. Attendees loved having the opportunity to see how the different program groups split up and covered their program-specific material and were eager to take back what they saw to their home districts and councils.

If your district or council is having problems getting people to attend roundtables, you may want to encourage your roundtable commissioners to attend the Effective Roundtables course at Philmont Training Center during Week 2: June 12–18, 2016. Registration is open now at www.philmonttrainingcenter.org. For more information about Philmont opportunities, please look for materials at your local council service center.



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Social Media Guidelines

There are now many districts around the country that create videos to post on social media and YouTube of roundtable sessions for unit leaders unable to attend in person. Electronic communication can be a valuable tool for that purpose, but its use must comply with the [BSA's social media guidelines](#).

The BSA does not ban the use of social media in the context of Scouting, and the National Council and many local councils engage in social media campaigns. The BSA focuses on safe and appropriate use of social media, including electronic roundtable methods. The BSA's social media guidelines have several goals, including:

- Ensuring that Scouting-related posts always present a positive image of Scouting as a whole, as well as the individual users and posters.
- Ensuring that youth protection principles are applied as rigorously online as in person.
- Safeguarding the privacy rights of the participants.

The first goal is achieved by creating, participating in, and posting YouTube videos, Facebook posts, etc., that abide by the host site's terms of use and the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Content must be appropriate for Scouting; the people involved must behave in a Scout-like manner; and they must be dressed appropriately in photos and videos depicting Scouts, Scouters, or Scouting activities. Doing otherwise may bring negative publicity to the participants and to Scouting as a whole. When in doubt about the propriety of a post or video, wait awhile before posting it so you can think about it, and consider seeking a second opinion.

The second goal is achieved when there is no nonpublic communication between adults and Scouts or between Scouts. In-person conversations with youth must occur in public; the same applies to electronic communications. The BSA social media guidelines provide specific guidance for email, Facebook, YouTube, instant messaging services, texting, and other communication methods.

The third goal is accomplished when no one is depicted verbally or visually without consent. Adults must agree to the use of their image or verbal statements before they can be posted online. A parent must consent in case of a youth under age 18. Additionally, captions or stories that include a minor should not contain the minor's full name or address. The BSA recommends using [this consent form](#).

Good roundtables promote great Scouting. Our youth deserve the best! So let's provide good roundtables.

Share your roundtable delivery experiences (and tips) by contacting Dan Maxfield at dbmaxi05@gmail.com.



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Delivering Commissioner Service to Changing Communities

There is an old saying that it is never too early to plan. That saying is certainly true when it comes to attending the 2016 Philmont course titled Delivering Commissioner Service to Changing Communities. If you are a commissioner serving a nontraditional or faith-based unit, this course is designed just for you! You will learn about the fundamental principles of commissioner service, along with religious and cultural insights, tools, and resources that will aid in your efforts to assist all units in their Journey to Excellence. If you serve in Asian, Hispanic, African American, Native American, Islamic, Jewish, or LDS communities, we encourage you to join us June 12–18 (Week 2) at the Philmont Training Center.

Details regarding courses, logistics, and fees are available on the [Philmont Training Center Web page](#). Scholarships are available.

Hope to see you at Philmont in 2016!



Joe Domino
National Commissioner Service
Underserved Markets Chair
send2jfd@gmail.com



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Commissioner Tools Best Practices

Here are some tips that will help you get the most out of Commissioner Tools.

- Clear your cache routinely.
- Try to log your contact entries as soon as possible after the contact has occurred so you neither forget important details of the contact nor forget to log the contact within the 60-day window. Should a commissioner or professional feel it imperative to document a contact after the 60-day window, it is possible to enter a date inside of the 60-day window and make an annotation in the comments that the entry was posted late along with the actual date of the contact. Making this type of “late” entry is completely ethical and in keeping with the intent and spirit of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- When running or downloading reports for *large* councils, try running the reports during off-peak usage hours or break up the report into smaller pieces such as into council service areas or districts if you receive an error message or the report times out.
- Which report is the “best” report is subjective, but the Unit Health report is a *most* helpful report *especially* for roundtable commissioners because this report not only shows the unit, whether it is a *new* unit, and when it was initially chartered, but also shows when the last assessment was made and by whom, along with the assessment type (simple or detailed), *plus* the score. It also shows roundtable attendance and how many leaders from each unit were in attendance for each month of the year.
- If the Commissioner Tools screen doesn’t populate or display information immediately, re-click the last button you clicked on. Or back up one level in the organization structure.
- When a commissioner needs to be assigned to units in multiple districts, have an administrative commissioner whose natural context allows access to all involved districts assign the *units* to the *commissioner* (not the *commissioner* to the *units*—



Rick Hillenbrand
National Commissioner Service
Communications Chair
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because the commissioner should show up in only one district).

