

Advancement News

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Previous issues are available at <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/advancement-news/>

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

Philmont Training Center 2020 Summer Advancement Conferences



Since **Advancement** is recognized as a key indicator of a successful unit, it is reasonable that learning how to enhance Scouts' advancement opportunities would be important. One way to do this is by increasing your own knowledge of BSA's procedures governing advancement. Two fabulous Advancement conferences will be available to fill that need, at the Philmont Training Center (PTC) this summer.

The *Advancement Mechanics, Issues, and Solutions Conference June 21-27* will connect participants to an in-depth understanding of the essentials of advancement and an appreciation for the rationale behind the policies and procedures governing them. It will also steer participants towards a wealth of advancement resources available on [Scouting.org](https://www.scouting.org), and engage them, through group discussions, on effective ways of resolving all types of advancement issues and challenges that may arise. The target audience is unit, district, and council level volunteers and professionals who deal with advancement issues.

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The *Scouts BSA Advancement Conference July 5-11* will provide units and leaders with a great overview of the advancement processes, but more importantly, will familiarize participants with program-building concepts that produce advancement opportunities and promote youth retention. The target audience is new troop leaders and advancement coordinators but will be a great refresher for established leaders and others interested in how a unit works.

Since 1950 the PTC has provided an environment for training, leadership, and family adventure. The family adventures are a HUGE draw, so don't leave them at home! Make plans NOW!! Bring your troop or council friends. If you can't attend make sure to let others in your units, districts, council, or area know about these opportunities.

Register now at:

www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc/2020-conferences



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Advancement News is designed for council and district advancement committees, advancement staff advisors, and Eagle processors. However, any Scouting volunteer or professional may subscribe.

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On Increasing Advancement

Positions of Responsibility in Scouting Programs: The Denner

One of the aims of the Boy Scouts of America is leadership development. As such, learning leadership skills is a key part of the BSA program and often the greatest of the many long-term impacts we have on youth.

Baden-Powell and the others who developed Scouting knew the best way to learn leadership is having frequent opportunities, when one is young, to practice by actually being a leader. It is learning by doing rather than by reading about it or hearing about it.

In most cases, the very first opportunity a youth will have to be a leader of their peers – in or out of Scouting – is when they become a denner or assistant denner in Cub Scouting.

Denners are Cub Scouts or Webelos Scouts who help their den leader with assigned tasks, like setting up the meeting room, passing out materials, or leading a ceremony or game. They are elected by the other Scouts in their den, and the responsibilities typically rotate every month or two so all Scouts in the den have a chance to serve and learn.

While not directly part of advancement in Cub Scouting, serving as a denner can set the stage for success in advancement both in the den and later as a Scout follows the trail to Eagle.

How so?

- A denner helps make den meetings more impactful by helping the den leaders with the den meeting. A denner helps the den leader and den chief (more on that one later!) concentrate on important aspects of the meeting.
- Being a denner gives a Cub Scout very early, and simple, leadership experience which helps the Scout as they move into leadership roles in Scouts BSA, in which they are part of advancement.
- Being a denner increases a Scout's engagement in the den meeting and Cub Scouting. When they have a position of responsibility, youth usually take pride in having a leadership role and rise to the occasion. When they know they have an important role, they will be there and be engaged!

Use denners in your dens. This, and all youth leadership roles, will help with the aim of leadership development of our program and will help youth advance.



Denner Cord

While serving, the denner and assistant denner wear cords on their left shoulders.

The denner cord (No. 368) has two yellow strands.

The assistant denner cord (No. 385) has a single strand.



Assistant Denner Cord

Cub Scouts BSA



Den Leader Experience Tool

Completing adventures is how Cub Scouts advance through their ranks. For each completed adventure, they receive a belt loop or a pin as a recognition along the path to the ultimate goal: rank advancement. We would like for our youth to have fun while working on their adventures. But how do we know if they are actually having fun? We need to ask.

In the near future, a survey will be available to collect feedback. As part of Scoutbook for Den Leaders, the survey will pop up as part of the process when completing an adventure. The survey will also be available on the [Cub Scouting Adventures](#) webpage.

The [Protect Yourself Rules Preview Adventure](#) already has an attached survey, specific to the topic of youth protection. The survey was added in late November 2019. In the first 6 weeks, 140 families responded. Results are shared with the author of the adventure, subject matter experts at [The Barbara Sinatra Children's Center](#).

