

06 THE COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COUNCIL COMMISSIONERS AND SCOUT EXECUTIVES

www.scouting.org/commissioners

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West Fellow, and a member of the 1910 Society and Founders Circle. Don has served as Central Region president, council president, and in a variety of other local and national responsibilities. He became a Cub Scout over 50 years ago in Kansas City, Missouri.



Unit Visit Assignments Made at Monthly District Commissioner Staff Meeting

At your next council commissioner meeting, ask each district commissioner to provide any great ideas they have in answer to the question, "How do they involve each commissioner in their district in having a meaningful monthly unit visit and what report or feedback from those visits do they ask for at their monthly commissioner meeting to ensure each unit is being visited?"

Send your comments to be shared with all commissioners in the next newsletter: Boy Scouts of America, District and Council Resources, S250, Keith Christopher, 1325 West Walnut Hill Lane, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015-2079, or e-mail kchristo@netbsa.org.

New Membership Validation Process

The council commissioner has a vital part to play in providing support to the units and the chartered organizations in each of the districts in your council. Your involvement and support is critical in measuring and giving direction and support to the "unit health" of each program in each district. The tool giving us guidance is the new membership validation process.

This new membership validation process with new forms will be implemented beginning January 1, 2006, by all local councils, involving volunteers, office support staff, and all professional staff. It provides for councils to involve volunteers and staff together in the process of evaluating the status of our units. At least twice during the year, the process requires us to look at all units in the council and give them a "health checkup." If they are not a Quality Unit at that time, we need to develop a plan of action to help them in achievement of that status during the year.

These areas of emphasis will strengthen our units' programs by helping provide for better retention of youth and adult leaders, more parental support, and a better quality program. This should be a major focus of the unit commissioners as they conduct their regular unit visits. The unit health checkups will assist the district committees in identifying and prioritizing the needs that each unit has for better programming.

Rationale

The membership validation process has been used by local councils since 1990. Over the past year, the process has undergone extensive review to further ensure the credibility of membership procedures. We believe this new process will enhance unit service and improve the quality experience of each youth. It provides guidelines for the district committee and commissioner staff on how they can specifically help their units achieve success.

The principal changes are:

- Documentation that the membership validation procedures have been followed.
- Semiannual evaluation of units, including plans to improve the units that are not Quality Units at the time of the health checkup.
- Certification by top district and council volunteers and professionals that the processes have been followed.
- Clarification of details and procedures as a part of the validation process.
- Redesign of the validation form to accommodate all those who must sign giving approval.
- Adds focus on accountability, measurement, and ensuring focus on unit priorities.

Implementation of New Membership Validation Process

■ August 2005

Introduction and distribution of the New Membership Validation Procedures process and form at Top Hands in Phoenix, Arizona.

■ October 2005

Provide Scout executives and regional staff with a brief fact sheet and the rationale for use of the new process, as well as a copy of the new form to be signed.

■ November 2005

Scout executives review procedures and share procedures and form with all staff—professional and office support staff. Share with council and district Key 3's, as well as council executive board.

■ January 2006

Scout executives review procedures with all staff at January growth conferences and have all professionals sign. Also share with office support staff and have them sign the form that they understand and will follow the procedures as outlined.

■ February 2006

Council presidents (or vice president of district operations) review procedures and obtain signatures at the annual district Key 3 growth opportunity meeting.

■ March 1, 2006

Council Key 3 certification is mailed to the regional service center with all signatures.

Thank you for your total commitment to providing a quality program experience to every youth who wants to become a member of the Boy Scouts of America.



Recruitment of New Commissioners

With your staff adviser, put together a program for a council commissioner meeting on where to find new commissioner prospects. Do a presentation to identify sources and then challenge each district to recruit to full strength for the new year—a ratio of one unit commissioner to three units. If this is done the same month as a professional staff meeting, you can compliment their efforts.

Where can these prospects come from? When developing the list of potential candidates to recruit, you want to look at many sources for prospects.

