

Spring 2012

THE COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COMMISSIONERS AND PROFESSIONALS



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National Commissioner Minute

My fellow commissioners,

It truly takes an entire district to support a unit. Although our commissioner corps provides direct service to units, adds visits in the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS), and helps units succeed in their continuous improvement for earning the Bronze, Silver, or Gold performance award in Journey to Excellence (JTE), we cannot do it alone. We also need to call on the district committee as subject matter experts to support unit program needs. The district committee should be your key resource for such specialty areas as training, advancement, camping, and finance. In our best districts, the district commissioner shares a unit's needs as identified by the unit commissioner, and the district chair or his or her designate assigns the appropriate program specialist to assist the unit commissioner in serving the unit's needs. If we work together as a team—the unit commissioner, the district administrative commissioners, the district chair, and the district's subject matter specialists—we can help a unit achieve the key performance characteristics outlined in Journey to Excellence. We are the best team to recruit new commissioners.

The district Key 3 plays a major role in selecting, recruiting, training, and recognizing qualified volunteers to serve units in local councils. The commissioner corps should support the Key 3's efforts to identify and introduce new volunteers who can provide needed depth and expertise to the district committee. Every volunteer who is recruited for the district committee is a resource that a unit commissioner can link to the unit in support of the unit's needs.

There are exciting times ahead for the commissioner corps in 2012.

- Philmont Training Center is offering a record number of commissioner training courses this summer. Details are contained in the newsletter and on the national website.
- The opening of the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve and the 2013 National Scout Jamboree is only a year away. This history-making event should be experienced by your unit youth. Don't forget your staff application.
- UVTS usage continues to grow at an exponential rate, and we are getting a better grasp of unit health and needs.



Tico Perez
National Commissioner

- Updated College of Commissioner Science curricula are being prepared and will be available soon.
- Revised commissioner basic training for unit commissioners, district commissioners, and assistant district commissioners will be available this quarter.
- Commissioners are playing an increasingly important role in Journey to Excellence and Voice of the Scout.

Get Registered as a Commissioner

Serving as commissioner is truly an honor. Please check with your district executive and local council registrar to make sure your BSA registration is current. If you also serve in a unit, make sure you are multiple registered with your position codes: unit commissioner = 80; district commissioner = 81; assistant district commissioner = 82; assistant council commissioner = 16; council commissioner = 15; roundtable commissioner = 83; roundtable staff = 84. Your registration status will ensure that you have continued access to UVTS and are able to add visits.

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



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Proper New-Unit Organization and Unit Retention Is Critical

One of the best resources to be published recently by the Boy Scouts of America is the *New-Unit Retention Guide*, which was introduced last year. The guide, now updated and renamed the *Unit Performance Guide*, is a comprehensive manual for creating and sustaining high-performing units. Produced by the New-Unit Retention Task Force under the leadership of Mark Kriebel, the guide assimilates some of the best field-proven methodologies that have been used to start and retain new units. Among those ideas are the creation of a unit Key 3 (the unit leader, chartered organization representative, and unit committee chair, advised by the unit commissioner) and the new-unit commissioner, who is charged with ensuring that the new unit survives and thrives through two charter renewal cycles. The guide is currently being piloted in various councils. Although the commissioner corps and the National Commissioner Service Task Force have been integral to the mission of the New-Unit Retention Task Force, our work is not done.

We are excited, and it seems only appropriate, that two of our own will be transitioning to play key roles in the New-Unit Retention Task Force. Ellie Morrison, who has served on the Commissioner Service Task Force since its inception as our chair of recruitment and retention, has accepted the appointment as the new chair of the New-Unit Retention Task Force following the National Annual Meeting. Under Ellie's leadership, the commissioner corps set records for commissioner recruitment and unit-to-commissioner ratios. We respect her vision, her Texas charm, and her extraordinary common sense, as well as her ability to get things done. We have pledged to Ellie that because of the work and common mission of the two task forces she will forever be a part of our commissioner family. It is a great opportunity for Ellie, and we wish her the best in her new role.

Mark Wappel, who has been the National Commissioner Service Task Force adviser since its creation, will be transitioning to serve as the new staff adviser for the new-unit organization/retention committee and supporting national BSA membership initiatives, effective June 2, 2012. Mark has successfully



Scott Sorrels
National Commissioner Service Chair

leveraged the strength that comes from a true "volunteer-led, professionally guided" partnership, and he deserves an immense amount of credit for the work and accomplishments of the National Commissioner Service Task Force. Thank you, Mark, and our best wishes to you as you begin your new adventure.

We are pleased to welcome Steve Sawyer as the new staff adviser for the National Commissioner Service Task Force, and we look forward to working with him as we continue our mission.



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A Simple and Unified Approach Will Focus Our Unit Service Efforts

By Scott Sorrels, National Commissioner Service Chair

Sometimes simpler is better. In this age of new technology and new initiatives, it is sometimes appropriate to step back and look at the forest. Earlier this year, the National Commissioner Service Task Force met and focused on where we have been as a commissioner corps and, more importantly, what we can do to make the duties of unit commissioners and the administrative commissioners who support them both easier and more fulfilling. The theme we kept coming back to is the need to make the expectations that we have for our volunteers more manageable and easier to achieve, as well as the need to carry that same message throughout our commissioner service support resources. Stated another way, we need a simple and unified approach to supporting the commissioner corps.

The retention mission statement given above captures the important elements needed to be effective in improving retention. Tico Perez, our national commissioner, has long challenged us to own retention, and we have seen an increase in retention due to your efforts. It is a lot easier to improve and keep a unit than it is to start a new one. The statement proposes that we deploy an adequate number of trained unit commissioners. We ended 2011 hitting a record of more than 30,000 unit commissioners and our best unit-to-commissioner ratio ever at 3.7. In terms of training, you will find information throughout this newsletter about new training materials, including an exciting revision of basic training and a complete rewrite of the College of Commissioner Science syllabus. The new syllabus will allow us to have a uniform curriculum fully supported by Web-based materials for each course.