Feedback is a gift. We are looking forward to hearing from our Cub Scouts!

About *Advancement News*

Advancement News is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America National Advancement Program Team. Its intent is to provide and clarify procedures found in the *Guide to Advancement*, announce various changes and updates in advancement, and to assist advancement committees in making decisions that can help increase the rate of advancement. Therefore, districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication. Our plan is to distribute six issues of *Advancement News* annually, but special editions may go out whenever there is important information to share. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at

advancement.team@scouting.org.

Hear It First on Twitter

If you want the news first, follow the National Advancement Program Team on Twitter. Topics cover the FAQs received at the national office, clarifications on policies and procedures, news on changes and new releases, and best practices in advancement.

If you already have a Twitter account, follow us at [@AdvBSA](#) or “**BSA Advancement Team**.” If you don't have an account, it is a quick and easy process to set up an account at www.twitter.com. To limit incoming emails ('tweets'), you can select to have BSA National Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

Note: Advancement questions should be directed to advancement.team@scouting.org.

Scouts BSA

Natural Advancement



Boys and girls love to go camping. Boys and girls love to hear the birds chirping in the morning and hike the trail down to the waterfall. They love to poke a campfire with a stick. It's the adventure we promised. Can we have advancement under these circumstances without interrupting the beauty of the moment or the fun of just camping? Well, you bet we can. Advancement, whenever we can, should be a natural part of our exciting Scouting activities. Camping has many moments that lend themselves to advancement without stopping everything to say, "Now, we're going to do advancement."

If we leave our camp site and hike to the waterfall, it's a hike. If the advancement requirement is to hike, we've just done it. As a natural part of our fun activities. If the requirement is for a two-mile hike and the falls are only 1.5 miles away, added together then the distance out and back is three miles. If the advancement requirement is to identify five different trees, then make that a game on the hike. If the requirement is to cook a meal, then we're camping out and we need to eat. If the requirement is to learn to tie knots, then pull out a piece of rope as we sit poking the campfire. If the requirement is to give a speech, then start story telling around the campfire. Make fulfilling the advancement requirements a natural part of the activities. Have leaders grab somebody's book and review their activities. You tell them, the requirement is "such and such" and you did them today as we were hiking. Remember you may not change the requirements. You can't add or subtract. You're not to make them easier nor are you to make them harder. You say, "I saw you cook the meal for your patrol." You do not need to be official and announce beforehand, "Now you're going to cook the meal for your patrol that is your advancement requirement."

Remember our mission is to help our young people develop character, citizenship, personal fitness, and leadership. We do this by using the methods of Scouting - Scouting's ideals, the patrols and the patrol method, the outdoors, advancement, personal growth, adult association, leadership development, and the uniform. We do this by making sure our activities are fun. Make advancement a natural outgrowth of your troop activities. Using advancement in this way will keep our youth in Scouting longer giving us a better chance to fulfill our mission. Now isn't that what we're all about?



Eagle, Summit, Quartermaster Highlights:

Two Important Forms Updated

These important forms have been recently updated. They can be found at the following location: <https://www.scouting.org/advancement>

[Eagle Scout Rank Application 2020, No. 512-728](#)

The January 2020 printing of the Eagle Scout Rank Application, No. 512-728, is now available on the Advancement Resources web page. Except for adding check blocks a Scout can use to note their gender, all other changes were either cosmetic or minor wording changes to improve consistency with the *Scouts BSA Handbooks* and the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book.

Scouts who have already started preparing their application using the 2019 version may continue to use it. They do not need to redo it using the 2020 version. Any Scout just beginning to prepare their rank application must use the 2020 printing.

[Request for Extension of Time to Earn Eagle Scout Rank, No. 512-077](#)

The 2020 printing of the Request for Extension of Time to Earn Eagle Scout Rank, No. 512-077, is also now available on the Advancement Resources web page. The entire back page of this form has been revised. The page now includes specific requirements and expectations for how an extension of time request must be prepared and documented. Complying with these requirements will help expedite the processing of extension requests by the National Advancement Program Team.

Project Approval Report—What Is Expected?