Below are a few areas in which to identify potential volunteers:

- Your friends, associates, and business contacts
- Chamber of commerce lists of organizations, boards of directors, and unions
- Service club membership rosters
- Prominent community leaders
- Educators, real estate brokers, shopkeepers, government employees, and other business, professional, and service people. Consider people whose activities cause them to travel through your district.
- Adults who have been actively involved with their children's unit, but the child is moving on to another Scouting program or event, aging out of the program
- Members of management who work for local major corporations
- Current adult leaders and parents of youth members from larger units who may have a large resource of prospects. These should be cleared through the unit leader before approaching them. Remember that NO UNIT LEADER should be a prospect.

- Merit badge counselor lists
- Regularly review the business section of the local newspaper for community leaders who have recently been promoted.
- Review your Friends of Scouting master list for prospects who support you financially. People who invest their money are more likely to invest their time.
- Review new adult applications, especially during the fall roundup, to see what companies the applicants work for and what their jobs are. You will also find their Scouting background, maybe even an Eagle Scout.
- Former Scouts, especially Eagle Scouts from the National Eagle Scout Association list.

In every community or neighborhood, there is a power structure of leaders who provide direction for the quality of life in that area. You can go into every community in your district and meet with the major community businesses and organizations: e.g., chamber of commerce, local newspaper, banks, major industry, etc. When meeting with the top leaders of those organizations, ask them to give you the top five people in the community who they would involve in the lead at a parade if they were to have a special celebration. After visiting with them, you will find there are probably five to 10 individuals who give major direction for that community. Those are the volunteers to involve on your nominating committee or a finance steering committee. This is a great way to find a source of volunteers who can help open doors for you in each of those identified communities.

Recruitment of quality volunteers will help you deliver your program to the youth and fami-

lies in your district. The time you spend in this process with the nominating committee will make your job easier throughout the year. Your success is directly proportionate to the quality of the volunteers you recruit. Good luck in recruiting a team that will assist you in achieving your mission in Scouting.

The Annual Commissioner Service Plan—What Is It?

The annual commissioner service plan gives specific purposes for regular and supportive commissioner contact with units. It is more than just a time to reregister units. The underlying goal is to help units become and stay Quality Units.

Specific steps happen during the year. They should be shared with your commissioner staff on a regular basis. The plan should be followed as a part of the membership validation procedures that each professional and key volunteer sign each January.

Service Plan Actions

- **January and July—"Unit health" reviews.** The unit-serving executive for each district meets with his/her commissioner team to evaluate the units in the district. Units meeting Quality Unit requirements would normally receive a grade of "good." For any unit not meeting the requirements, a plan is developed on how this unit can be brought back to Quality Unit status. This plan is reviewed regularly during the year to monitor progress and to help bring the unit to Quality Unit status.
- **April—Unit leadership inventory.** Conducted by the commissioner and unit committee. Find out who will continue and who will drop.
- **May—Troop uniform inspection.** The commissioner helps the Scoutmaster and lends dignity to a high-morale event. Encourage uniform for summer camp. Develop unit pride.
- **August—Unit program planning.** Unit commissioners visit with unit leaders to help where necessary with the planning process. With a new program year starting September 1, a unit annual plan should be completed by August 1. This will allow it to be shared with the existing members at your first unit meeting of the fall. It also allows the unit to have it ready for their fall recruiting drive, usually held in August or early September for new members.
- **Fall support.** Unit visits should be done each month to ensure the units get off to a great fall in programming. Support the unit's fall roundup and recruitment drive. Help the training team to encourage that all adult volunteers get Fast Start training, Youth Protection training, and basic leader training in a timely manner. Follow up on the unit health plans to assist units in earning the Quality Unit Award.
- **October—Uniform inspection.** The commissioner helps pack and troop leaders, and lends dignity to a high-morale event. Encourage uniform for all members. Develop pack and troop pride.
- **November—Youth Protection visit.** The commissioner explains and promotes the latest BSA child abuse-prevention training booklets and videos at a fall meeting of unit adults. Guide your commissioners to make this a meaningful event in each unit.

Visit inactive adults. Recruit new adults.