The concept of linkage is critical to our execution mission. In the best of worlds, the unit commissioner is a link to the subject matter experts and resources who reside at the district committee level. Where those subject matter experts do not yet exist, our commissioners should support the efforts of the district Key 3 to recruit and deploy the right resource specialists. A new pilot project by the Western Region focuses on that linkage, and we look forward to learning from their efforts. There can be little doubt that we need to strengthen our district operations in order to increase unit and youth retention.



Retention Mission Statement

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

We should strive to make the functions of unit commissioner as simple as possible. It is also supposed to be fun. During our analysis, the task force identified various job descriptions with at least 38 different tasks that we ask of a unit commissioner. That is hardly a simple job description. Put more simply, the BSA needs for our unit commissioners to focus on the following four primary areas:

- **Supporting unit growth in the Journey to Excellence criteria:** JTE measures performance characteristics that unlock the door to a successful unit. We should analyze the unit's program and identify JTE areas where help is needed to move the unit to a higher level of JTE success.
- **Linking district committee resources to the unit:** We should support the district committee's delivery of a "catalog of services" to support the specific JTE elements needed for a particular unit's health and success.
- **Visiting units and logging the visits into the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS):** Our core task remains visiting the unit. UVTS input feeds critical information to the district committee to help link resources to the unit.
- **Supporting on-time charter renewal:** The commissioner's focus is the retention of the unit, though we should be especially mindful of supporting new youth membership efforts as we move more toward a volunteer-led, professionally guided approach to increasing membership.



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In the coming months, the task force will “tear the covers off” of our printed and online resources and will move forward in support of a simple and unified message that is consistent across our platforms. Although some materials and resources are dated and will go away, other materials that are complex and inconsistent will be unified in their approach. All of these new or revised materials will be readily available on the commissioner website.

We welcome your thoughts on how we can further enhance a simple and unified approach to serving our units.



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Recruitment and Retention

The effectiveness at the unit level of Voice of the Scout, the national survey of BSA membership with the goal of improving the Scout experience, is critically dependent on two meetings: the Action Planning Meeting and the Mid-Charter Review. Participants in those meetings are the unit Key 3 (chartered organization representative, unit leader, and the unit committee chair) and the unit commissioner. Without these two meetings, the information from the surveys would just collect dust.

The Action Planning Meeting has been used for many years as part of the former Centennial Quality Unit procedures. This former process also called for a review of goals set six months prior to the next unit charter renewal to ensure that the unit was on track to meet its goal. We are now calling that second meeting the Mid-Charter Review.

The two meetings are essentially the same—the different names correspond to the timing of each meeting—but the addition of Voice of the Scout has caused the guidelines for those meetings to change. Please review the new guidelines located on page 65 of the *Unit Performance Guide* (formerly the *New-Unit Retention Guide*). The unit commissioner's preparation for each of those meetings will make all the difference in their success.

Most councils renew their unit charters in December so the results of the semi-annual Voice of the Scout surveys for units have been designed to arrive at council in time for these two meetings. There will be two streams for that information to flow: from council president to district chair to the individual members of the unit Key 3 and from council commissioner to district commissioner to the unit commissioner.

District commissioners will want to help their unit commissioners prepare for these meetings in several ways. A monthly training topic of counseling skills would be helpful. The district commissioner will want to introduce the new guidelines for the meetings as part of their cabinet meetings. They may also want to ask assistant district commissioners to review the individual results with each unit commissioner to assist in looking for trends and help them put the information into perspective.

Recently I had the opportunity to observe a unit Key 3 and their unit commissioner have an Action Planning Meeting. The unit was a JTE



Ellie Morrison
National Commissioner Service Recruitment
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Gold unit, and it was obvious that most members of the unit were happy with their Scouting experience. But there were some items revealed that needed to be addressed. The UC did a great job of promoting the attitude that these comments were the doorway to opportunity for change. The unit Key 3 made some plans for change and adopted deadlines. All left the meeting energized and enthusiastic about what was to come.

With proper preparation and execution of the meetings, the survey results can be put to good use. Personally I'm convinced that, along with the resources of the districts, Voice

of the Scout may be one of the best tools commissioners have to help units succeed.

Along with the resources of the districts, Voice of the Scout may be one of the best tools commissioners have to help units succeed.



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Training for Commissioner Service

Commissioner training has been significantly revised for 2012. Please read this article carefully, especially if you are responsible for conducting commissioner basic training or a Commissioner College.

Basic training has been changed from one course for all commissioners to a position-specific course for unit commissioners, new-unit commissioners, and district and assistant district commissioners. Focusing the training on concepts needed for each position made it possible to shorten the training from three sessions that were each two hours long to one session that is about three hours long. This will make it easier to train new commissioners and get them fielded. The training has also been updated to include information on new-unit retention, how the district can help serve the unit, UVTS, Journey to Excellence, Voice of the Scout, and the unit Key 3.

The College of Commissioner Science has undergone a major overhaul. Some of the courses have been dropped or renumbered and some have been significantly revised. Other courses have been added, as well as an entirely new Continuing Education curriculum. Section III, Chapter 4 of the *Administration of Commissioner Service*, has been updated to include much more information on how to plan and conduct a Commissioner College. The additional information includes budgeting, using Internet techniques for conducting a remote college, degree requirements and reciprocity for those attending other colleges, recordkeeping, and more.

The new and updated training courses will be ready for use shortly after approval at the 2012 National Annual Meeting and should be available for download from the Commissioners website in early July.



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Basic Training

After a new commissioner has completed the e-learning sessions, the next step in the orientation process is basic training. The following courses are available:

- Unit Commissioner Basic
- Commissioner for New Units Basic
- District Commissioner/Assistant District Commissioner Basic

Similar to the original basic training for commissioners, Unit Commissioner Basic focuses on what a unit commissioner needs to know before the first unit visit and how to be a unit commissioner. The second course is for unit commissioners who focus on new units. The third course is the first basic training course available for the district commissioner and assistant district commissioner positions.