The *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* is an important tool to help a Scout successfully plan, develop, and provide leadership to their Eagle service project. Although use of the workbook is required, some leaders misinterpret this to mean that the workbook itself must be "perfect" in order to meet the requirement's intent. Not true. *The Guide to Advancement* notes: "The workbook should not become a basis for rejecting candidates based on 'technicalities' that have nothing to do with project intent." It is not necessary that every line be filled in or that every "i" be dotted and "t" crossed.

The project itself is the requirement - not the report. When a unit leader or project beneficiary signs a Scout's project report, they are signifying that the project has met the intent of requirement 5. They are not approving the quality of the report. The report is merely an administrative tool that the Eagle candidate uses during their board of review to help the board members understand what their project entailed.

Although we want the Scout to prepare the project report, they are not being graded on the quality of that report. However, we do want the Scout to present a clear picture of their project and the impact that it has had on the community and the beneficiary. Since the report will be read by the individual board members, a wise Scout will put their best foot forward when preparing their report. A caring unit leader might point out

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areas where a Scout could improve the quality of their report. However, the unit leader cannot require a Scout to make spelling, grammar, and associated changes to the report before signing it. Neither can they refuse to sign the report for reasons unrelated to meeting the intent of requirement 5.

It may be valuable for a unit leader to advise a Scout that a poorly prepared report might reflect negatively on them and make it harder to convince a board of review that their project was well done and worthy of approval. However, if the Scout chooses to move forward with a less than stellar report, that is their choice. Perhaps their decision will work out with the board of review or perhaps they will have a different learning experience. In either case it is up to the board of review to decide if the Scout's project met the intent of requirement 5. To do this the board members must focus on the project itself and its benefit to the community, not on the quality of the report. If the board members have questions or concerns that are not answered by the report, they are welcome to ask the Scout for additional information or clarification during the board of review.

Click on the given link to download the [Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#). Detailed instructions will be provided on how to save the workbook to your computer and then opened with Adobe Reader 9

A Peek Ahead

Here is a glimpse at what we are working on for the next issue of *Advancement News*. As always, actual content may vary somewhat based on a number of considerations, and especially to accommodate "late-breaking" news of immediate importance to our subscribers.

Topics Planned for May-June

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators: Philmont Training Center – A Summer Highlight

On Increasing Advancement: Positions of Responsibility, continued

Merit Badges: Process for review and updating of Merit badges

Sea Scouts BSA

Academy In Texas Helps Sea Scouts Advance In Rank



When Scouts BSA members need to work on advancement toward the trail of the Eagle, they always have summer camp. Many are the Scouts who were able to advance to Eagle because of merit badges and other requirements achieved at summer camp. In Sea Scouts, the same thing happens at Sea Scout Academy.

The 20th regional academy took place January 18-20 at Sea Star Base in Galveston, Texas. More than 170 youth and 80 adults attended, with hundreds of requirements checked off for the youth.

Quartermaster rank is the highest rank in Sea Scouting; it is a prestigious and challenging rank, reflected by the 40 Sea Scouts who received the Quartermaster rank in 2019. Sea Scouts have until age 21 to earn the Quartermaster.

“Quartermasters are rare,” said T.W. Cook of Austin, Texas, the National Commodore for Sea Scouts in the USA, who also attended the Academy. “One of the requirements of a Quartermaster is teaching, and we have a place here for them to do that. There’s really a lot of goodness in that model where youth learn from older, more experienced youth.”

There are other Sea Scout gatherings similar to the Academy in Galveston – including those in Mobile, Alabama; Fort Monroe, Virginia., and in the Northeast Region, Cook said. But the event in Texas is by far the largest.

One adult Scouter from the Oregon Trail Council in Eugene, Oregon, attended his third Sea Scout Academy in Texas, and marvels at what can be accomplished at the event. He found out about the Galveston academy after he attended Seabadge in Dallas in 2017. Seabadge is an adult leadership training class that is similar to Wood Badge. This Scouter who led one of the advancement tracks in Galveston said “I got to see what was the tip of the spear for leaders in Sea Scouts. It enlightened me as to what Sea Scouts offer to

adult education. The program was 2,000 miles away from me, but it did not matter. I was involved with the top Sea Scout leaders in the country. I knew I wanted to be involved in Sea Scouting after that.”