- Before scheduling a Collaborative Assessment (entering a future date in a Detailed Assessment), it is recommended that you contact the unit leaders first to get on their calendars. Scheduled assessment emails are sent from CommissionerTools@scouting.org and may go to their Junk folder, which they may not ever see or open. By having a conversation in advance, unit leaders will be aware that they need to look for the communication.
- Keep up to date on current events by reading the biweekly status reports online (council commissioners and Commissioner Tools champions—don’t forget to *share* the status reports with your commissioners) and by joining the [Commissioners of the Boy Scouts of America Facebook page](#).



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- When training new commissioners, teach them how to use Commissioner Tools by having them review the Commissioner Tools videos. The links to the videos are found at <http://www.scouting.org/Commissioners/tools.aspx> along with a suggested [viewing sequence \(Viewing Order Matrix\)](#). Click [here](#) to view the entire commissioners training play list.
- Look at your my.scouting dashboard and as appropriate update your contact information. Also review your training to have errors corrected and omissions added.
- If you have a problem, don't sit on it. Let your council Commissioner Tools champion know, so he or she can help. Or failing that, reach

out to the Commissioner Tools Focus Group at CommissionerTools@scouting.org. You might have found a problem that nobody else is seeing. For example, one council could not get its reports to run. It turned out that someone had made a contact entry with a three-digit year. That very unique problem was causing the system to hang up. In another situation, there was a single district in a council where the commissioner list was not loading, but it was loading in every other district.

If you have any best practices that could benefit others, please send a detailed email with your idea to commissioner.support@scouting.org. Include screen shots if they would make explaining your idea easier.



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Counting JTE Contacts in Commissioner Tools

Before we begin a discussion of contacts in Commissioner Tools and how they relate to Journey to Excellence (JTE), the following must be appreciated when it comes to how many contacts were made in a given period of time.

1. JTE, Commissioner Tools, and back-of-the-envelope counting of unit contacts or visits for JTE for any given period of time are very likely to have three different (but correct) values, all of which are a function of data date issues. To reduce the number of answers to two, the Commissioner Tools Focus Group has submitted an enhancement to make Commissioner Tools use the same data date cutoff algorithm (it's complicated) as is used by JTE. At the time this article was written (August 28), there was no estimated time of completion for this enhancement, but we are aware of the importance of getting it done soon so people can respond as necessary in time for the end of this JTE cycle.
2. Currently the various Commissioner Tools reports that provide the number of contacts per month are counting only the number of contacts made by the *assigned* commissioner. This was a miscommunication by the developers in that they misunderstood the requirement to count *all* contacts made by any commissioner. An enhancement request is in to get this fixed too. When fixed, several columns of data will be added so you can see the contacts made not only by the assigned commissioner but also by *any* commissioner and professional.
3. The monthly reports that Darlene Sprague sends to region and area commissioners already merge UVTS visits and Commissioner Tools contacts, and this is the report that is the "gospel" when it comes to meeting JTE goals.

Ultimately, the number of contacts made and counted in both JTE and Commissioner Tools are the same. Occasionally, the count for any given month may vary between JTE and Commissioner Tools. From a district or council JTE measuring perspective, the only time it may matter when a contact is counted is at the close of the JTE cycle. To be certain that all contacts made in a given year are actually counted in that year, the best advice is to make that entry *during* the same calendar year, i.e., don't delay logging any contact made in 2015 in Commissioner Tools to 2016.

As to which Commissioner Tools reports provide what type of counting of contacts, here is a synopsis:

- **Commissioner Activity (2014 and 2015)*** shows the number of assigned contacts that have been made monthly by commissioners registered at the district or council level.
- **Commissioner Contact Stats (2014 and 2015)** displays the number of contacts made monthly by each commissioner registered at the district or council level. Contacts are broken into two buckets: assigned and additional (contact made for a unit the commissioner is not assigned to). The total number of assigned unit contacts and the percentage of assigned unit contacts are also displayed. Additional contacts *are not* included in the subtotal numbers; however, they are included in the yearly totals and may be calculated manually once the report is exported.
- **District Contact Stats (2014 and 2015)** displays the number of contacts made monthly for a unit at either the district or the council level. Only units within the selected district or council will appear.

***Note:** This report currently displays only those contacts made by the commissioner(s) *assigned to the unit*. (This does *not* affect JTE counting.) An enhancement is in development to include other types of contacts made.



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Sharing Knowledge Gained via Commissioner Tools

As the saying goes, “No man is an island,” and that is more true for today’s commissioner, whether man or woman. In the past year we have introduced the concept of a Collaborative Assessment where the commissioner works with the unit’s Key 3 (another relatively new term). An often underutilized and frequently nearly invisible member of the unit Key 3 is the chartered organization representative (sometimes referred to as the COR), yet this person is vital to the unit and is a voting member of the district committee. When commissioners work with their units, they seek to strengthen the unit, and because nobody is an expert at everything, as commissioners we often need additional resources to obtain the help the unit needs.