The courses are presented by an instructor using PowerPoint slides. The slides each contain “talking points” that the instructor will expand upon. Instructors will be provided with a teaching guide and will have to make sure all important points are covered during the class. These courses have been reviewed by professional course developers at the national level.

The plan is to have Roundtable Commissioner Basic and Council Commissioner Basic available before the end of the year. In addition, the manuals will be updated to reflect the new training curriculum.

Dave Fornadel led the team of Ron Blaisdell, Ed Reynolds, Stephen Perrone, and Dick Kroll in creating all three courses. Thanks to the team for an outstanding job.

Note: Every commissioner is required to complete basic training, and a yearly review is not a bad idea!



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College of Commissioner Science

The College of Commissioner Science curriculum is undergoing revision. The goal in updating the college courses was to improve both the quality of instruction and the materials used at a College of Commissioner Science. By using these materials, the courses will now be taught in a more consistent manner from college to college and there will be an approved PowerPoint presentation available for each course. Nationally approved courses for the College of Commissioner Science will be listed in the *Administration of Commissioner Service* manual and can be downloaded from the Commissioners website for use.

Once the updated manual has been posted on the Commissioners website under the "Commissioner Training" tab, there will be a link with a zip file for each course. Each zip file will be a self-contained course with all materials—course outline, teaching notes, PowerPoint presentation, and handouts. Simply click on the link and download the file. Most versions of Windows now have a utility that will unpack zip files. Each zip file will include multiple files with the following prefixes:

001—A list of the documents that should be in the file set; this is to make sure that nothing is missing after the files have been unpacked.

002—Course outline (similar to the one currently in the Continuing Education section of the administration manual)

003—Teaching notes for the suggested primary and secondary teaching methods

004—A listing of materials needed for the class, such as flipchart, markers, Post-it notes, index cards, digital projector, laptop, and printouts

010—PowerPoint presentation of the course

011–025—Handouts, data sheets, manuals, and other materials used for the class

As an example, the zip file for **BCS 105 Practical Solutions to Common Unit Needs** includes the following files:

001—BCS 105 Contents

002—BCS 105 Course Outline

003—BCS 105 Teaching Notes

004—BCS 105 Materials Needed

010—BCS 105 PowerPoint Presentation

011—BCS 105 Commissioner Helps

012—BCS 105 Worksheet (Pack)

013—BCS 105 Worksheet (Troop)

014—BCS 105 Worksheet (Crew)

015—BCS 105 PowerPoint Notes

Because the Commissioner College course content has changed very little since its inception, many councils have created their own college courses. To accommodate local courses and keep a consistent numbering system, it is suggested that the following course numbering system be implemented in each council:

Bachelor Courses

101–199 National courses

201–299 Local council courses

Master Courses

301–399 National courses

401–499 Local council courses

Doctoral Courses

501–599 National courses

601–699 Local council courses

Continuing Education

701–799 National courses

801–899 Local council courses

Note that there is now a nationally approved set of courses for Continuing Education.

Section III, Chapter 4 of the *Administration of Commissioner Service* will be updated to include much more information on how to plan and conduct a Commissioner College. The new information will be especially helpful to a council holding its first college, but it will also contain new information for even the most experienced college dean.

The following commissioners worked on the update:



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Bachelor curriculum:

Peter Matrow, lead
Randy Corgan
Cheryl Izyk
Tony Mei
Gene Eplee

Master curriculum:

Jon Baake, lead
Jane Condon
Jay Laser
Mark Morris
Bill Yoder
Dominique Bee
Tony Mei
Elizabeth Matrow

Doctoral curriculum:

George Crowl, lead
Hulic Ratterree
John Refieuna
William Reisa
Elmer Palmer
Larry Schmidt
Alan Leech

Continuing Education curriculum:

Terry Chapman, lead
Alan Simmons
Randy Worcester
Sam Young
Gordon Cochran
Douglas Roberts
Scott Moline
Jody Batten

Manual update:

Ron Hubbard, lead
Tom Libby
Nathaniel Lim
Alan Simmons
Dave Barringer



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National-level Training

The national commissioner conferences take place each summer at the Philmont Training Center near Cimarron, New Mexico. So far this year, registration numbers are below expectations. Please consider attending training at Philmont and encourage other commissioners to attend with you. For more information, see the Philmont Training Center 2012 Registration Form.

The Florida National High Adventure Sea Base will be conducting Unit Commissioner Training from January 13–18, 2013. For more information, see the 2013 Florida Sea Base Volunteer Training Conferences handout.

If you have any questions about commissioner training, please contact Tim Acree, national commissioner service training chair, at tim.acree@comcast.net.



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Commissioner Questions and Answers

Should Scoutreach units have entries in UVTS?

Currently there is no method to separate Scoutreach units from any other traditional unit type for JTE purposes regarding, for example, either advancement or unit visitations.

More correctly stated, Scoutreach units should NOT be counted for the JTE commissioner visit requirement because they do not typically have commissioners assigned. A counting problem based on Scoutreach units will occur if those units are intermingled with regular units in the typical district. Some councils avoid that counting problem by separating their Scoutreach units into Scoutreach-only "districts," which allows them to easily "back out" those units from the JTE statistics.

What if I don't have Internet access?

For a commissioner who does not have access to UVTS or the Internet, here is a sample UVTS form they can fill out and submit to their assistant district commissioner or district commissioner who can input it into UVTS.

Is it possible to print *The Commissioner* online newsletter?

You asked and we listened. We now have a PDF version of the new electronic newsletter. It is available by clicking under the masthead on the electronic version.



Click here to print a copy of *The Commissioner* newsletter.

Is a roundtable commissioner able to make entries in the UVTS system?

UVTS allows the roundtable commissioner and registered roundtable staff registered positions to make a unit visit entry. They were included because in some councils they are assigned to serve units. Roundtable attendance should not be entered into UVTS.



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

Need help?

The Unit Visit Tracking System help desk provides personal assistance from an operator and details on the system with links to each section of content.