The mojo that is in Texas Sea Scouting is not lost on the youth, as there were participants from Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Virginia, and California. The Californians were from Long Beach, where there is a strong Sea Scout presence. One Scout,



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attending for the second year in a row is a Western Regional boatswain for Sea Scouts (the youth national officer who represents Sea Scouting for the Western Region). This Sea Scout is with Ship 550 in Long Beach, California.

Quartermaster Award



“This event helps me complete many of the requirements I need that I cannot do at home because my ship doesn’t have the time or resources,” she said. “I have 15 months before I turn 21 (and age out of Sea Scouts). I can get the rank in the 10 months because I got about a third of the rank knocked out here. All I need is my Quartermaster project and a lifesaving merit badge. If I had not come, it would have taken me to up my 21st birthday to get everything done.”

Putting youth in a leadership position is not lost on younger participants. Another Sea Scout who is 15 and is in Ship 681 in Austin, Texas, said he should finish his advancement for the Ordinary Rank soon because of his participation in the Galveston event.

“Sea Scout Academy provided me a structured way to learn,” he said. “Outside of the academy, you have to plan it out by yourself. Here, you can make sure that you get the achievements that you need.”

Part of the planning is done by Brian Ehrler (pronounced Air-ler), who is an adult leader from the Longhorn Council in Fort Worth. Sea Scouts grew on him. And even though he also is a district chair in the Fort Worth area, he makes time for Sea Scouts because of what it gives him personally.

“I started coming here with my Scouts and helped them to get organized,” Ehrler said “It’s great for them to come here because our unit is inland near Dallas. It’s the first time some of our kids have seen the ocean. They get exposed to larger ships, from the Point Glass (former U.S. Coast Guard cutter) to Sonar sailboats to other things. The kids advance, and I also get to learn.”



Venturing

Quest Award

The Venturing Quest Award is a specialty award that focuses on sports and physical fitness. This award is designed to challenge and educate Venturers about having a healthy lifestyle and promoting fitness for life. Along the way, a Venturer can experience a variety of sports and activities that develop several skills they can use for the rest of their life. This is a great award for Venturers who like sports.

The Quest Award can be earned by completing **five** main focus area requirements:

1. Quest Essentials
2. First Aid
3. Fitness for Life
4. Fitness Assessment
5. Sport Discipline

And also complete **one** elective focus area requirement:

- History and Heritage of Sports
- Sports Nutrition
- Drug Free Sports
- Communications
- History and Heritage of the Disabled Sports Movement

More information and requirements can be found online at www.scouting.org/venturing



Awards

District Award of Merit

The management of awards and recognitions for youth and adult members is an important function of all districts. Awards and recognitions are not part of the advancement plan, although members of the district's advancement committee may be called upon, along with others, to assist from time to time.

One of the more frequently presented recognitions in this category is the District Award of Merit, or D-A-M. This is a council recognition presented by districts in the same manner that, for instance, the Silver Beaver Award is a national recognition presented by councils. Each of a council's districts is permitted, per prescribed allocation formula, to annually present this recognition to one or more registered adult volunteers.

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Basic guidelines for the D-A-M are found in the *Guide to Awards And Insignia* (SKU 648215), Guidelines for District and Council Committees. Information is also available at <http://www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/district-merit/> although the language there may be misleading in that it describes “earning” and “getting” this award. This is distinctly not the case. There are neither “requirements” nor a “score card” for this award.

In fact, the District Award of Merit is by nomination only. All nominations are evaluated on the basis of each nominee’s noteworthy service, beyond normal expectations, at the district level. A confidential nomination form is available (see <filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33720.pdf>). To avoid possible disappointment on the part of a nominee, all nominations are confidential. Also, this is not a posthumous award, nor is it appropriate for a formerly registered adult volunteer.

In each district the district chair will annually appoint an ad hoc selection committee of no more than five (5) to evaluate all nominees for that year. Past recipients often make excellent selection committee members. Members of the district advancement committee may be specially tapped for this as well. The district chair is an ex officio member as well.

Because nominations from the field are required for this award, the selection committee may be charged with responsibility for promoting nominations, providing forms and deadline dates, and—with the district’s committee that manages special events—selecting the presentation event, location, and date.