Part of the Charter Renewal Process

- **At least four months before the renewal date**, the council prepares a unit charter renewal kit for each unit due to reregister, including a letter outlining the use of the optional Internet Rechartering system, the council's Web site address, and the unit's unique access code.
- **At least 90 days before the renewal date**, the district executive visits the head of the chartered organization to renew the Scouting relationship. The meeting is a face-to-face discussion on the current state of the unit. If problems are anticipated in the reregistration of the unit or there is other major action to be taken by the district, this visit should be held earlier so positive action may take place prior to the renewal date. In districts where all units have the same renewal date, district executives must start even earlier to complete all visits on time.
- **Sixty days before the renewal date**, the unit commissioner and unit committee conduct a membership inventory of currently registered youth and adults. Visits are made to inactive members. Every effort should be made to recruit additional youth and adults so the unit can reregister with no loss of membership. The commissioner does a final check to see if the unit has completed the Quality Unit Award. The charter review date is set, and all unit adults are urged to attend.
- **Sixty to 45 days before the renewal date**, units choosing to renew their charters online will select a person as their renewal processor. He/she will visit the local council's Web site, complete the steps through submittal process, and print a revised charter renewal application to be brought to the unit's charter

renewal meeting for review, discussion, and authorized signatures.

(To assist districts in this process, there is a report available to council employees with membership reporting capabilities entitled Commissioner's Status Report. This report provides you with the renewal status of each unit, including the date of first login, the current stage of the process completed, and date submitted. Two other reports that are available are the New Members Added Report and the Members Not Renewed Report. Both of these reports are designed to provide information to the district in an effort to follow up with new youth and dropped youth identified through the renewal process.)

- **Forty-five days before the renewal date**, the commissioner and unit committee chair conduct the unit charter renewal meeting. Also in attendance should be the chartered organization representative, executive officer of the chartered organization, unit leader, and other unit volunteers. Additional changes may be made to the application. The renewal application with appropriate signatures,

applications for new youth and adults, appropriate fees, and Quality Unit worksheets are all completed at this meeting. During the unit charter renewal meeting, a Quality Unit Award check is completed for the past charter year and a commitment is made for the charter year ahead.

- **Following the renewal meeting**, the council's registrar receives the charter renewal application, new youth and adult applications, and appropriate fees. If the unit has renewed its charter using the Internet, the registrar reviews this information online along with the hard copies from the unit charter renewal meeting. The registrar then creates the new charter and registration cards for the unit. The registrar mails the registration cards to the unit leader and makes the new charter available to the district for presentation by the commissioner.
- **Thirty days after the renewal date**, the commissioner presents the charter formally at an event of the chartered organization (not the unit). Make it special.

Quality Council, District, and Unit Award Changes for 2006

A change for 2006 on the Quality Council and District Award criteria is objective No. 9. It reads, "Reregister at least 70 percent of youth members or reregister at least 50 percent with an increase over last year." This is one of the choices to achieve seven out of nine.

The change in the unit award criteria includes the addition of the following under objectives No. 6 (for troops and teams) and No. 7 (for packs and crews): "Service Project. We will conduct an annual service project, preferably for the chartering organization or the community. We will report our project on the www.goodturnforamerica.org Web site."

Share these changes with your commissioners to plan for a successful, quality program year. District and assistant district commissioners should be reminded that this unit visit criteria is also one of the requirements for you to earn the Arrowhead Honor: "Put in action a plan to track and hold your unit commissioners accountable for unit visits".

The Quality Unit forms were sent to each council in September 2005.

All Commissioners Need at Least One Assignment to Complete Each Month to Be Successful

Lily Tomlin once said, "I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that, then I realized I was somebody."

As council commissioner, you are the somebody that can do something about the quality of Scouting in each unit in your council.

No matter what position on the commissioner staff you serve, you should always have at least one assignment during the month to complete before the next meeting. As council commissioner, you should make sure that every district commissioner leaves your meeting with at least one thing to do that will directly impact the units and the quality of the program in their district.

A monthly visit to all units is critical to our success in evaluating and supporting the Quality Unit status of each unit. Their good health depends upon the commissioner to be available as needed to assist them in providing a quality program. You can facilitate this process by monitoring the percentage of units in each district that were contacted each month. The goal is 100 percent of all units.