Phone (for commissioners only): 972-672-4389

Hours: The operator is on call to answer questions 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Leave a message and an operator will call you back.

Have another question?

For volunteer questions, issues about JTE, or any other related items, call the National Service Desk at 972-580-2330.



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Entering Information in UVTS

What contacts should be entered in UVTS?

Now that UVTS is stabilized and commissioners are entering visits, there have been many discussions about which contacts should be entered in UVTS. Remember, UVTS is just a tool to keep track of your visits. The important part of the visit is the visit itself and the information you obtain about the health of the unit. A good rule of thumb is the contact/visit should be recorded in UVTS if you can select one or more of the quality indicators to attach to it. For meetings involving youth, you should be able to evaluate all the quality indicators. Currently, there are many recorded visits in UVTS with no indicators selected. Incomplete entries in UVTS are not useful to those reading them, including the person who entered the information originally and returns for a historical review. Enough information should be entered to give a sense of the unit health. Use the following chart of quality indicators for reference.

Planning Did the observed program reflect prior planning and adequate preparation?

Program Was the observed activity appropriate to the stated advancement and program objectives for this unit?

Leadership Was adult (and age-appropriate youth) leadership present during this activity?

Tone Did the Scouts appear to enjoy and be engaged with the program activity?

Attendance Was actual attendance at this activity at or near the number of enrolled youth?

Who enters the contacts?

The visit should be entered primarily by a unit commissioner or assistant district commissioner. Visits by district commissioners, assistant council commissioners, council commissioners, area commissioners, and region commissioners, while wonderful, are not regularly scheduled visits with the intent on improving the unit program.

What about roundtable attendance?

Roundtable attendance is not a unit visit. It is a supplemental training event that unit leaders attend. Attendance should be recorded, but not in UVTS. The *Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service* provides the following information about roundtables:

Visit informally with leaders but do not use roundtables as a primary unit contact. Leaders attend to get program ideas and techniques for their next month's meetings. Do not take them away from the program. Talk with them informally during the fellowship portion of the roundtable.



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UVTS Features Wish List

We have been compiling a wish list for future enhancements to the Unit Visit Tracking System. The new version of UVTS will likely be launched when the BSA information system is revamped. Certain aspects of the new information system have already been introduced. When it is our turn for input, we want to be ready.

Features that have been formally requested:

- Add the "Date Entered" column in the exports.
- Make the Summary Report list all the units and put zero in those units with no visits (like it was in 2011). This will require that the date filter work in selecting the year but still have all the units listed.

Features that have been suggested:

- Report tool for creating custom reports
- Set of standard reports

- Notification that an administrative commissioner has made a comment about a visit
- Notification indicator that can alert an administrative commissioner of a situation in a unit
- More options for the type of visit
- Smartphone apps

Suggestions

If you have suggestions for features to add to the wish list, please email Darlene Sprague at darsprague@roadrunner.com. Make sure to include details so we understand exactly what you are requesting.



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The Purpose of the District UVTS Monthly Report

What is the purpose of the district UVTS monthly report?

What It Is

- A stand-alone manual report
- A report to show which districts are currently using UVTS
- A report to show district UVTS activity during the year
- A report for helping councils encourage districts not using UVTS to participate
- A report that captures previous monthly activity when the unit visits are actually entered in UVTS, not the dates when the actual unit visits are made
- A positive reinforcement acknowledgement and recognition of districts using UVTS
- A temporary report that will be replaced by an actual JTE district dashboard to reflect real-time UVTS data and unit visits entered (target of May 2013)

What It Is Not

The district UVTS monthly report is not any of the following:

- A JTE district dashboard
- A real-time ScoutNET/PAS report
- A real-time UVTS data report
- A real-time JTE data report
- A record of when the unit visits are actually made



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Commissioner Manuals Under Construction

The following commissioner manuals are under construction:

Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service, No. 33621, *Administration of Commissioner Service*, No. 34501, *Council Commissioner Manual*, No. 522-015, and *Commissioner Helps for Packs, Troops and Crews*, No. 33618. The new manuals will have a module format with topic modules and then groups of modules based on the commissioner position and the information required. These updates will give us the flexibility to create specialized manuals.

We hope to release the new materials in October. If you would like to be a part of the review process, please email Darlene Sprague at darsprague@roadrunner.com.



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Roundtable Study Project Report

The Roundtable Study Project Team data collection process has been completed. Some 800 of you contributed to this effort, and the Roundtable Study Project Team thanks each of you!

Of the survey respondents, 36 percent were between 40 and 50 years old, and 43 percent were 50 years and older. Forty-three percent of the respondents were most directly related to the Cub Scout program, 44 percent were most directly related to the Boy Scout program, and 12 percent of the respondents were most directly related to Venturing. Here are some of those results:

Approximately 77.5 percent of the respondents believe that monthly meetings are most effective, but the following differences were noted:

Urban and suburban

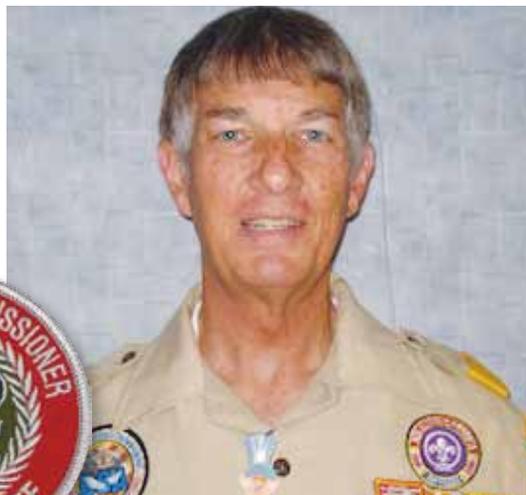
Sixty-five percent of respondents fell into this category.