The selection committee may meet confidentially as often as needed, based on the number of nominations. Since the nomination forms request training courses completed, positions held, etc., it is reasonable that the committee confirm such information with the council registrar, training chair, and any others as needed. Once the committee has made its final selections, it will present these recommendations to the council committee through the Scout executive, who will subsequently inform the district chair of the nominations approved by the council committee. Throughout this process, none of the nominees will be informed that they have been nominated or recommended or approved.

All District Award of Merit presentations will follow the procedure advised on the second page of the nomination form, including district- and council-wide publication and promotion.



The *Guide to Awards and Insignia* may be found at the following Scouting.org site:

<https://www.scouting.org/resources/insignia-guide/>

Worth Repeating

From The *Guide to Advancement*

Advancement in Camp Settings: Feedback Is a Gift—Use It (March-April, 2016)

As council program and advancement committees begin formulating plans for the coming summer, it's a good time to review *Guide to Advancement* (GTA) topic 5.0.1.0, "Advancement in Camp Settings." Particular attention should be paid to item 11 under topic 5.0.1.2: "Collecting and making use of feedback on camp advancement program quality."

Reviewing the guidelines and procedural examples in this section will help key council volunteers and staff advisors to improve the quality of their advancement delivery system in camp settings, often by avoiding the trap of blindly continuing ineffective or unproductive activities or practices merely because "that's the way we do things here." Perhaps it is time to consider culling some of those traditions that may not be as effective as they were in the past.

Start by going to the files and reexamining last year's camper and staff evaluations—with an eye toward what you want to improve, what you want to drop, and what you want to keep intact. Applying Scouting's classic "Start-Stop-Continue" approach should lead you toward even better programs and delivery methods this year.

If you don't have files like these, plan to start them this year. Meanwhile, consider other feedback resources available. For example, evaluate the percentages of overall Cub Scout day camp attendance, Scout long-term camp rank advancements, or merit badges earned. Consider contacting last year's key staffers by email or phone for brief interviews, as well as camp and area directors. In all interviews, focus on what they would "Start, Stop, or Continue" by stressing that you need their "boots-on-the-ground" perspective on what to "Keep, Improve, Fix, or Drop," even—and especially—if the thing that needs to be stopped or dropped can only be justified by asserting, "That's the way we do things here."

If the entire advancement committee shares this responsibility, the work will be light. Then bring whatever outside feedback you have gathered to your own roundtable and brainstorming session. You don't need statisticians; simply share the learnings around the conference table. Remember that your end-goal is to make the best decisions possible to improve your summer camp's programs for the Scouts.

Editor's Note

Editor Note: This article was written before girls were introduced into certain Scouting programs. Therefore, minor modifications to the original 2016 article have been made to reflect gender references. The terminology Scouts BSA has been substituted for all references to Boy Scouts. Varsity Scouting is no longer a program of the Boy Scouts of America.

Helpful Links -

Here are some links to the most current materials of interest for Scouters who are involved in the administration of advancement. These and many more resources are available via the **Advancement Resources** web page at www.scouting.org/advancement.

General Resources

- Guide to Advancement 2019, No. 33088
- Advancement Educational Presentations (see list below)
- Advancement News
- Abilities digest
- Advancement Report, No. 34403
- Building Effective Advancement Committees, No. 510-756
- Eagle Scout Challenge, No. 542-900
- Friendstorming on Tour, No. 510-003
- Lone Scout Friend and Counselor Guidebook, No. 511-420
- On Increasing Advancement, No. 512-047
- Recommendations for Regional and Area Volunteers Supporting the Advancement program, No. 512-048
- Troop Resource Survey, No. 512-940
- Guide to Awards and Insignia, No. 33066
- Venturing Board of Review Guide, No. 512-940

Advancement Educational Presentations:

- Introduction to the *Guide to Advancement*
- Today's Advancement
- Cub Scout Advancement Delivering Adventure
- Developing Council and District Advancement Committees
- The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach
- The Eagle Scout Service Project
- Effective Troop Advancement
- Essentials in Serving Scouts with Disabilities
- The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling
- The Merit Badge program
- Getting the most from Internet Advancement
- Including Scouts with Disabilities

Videos

- Guardian of the Gate



Additional resources include

Rank Advancement Information

(including the new 2019 Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, 2019 Scouts BSA Rank Requirements, and various applications)

Merit Badge Counselor information

(including A Guide for Merit Badge Counseling, Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide and Merit Badge List)