In a recent conversation with a regional membership vice president, it was noted by the membership team that Commissioner Tools has the potential to be very powerful depending on how it is used and whether the appropriate information is provided to the membership team. Specifically, the membership team requested that there be a way to export information from the Membership section of unit assessments documented in Commissioner Tools. While the Commissioner Tools Focus Group wrestles with this question and how to fulfill the expressed need, it does raise the important point that as commissioners we are the front line between the unit and the administrative resources and support that the district and council can provide.

Traditionally we say that commissioners should be sharing their knowledge of unit needs and strengths with “the district,” but how does a typical commissioner,

who does not attend the district committee meetings, bring that information to the district? Commissioner Tools provides the perfect means to both document and communicate unit needs and strengths to your commissioner leadership (district commissioner and assistant district commissioner) as well as trigger an alarm when there is a priority need, and it is the leadership’s responsibility to summarize, prioritize, and communicate those needs to the district committee, typically at the monthly district committee meeting. If chartered organization representatives are regular attendees at the district committee meetings, in addition to their regular responsibilities, they can aid a district commissioner in conveying exactly what the needs of specific units are in an effort to marshal resources to help that unit. This is not to say Commissioner Tools should—or ever will—replace other means of communicating, including regular district commissioner meetings, yet I’m sure all of us can imagine a scenario where a phone call would be faster and more appropriate to make an initial report of a unit need. If you think about this scenario, it’s pretty easy to see the importance of a commissioner creating a Unit Service Plan collaboratively with the entire unit Key 3.

Because it is impossible to be constantly in touch with all the commissioners in a district, administrative commissioners should regularly review the Priority Needs Units report and use it as a first line of defense for identifying where they need to engage to assist in getting help for a unit.



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Why Commissioner Tools?

By Garry Lewis with Rick Hillenbrand

When the Commissioner Tools Focus Group began the process of writing requirements for Commissioner Tools, the team went to the doctrinal publications to establish what commissioners do. Then, we asked a couple of questions:

- How could Commissioner Tools facilitate commissioner processes?
- What information is needed to support commissioners?

In the following table, commissioner tasks are found in the left column, and Commissioner Tools support for commissioners are found in the right column. While Commissioner Tools does not do everything we would like it to do, it certainly moves us in the right direction.

Commissioner Tasks/Functions	Commissioner Tools Capabilities
Commissioner Orientation	Provide a record of previous contacts/assessments, roundtable attendance, Key 3 information
Charter Renewal	Record unit assessments and provide Unit Health reports
Priority Needs	Ability to identify, track, and report units with priority needs
Unit Evaluations	Record assessments
Assessment Forms	Electronic distribution; online completion; permanent record
Unit Action Planning Meeting	Schedule a future meeting with unit leaders to develop a Unit Service Plan
Operating Committees	Record and track district operating committee support
Unit Contacts	Record and report unit contacts
Roundtables	Record and report roundtable attendance

Commissioner Tasks/Functions	Commissioner Tools Capabilities
Unit Service Plan	Facilitates building a Unit Service Plan
Journey to Excellence	Guide and assess unit performance improvement
Youth Protection Training	Monitor unit Youth Protection training status
Service to New Units	Help identify and manage new units
Commissioner Training	Identify trained commissioners
Commissioner Assignments	Assign commissioners to units
Dashboards	Unit scores and health indicators

The main point is that when you discuss the “why” of Commissioner Tools the discussion must begin with what commissioners do as defined by our doctrinal publications. If we don’t understand and appreciate how Commissioner Tools, Member Manager, Training Manager, JTE dashboards, and other such applications can provide access to data and information we can use to fulfill our role and help units, then it will be difficult to appreciate whether Commissioner Tools is providing added value. (Similar to the old saying that “if you don’t have a planned destination, how will you know when you have arrived,” or alternatively, “any destination will do.”) Commissioner Tools is capable of providing actionable information for very specific questions.

Commissioner Tools Enable Success

Since the initial pilot deployment of Commissioner Tools in August 2014, commissioner staffs have explored ways to use the tools to fulfill the purposes and goals of commissioner service. Helping to see that the objectives of Scouting are being carried out, assuring that each unit has strong, competent unit leadership, and ensuring growth in youth membership are just a few of the goals of commissioner service.