Hold monthly meetings held either year-round or during school months. Determine what works best for attendees, districts or the council: (1) holding roundtables preferably in the same place for continuity (87.7 percent) that last from one to one-and-one-half hours (pretty evenly split percentage as suits the attendees, district, or council), or (2) holding roundtables that begin with all attendees together and then break into smaller topical groups for most of the meeting (70 percent). Significant evidence existed that it is important to have a notification system developed via phone tree, email, etc., that reminds attendees—and perhaps provides an agenda—five to seven days prior to the meeting.

Rural

Thirty-five percent of respondents fell into this category.

Hold monthly, alternate monthly, or quarterly meetings (18 percent). Determine what works best for attendees, districts or the council: (1) holding them in the same place, (2) rotating around the districts geography each time held, or (3) holding them in more than one place for each time held (with two or three roundtables conducted). For those unable to attend because of issues with distance, make the roundtable available through electronic means, such as a podcast or Skype. (Web-based options should be researched to discover what systems of this nature are already available and usable with a minimum of technology complications). Significant evidence existed that it is



Daniel B. Maxfield
National Commissioner Service Roundtable Chair
dmaxfil@yahoo.com

important to have a notification system developed via phone tree, email, etc., that reminds attendees—and perhaps provides an agenda—five to seven days prior to the meeting.

Other thoughts brought forward include the following:

- Roundtable staff members must be high-energy people who know how to involve some or the attendees in the meeting activities.
- Meetings must be well organized to maximize participant outcome and not be wasteful of people's time.
- Success depends on the talent and imagination of the roundtable staff and requires salesmanship to get leaders to come.
- Roundtable staffs need training in time management, organization, and the use of multimedia tools.
- Technology can provide the means to make available a substantial amount of resources to those who are not able to attend or who just want more information.



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The study team is currently in the process of dissecting this information. Many topics will be discussed, but the following are currently under consideration:

1. Is the name “roundtable” still an appropriate characterization of this program, or is there some other name that could better address its intent?
2. Is an official position of assistant council commissioner for roundtables appropriate?
3. What distinguishes a roundtable commissioner from roundtable staff?



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Roundtable Planning Guides

Roundtable planning guides are scheduled for a May–June delivery this year instead of September.

There will not be any substantive changes at this time. During 2012, all of the guides will be reviewed with major updates expected for the May 2013 editions.

If you have looked online lately, you might have noticed some changes are already being made to the Cub Scout pack meeting plans. These changes will be incorporated into the 2013 *Cub Scout Roundtable Planning Guide*.



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Survey Question: The Word “Roundtable”

Would you be in favor of changing the word “roundtable” to another appropriate and meaningful name?

Thanks for your support of the Roundtable Study Project and for the responses we received from so many of you who are in the field doing the hard work! If you wish to contribute thoughts and answer the survey question above, please email Dan Maxfield at dbmaxi05@gmail.com



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Farewell From the National Commissioner Staff Adviser

Wow! It has already been close to four years now since I had been assigned to national BSA commissioner service as your staff adviser. The time has gone by quickly. I will miss working with a great group of volunteer commissioners as I move on to my new role as of June 2, 2012, as senior business development/membership specialist for the Membership Impact Department in the following two functions: new-unit organization/retention and national membership initiatives.

Commissioner service will be in capable hands. It has truly been a privilege and honor for me to provide direct support behind the scenes in every aspect of commissioner service to our tremendous team

of volunteers these past four years. The national commissioner corps has truly exemplified what a volunteer-driven, professionally guided operation could become with volunteers and professionals working closely together. I am grateful and appreciative for knowing, working with, and supporting such a dedicated and hard-working group of volunteers. I wish to offer my successor, Steve Sawyer, Community Alliances Team, the best of success as he takes on the new role of staff adviser to the National Commissioner Service Task Force.

Here's a little bit about Steve's Scouting background. He has worked on the Boy Scouts of America National Council staff since May 2011 and he is serving as a membership specialist, working with national community organizations and groups with religious affiliations.

He served as a field director for the last 18 years at Circle Ten Council in Dallas, Texas, where he directly managed and supervised commissioner service, membership, volunteer recruitment, training, and fundraising. Prior to working at the Circle Ten Council, Steve served as a district director in Dallas. Steve is married and has two daughters in college.

For all future correspondence related to commissioner service beginning June 2, 2012, contact Steve Sawyer at 972-580-2111 or steve.sawyer@scouting.org



Mark Wappel



Steve Sawyer



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Panning for Gold

By Larry Chase

Council Commissioner, Atlanta Area Council

As we move forward into Scouting's second century, the mission of its commissioners remains constant: helping units succeed. But just as the BSA is changing rapidly to remain relevant while maintaining its core values, commissioners are finding that new tools and techniques are needed to deliver second-century service to our units. Journey to Excellence, with its focus on continuous improvement, is just one of those. Our administrative commissioners (council commissioners, assistant council commissioners, district commissioners, and assistant district commissioners) are finding new approaches are needed to lead unit commissioners effectively. Clearly setting expectations, measuring what really matters, and walking the talk can help our commissioners deliver service that will enable our units to serve more kids better.

Set Expectations

Four clear messages must be regularly and consistently communicated to the corps:

1. Retaining units and kids requires trained leaders, great program, and effective unit service.
2. We must have an adequate number of commissioners to serve our units. A reasonable benchmark ratio is 3:1, but it's only a benchmark. Individual skills, experience, and schedules require adjustments. The new-unit retention process will drive us toward a lower ratio.
3. Our commissioners must be fully engaged with the units they serve. Just achieving the ratio is meaningless. Our only measures of engagement are unit health assessments and unit visit reports.
4. Training never ends. Our core values are constant. Everything else changes to maintain relevance. Training taken in the past doesn't meet the needs of today.

Measure What Matters

Ratio of Units to Commissioners

A reliable reference point (starting point) on corps membership is essential.

ScoutNET rosters may not serve that need (cut-off, process, and other issues may distort accuracy). District commissioners will almost invariably have a reliable email roster of current commissioners. Continuously cross-reference email and ScoutNET rosters to drive to greater accuracy.

Access to UVTS 2.0 is an invaluable by-product of ScoutNET providing an accurate basis for calculating the current ratio. Key volunteer access to ScoutNET is essential.

Percentage of Units With Health Assessments Completed in January and July

Recording unit health assessments in UVTS increases familiarity with the tool and facilitates access to information. Cross-referencing unit health assessments and dropped units following recharter identifies opportunities for improvement and reinforces the value of the tool and the technique.

The Number and Percentage of Units With Visits Reported Monthly in UVTS 2.0

UVTS 2.0 offers the potential of data that can be mined to improve unit service.

Utilize UVTS within the commissioner corps. Share with district operations committee to improve allocation of resources. Celebrate and build upon initial success by using data as it becomes available.

Participation in Council-sponsored Commissioner Events

These include quarterly commissioner meetings, the College of Commissioner Science, and the annual conference.

Incorporate the use of current tools and techniques and continuous training in recognition criteria.

Walk the Talk

Maintain transparency. Routinely report on performance across the entire corps. Celebrate successes and acknowledge opportunities for improvement.

Demonstrate familiarity with the data. Incorporate references in communications and include references in casual conversations with professionals and volunteers.



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Execute district recharter timely and accurately. This process is essential for providing accurate data to calculate ratio, critical for ensuring uninterrupted access to UVTS, and reinforces behaviors needed for successful unit recharter.

Execute unit recharter timely and accurately. This is essential for accurate data to calculate ratio. Temporarily dropped units distort UVTS data (unit visits also dropped until unit is rechartered).

Use the data. This will help with coordinated utilization by volunteers in unit service and in district operations, coordinated utilization by volunteers and professionals, demonstrates value of new tools and techniques, and reinforces that utilization can help units succeed.



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100th Anniversary of the Eagle Scout Award

The first Eagle Scout board of review was held August 1, 1912. A century later, more than 2.2 million Eagle Scouts have earned this esteemed recognition and have had a profound impact on our nation.

Many council National Eagle Scout Association (NESA) committees are planning related events this year to celebrate the 100th Anniversary. The theme of the National Order of the Arrow Conference in late July to early August is the anniversary. Renowned painter Joseph Csatari was commissioned by NESA to create a commemorative painting; prints will be on sale in June. The U.S. Congress is working toward a resolution to establish an annual Eagle Scout Day on August 1, when all Eagle Scouts should wear an Eagle Scout lapel pin or hat pin and perform service in their community.



Eagle Scouts are as American as apple pie and baseball, and everyone knows what the award means, but for the first time ever we have scientific proof of its impact. *Eagle Scouts: Merit Beyond the Badge*, a Baylor University study released on April 10, showed that Eagle Scouts go through life with self-earned advantage and are a benefit to our American way of life.

Your council has access to a database of adult Eagle Scouts found by the NESA-sponsored Eagle Scout searches conducted in 2008, in 2010, and again this year. What better prospect list for unit commissioners could there possibly be?



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Still Need Unit Commissioners?

Consider finding prospects from those signed up with the Scouting Alumni Association (SAA), which was launched in November. Not only do councils receive \$15 per person for alumni living in their councils who sign up with the SAA, they also receive a database quarterly. Visit BSAalumni.org for more information about the organization and the online registration form.

Research has shown that 50 percent of reconnected alumni are not registered volunteers. These individuals took action to become involved. They are excellent prospects to invite to do something such as serving as unit commissioners.



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Proud Past. Bright Future. BSAalumni.org



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2012 Jamboree-on-the-Air

The 2012 Jamboree-on-the-Air will be held October 20–21. Last year's effort saw a 600 percent increase in reported Scout participation in the U.S., with more than 3,000 Scouts taking part in exciting activities and a superb introduction to the science and technology of amateur radio. Worldwide participation reached just short of 750,000 Scouts operating from more than 6,000 amateur radio stations across 150 countries. Ham radio contacts included several with astronaut Mike Fossum on the International Space Station!

JOTA introduces Scouts to radio technology and to other Scouts around the country and the world. They get a chance to talk with one another and share information that broadens their perspective on other cultures, on geography, and on the technology and hobby that provides the means for their communication.

The most successful JOTA events in the U.S. occurred during camporees or other troop, district, or council events. This allowed a wide range of Scouts to tour ham radio stations and, if they desired, talk on the radio with a microphone or even with a keyboard using digital communication. Several JOTA events offered foxhunting—amateur radio direction finding used to locate hidden transmitters, which is a fantastic outdoor Scouting activity.

I encourage you to reach out to your local amateur radio clubs and get your council involved in the largest Scouting event in the world. If you need help identifying ham radio clubs in your community, let me know and I'll provide a list.

Nothing in Scouting gets done without a patch. Here's the official USA patch design for the 55th Jamboree-on-the-Air.

For more information, visit the JOTA website at Scouting.org.

Jim Wilson, K5ND
National JOTA Organizer
jim.wilson@scouting.org



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Jamboree-on-the-Internet 2012

The 16th Jamboree-on-the-Internet (JOTI) will be held October 20–21, along with Jamboree-on-the-Air (JOTA). The JOTI and JOTA events always occur on the third full weekend in October, and the World Organization of the Scout Movement sponsors the events.

JOTI is the younger brother who turns 16 this year and is learning to drive. A national BSA committee is in place to provide direction and assistance as the 16-year-old heads down the road.

JOTI invites all youth and organizations that support Scouting to join the Internet revolution. This event utilizes computers and the Internet so that thousands of Scout groups can be contacted during the weekend. Computer usage is growing exponentially, and the Jamboree-on-the-Internet is prepared to keep pace with that growth, as well as become more user-friendly.

Here is the official USA patch design for the 16th Jamboree-on-the-Internet.

For more information, visit the JOTI website.

Greg White
National JOTI Organizer
gregjwhite@live.com



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Charter Renewal

Scouting is unique among youth organizations. One of its most unusual characteristics is that it doesn't own or operate Scouting units. The ownership of packs, troops, teams, and crews is vested in community organizations or other groups. The Scouting movement provides the program, technical help, and special facilities. The chartered organization provides an adequate, safe meeting place and dedicated, capable leadership. Additionally, the chartered organization agrees to and adheres to the principles and policies of the Boy Scouts of America.