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Here are some early indicators provided by Commissioner Tools to support the commissioner functions:

- The percentage and list of units with/without an assigned commissioner
- The percentage and list of commissioners entering/not entering unit contacts
- The percentage and list of units with/without an assessment
- The percentage and list of units with/without a Unit Service Plan
- The percentage and list of units attending/not attending roundtable

The information contained in Commissioner Tools—when employed by a knowledgeable commissioner—will improve the ultimate performance indicators:

- Retention rate of traditional units
- Number and performance rating of units using the Journey to Excellence program
- Percentage of unit leaders with current Youth Protection training
- Percentage of unit leaders with current position-specific training
- Percentage of traditional units completing charter renewal in a timely manner

While this discussion has centered on obtaining actionable information, being a commissioner is about establishing a meaningful relationship with unit leadership and providing exceptional commissioner service. We endeavor to exceed expectations rather than just barely satisfying expectations; provide caring service, not just competent service; and respond promptly to unit needs.

If you have questions about how to leverage the power of Commissioner Tools, [view the training videos](#), visit the Commissioners website, contact your local Commissioner Tools champion, or send an email to CommissionerTools@scouting.org.

Conclusion

If we think about Commissioner Tools as suggested, we can continue to build its capabilities to be and do exactly what commissioners expect. This takes us back to the beginning where the team asked those first two important questions: tell us what you need the tool to do and what information you need to fulfill your role as a commissioner.



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Getting Down to Business

New Chief Scout Executive Michael Surbaugh believes the Boy Scouts of America should apply the principles of sound business practices to its efforts in serving young people. Click [here](#) to read the entire article on Scouting Wire.



Michael Surbaugh
Chief Scout Executive



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Scouting Wire

Scouting Wire is a new BSA website for both volunteers and professionals. Click [here](#) to find out what's happening in Scouting across the country.



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Marketing and Membership Hub

The Marketing and Membership Hub provides resources to help you serve more youth in your area. Click [here](#) to access this one-stop resource for improving your marketing and recruiting strategy.



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2015 National Outdoor Conference

Make your plans to attend Scouting's largest get-together of volunteers and professionals charged with delivering the world's greatest outdoor program for youth! Scheduled for October 14–18 at Philmont, it's four days of backcountry excursions, group sessions, outstanding keynote speakers, outdoor vendor exhibits, clean mountain air, more than 50 sessions with camping and outdoor experts, some fun competition, special program opportunities, great music, and fellowship with Scouting's top outdoor leaders.

Join fellow Scouters and outdoor enthusiasts from across the country to learn new methods, share ideas, and check out the latest in outdoor gear and programs. It is the place to be if you are involved with outdoor programs in any way. There are also two pre-conferences planned about fishing and visual storytelling.

Click [here](#) for more details and click [here](#) to register.



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Get Ready for 2015 Jamboree-on-the-Air and Jamboree-on-the-Internet

Jamboree-on-the-Air and Jamboree-on-the-Internet will be held October 16–18, 2015. JOTA and JOTI are annual world Scouting events that provide an opportunity for Scouts to communicate with other Scouts from around the world.

Visit the [JOTA website](#) and [JOTI website](#) for information on how to participate, download participation certificates, order this year's patches, and MUCH MORE!

We hope you have lots of fun and success during these exciting events.



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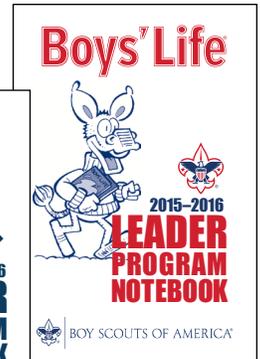
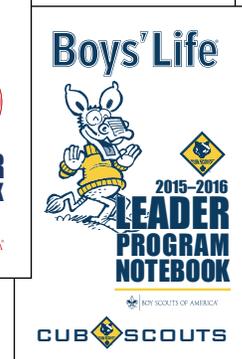
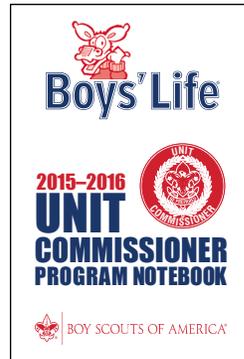
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Boys' Life Program Planning Package

The 2015-2016 *Boys' Life* Program Planning Package is now available. Using these materials will help make your unit's annual program planning a success. Click [here](#) for more information.



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Updated September 24, 2015

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JTE Key Performance Indicators

The Journey to Excellence Key Performance Indicators from August 2015 can be accessed [here](#).



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Coming Events

2015

October 5-7

National Executive Board and Committee Meetings

DFW Marriott North, Irving, Texas (invitation only)

2016

February 7

Scout Sunday

February 8

Scouting Anniversary

February 8-10

National Executive Board and Committee Meetings

DFW Marriott North, Irving, Texas (invitation only)

February 13

Scout Sabbath

May 25-27

National Annual Meeting and National Executive Board and Committee Meetings

Manchester Grand Hyatt, San Diego, California



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