Since 1916, when the U.S. Congress granted a charter to the Boy Scouts of America, the BSA has the approval to grant charters to organizations. The BSA renews its charter annually. Likewise, chartered organizations renew their commitment to Scouting and their local council each year. As commissioners, we are in an excellent position to help and lead the unit charter renewal process.

The charter renewal process is an important, fundamental task. A great deal of unit loss is related to the process of renewing the unit's charter. Among the commissioner's duties is to help the unit be successful, and one way a unit commissioner can help is to ensure the unit's charter renewal process is completed on time. The commissioner is responsible for the on-time charter renewal of all of their assigned units.

One of the early warning signs of a troubled unit is its failure to renew its charter on time. Making sure the charter renewal process is done correctly is also the responsibility of a commissioner. A good commissioner follows up early to ensure timely completion of the charter renewal process. It is also important that there is a charter renewal plan in place with goals of zero time lapses and zero dropped units. If we lose a unit, we lose membership.

What can we, as commissioners, do to help the unit complete the charter renewal process? We can ask the following questions:

1. Does the unit use online rechartering? Online charter renewal provides a more accurate and efficient process. Does your district need to hold online rechartering training? That's a good place for the district commissioner staff to jump in and help organize, instruct, and even teach the course. What about a district charter renewal party? How about a district roundtable on charter renewal?



*Dr. John W. Lea IV
Southern Region Commissioner*

2. Does your unit have delinquent fees holding up charter renewal? Can the unit commissioner help collect those fees?
3. Is the charter renewal process pending because direct contact leaders need Youth Protection training? Can the unit commissioner conduct the training for the unit leaders at the next unit meeting or unit committee meeting?
4. Does the charter need certification signatures from the chartered organization or council?
5. Is there another issue that is holding up the charter renewal process? The commissioner staff can help offer a solution to solve the problem. Don't forget that the district commissioner staff has all the resources and support of the district committee. It is the district committee's responsibility to set up the district for success and that means successful units!



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Bottom line: Do what needs to be done. Discover who has the charter renewal forms and what is holding up the process; consult with your district executive; and if necessary hand-carry the forms through the renewal process.

Finally, complete the process with the charter presentation. The charter belongs in the hands of the chartered organization, not the unit. It is important to capture the interest of as many of the members of the chartered organization as possible. Remember, the BSA gives an annual report to Congress. The charter presentation ceremony is the unit's opportunity to report to the chartered organization. If possible, stage the presentation during a regular meeting or activity of the chartered organization. Thank the chartered organization for the opportunity to present the charter and for accepting Scouting as a program of action for its organization.

Commissioners must help stop the loss of units. When I see year-end membership percent losses and last-year unit losses, I begin to think of ways commissioners can help. We must STOP THE LOSS! Remember, it is the commissioner's responsibility to ensure that a unit is healthy; a lost unit can't be healthy! The unit commissioner has the tools to renew the unit's charter and keep it healthy. Let's get to work.



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Area Commissioner Spotlight

Take a look at what one area commissioner in the Central Region is doing.

Area 5 Commissioner Kandra Dickerson publishes the *Commissioner Comments* newsletter for area council commissioners. The monthly newsletter provides leadership guidance and tools, event information, forms, and updated links to helpful online resources.



Lt. Col. Reid A. Christopherson
Central Region Commissioner



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2012

Commissioner Comments

Unit Leadership Inventory

Once per year, early in the spring, the Unit Commissioner and the Unit Committee should perform the process of reconciling registered leaders to actual leaders. There may have been some leaders who moved to the next Scouting level with their son or some may have taken a new position within the Council. Getting an inventory of leaders who plan to participate with the unit in the coming year is an important first step in assessing the number of active adult leaders and the number needed to be recruited.



Taking Inventory—Year End Court
by Norman Rockwell

Before moving to the next step, take time to assess each leader that has dropped from the active Unit inventory. Assign a Commissioner to visit the inactivated adults. Explore with the adult their reasons for dropping and give feedback where appropriate.

Once the active leadership is identified, consider the following factors to determine the number of leaders that will need to be added. The size of the unit and number of patrols or packs will influence adult guidance needed in addition to the activities planned for the year and the number of experienced Scouts who can help lead their younger counterparts. The leadership goals of the existing leaders, the committee and the commissioner should also be taken into account.

After determining the optimum number of leaders, a plan of action should be developed jointly with the Unit Commissioner and the Unit Committee to ensure there is and will be adequate leadership for the unit. New leaders should be selected, recruited, and trained before beginning membership recruiting.

- Commissioner Focus**
- **April**
 - Unit Leadership Inventory
 - **May**
 - Troop Uniform Inspection
 - **June**
 - Watching the Vital Signs.

News from Central Region
Lucia Cronin, the Central Region Membership chair, has a new recorded webinar on the topic of **Spring Tiger Cub Recruiting**. Go to www.scouting.org/membership and click Webinars and Podcasts link at the bottom of the page. Once on the Webinars and Podcasts page, look for the hyperlink for Spring Tiger Cub Recruiting.

- **Unit Visit Tracking System** can be accessed at MyScouting.org. Record all your unit visits at this central location.
- **Commissioner Fast Start** is at www.myscouting.org. This 'fast start' training is designed to be taken by all commissioners within the first few weeks. Sign in Needed.
- **New requirements for Youth Protection!** MyScouting.org takes you to ELearning for on-line training for Youth Protection, Climb On Safety, Safety Afloat, and more!
- **Journey to Excellence Link:** <http://scouting.org/leaders/central/home/Commissioners/Journey.aspx>
- **Commissioner's website:** <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsources/Commissioners/newsletter.aspx> National Commissioner's newsletter
- **Voice of the Scout:** http://www.scouting.org/scoutsources/wards/journeytoexcellence/ves_news.aspx

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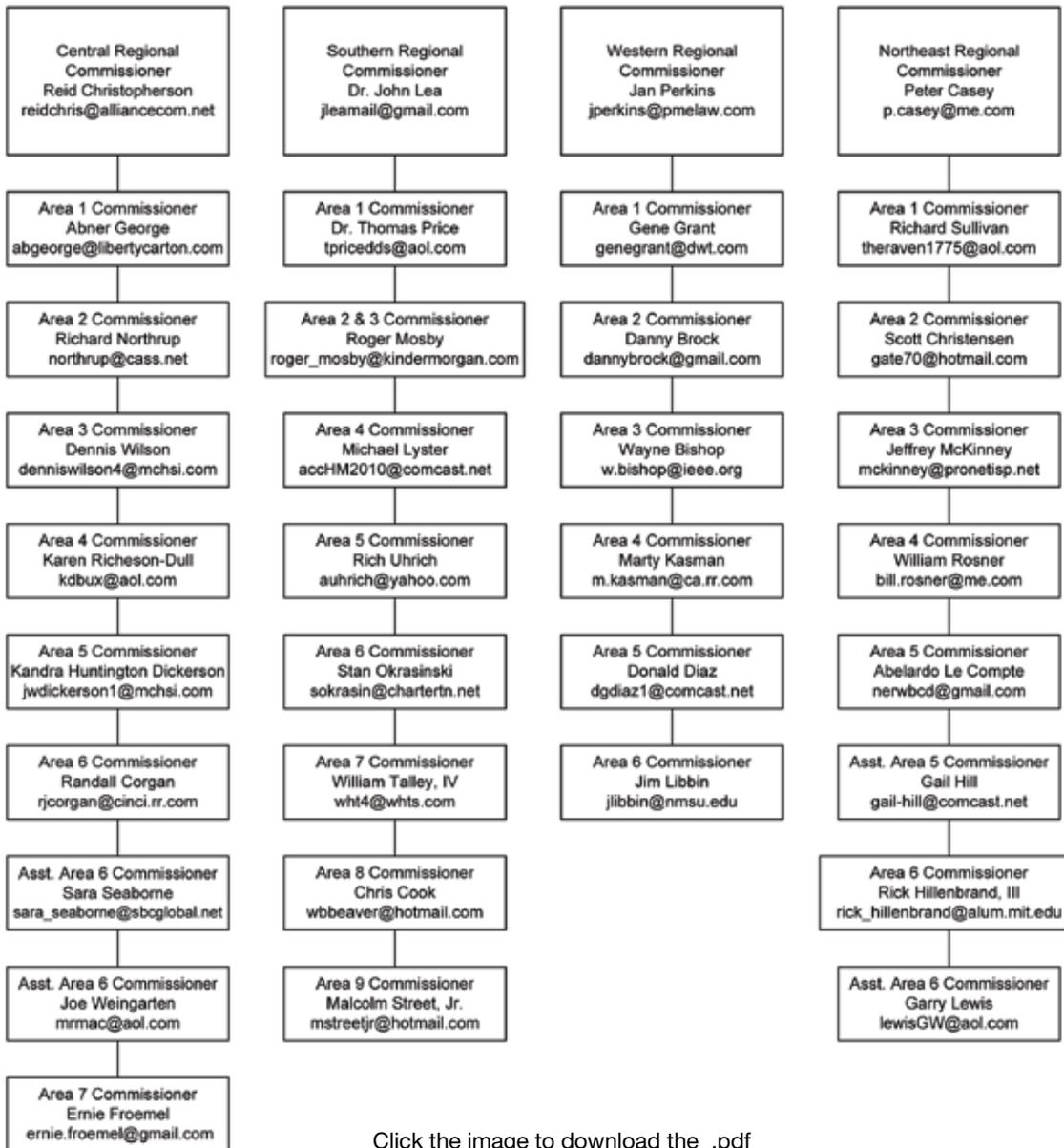
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Area Commissioner Organization Chart

Area Commissioners Organization Chart



May 28, 2012 Update



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Unit Commissioner Box Score

As of December 2011

Region	Traditional Units*		Unit Commissioners Needed		Unit Commissioners Registered		Need to Recruit		Percent of Need Filled		Commissioner Ratio	
	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year
Northeast	16,045	15,592	5,394	5,196	3,976	4,140	1,378	1,056	74.3%	79.7%	4.0	3.8
Southern	25,463	24,892	8,487	8,299	5,991	6,418	2,496	1,881	70.6%	77.3%	4.3	3.9
Central	22,888	22,137	7,631	7,379	5,361	5,744	2,270	1,635	70.3%	77.8%	4.3	3.9
Western	41,201	40,657	13,733	13,554	9,878	9,322	3,855	4,232	71.9%	68.8%	4.2	4.4
National	105,597	103,278	35,205	34,428	25,206	25,624	9,999	8,804	71.6%	74.4%	4.2	4.0

*Does not include Explorer posts or Learning for Life groups



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Calendar of Events

2012 National Annual Meeting: Events for Commissioners

May 30

National Commissioner Task Force Meeting (invitation only)

Area commissioner meeting, 4 to 5 p.m. EDT

Commissioner reception sponsored by Boys' Life, 5 to 6 p.m. EDT

June 1

Elective 208: Commissioner's Role in Using VOS and JTE to Improve Unit Programming, 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. EDT

Philmont Training Center: 2012 Commissioner Course Offerings

Week 3: June 24-30

Southern Region Journey to Excellence

Council Key 3*

District Key 3*

The Unit Commissioner

Week 6: July 15-21

Northeast Region Journey to Excellence

How to Conduct a Commissioner College

Council Commissioner

Administrative Commissioner

The Unit Commissioner

Effective Roundtables

District Key 3*

Week 7: July 22-28

Central Region Journey to Excellence

Council Key 3*

District Key 3*

The Unit Commissioner

*These courses cover aspects of commissioner service but are staffed by volunteer training.

Visit the 2012 Conference Schedule page on the Philmont Training Center website for more information.



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