You can encourage the district commissioners by providing them support in what constitutes a "monthly unit visit." Each council commissioner meeting should provide support to the district commissioners in what to offer as training opportunities at their meetings. An excerpt for example of "What is a unit visit?" should include:

"Monthly unit visits should be one of the following: (1) Youth meeting—a pack, troop, or crew meeting; (2) unit committee meeting; or (3) visit unit leaders outside of their regular meeting. You can visit with

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All Commissioners Need at Least One Assignment to Complete Each Month to Be Successful

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them at roundtable or district activities, but these are not the best since they are out of their own environment. A unit commissioner wants to visit their units on their own grounds. You can then evaluate the depth of their leadership, the adherence to youth protection and safety policies, and the quality of the program. By visiting regularly at the unit meetings, you will become a trusted friend and someone they will listen to when coaching needs to be done.”

At each of your council commissioner meetings, provide resources for the district commissioners to provide training at their monthly commissioner staff meetings.

About Commissioner Staff Meetings

These monthly meetings are held to fulfill the districts’ delegated tasks of providing ongoing training to unit commissioners, review of current and future assignments that impact the health of the units in your districts, and update about coming activities of interest to the units.

Ask Your Units

Periodically, do a brief survey of unit leaders: What have commissioners done well? What are we doing that we should be doing? What are we doing that we should do differently?

You will pick up ideas to improve unit service. The very fact that you are asking will be appreciated by the unit leaders.

Inspirational Story

Three men were working in a stone quarry. They were each asked, “What are you doing here?” The first man said, “I’m cutting rock.” The second man said, “I’m making \$11 per hour.” The third man said, “I’m building a cathedral.”

Be sure your council’s commissioner staff members are building a cathedral. Build a super team in each district of people who are capable of providing the most dynamic commissioner service available. The No. 1 priority is to help the units maintain or achieve Quality Unit status. The health of the program depends upon our success.

Commissioner Registration

Be sure each of your commissioners is registered as soon as they are appointed and agree to serve. NO UNIT LEADERS should be recruited as commissioners. If other active Scouters are recruited and their prime (fee paying) registration is with a unit, be sure they are multiple-registered as a commissioner with no additional fee.

Guidance for Leadership

“Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy.”

—Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf

Commissioner Points to Ponder

Quote From a Prominent American

“The real question is not how can busy people afford the time to become involved in Scouting, but how can anyone concerned about the future of our society afford not to take an active role in a program with so successful a record of preparing future generations for the challenges and opportunities of life.”

—Norm Augustine, chairman, Lockheed Martin Corporation; Eagle Scout; and past president, BSA

Calendar Items

May 24–26 — National Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., Wardman Park Marriott

June 11–17 — Commissioner and Key 3 Conferences at Philmont Training Center

July 16–22

July 23–29

Unit Commissioner Box Score

As of September 30, 2005

Region	Number of Units*	Unit Commissioners Required	Unit Commissioners Registered	Need to Recruit	Percentage of Need Filled Last Year/This Year	Unit/Commissioner Ratio Last Year/This Year
Northeast	18,751	6,250	3,442	2,808	54.6/55.1	5.5/5.4
Southern	29,731	9,912	5,233	4,679	52.0/52.8	5.8/5.7
Central	26,000	8,667	5,756	2,911	63.5/66.4	4.7/4.5
Western	42,467	14,154	7,395	6,759	50.4/52.2	5.9/5.7
National	116,949	38,983	21,826	17,157	54.4/56.0	5.5/5.4

*Does not include Explorer posts or Learning for Life groups

Boys’ Life Commissioner Award

The purpose of the *Boys’ Life* Commissioner Award is to recognize all commissioners who successfully promote 100% *Boys’ Life* units.

A unit qualifies as a 100% *Boys’ Life* unit when a subscription to *Boys’ Life* goes into the home of each youth member.

All registered commissioners who qualify can earn the award. There will be a specially designed recognition that only those who qualify will receive. Each council will submit a list of those who have qualified at the end of the year to receive the award.

Qualifications

- A unit commissioner qualifies when he/she serves at least two 100% *Boys’ Life* units.
- A roundtable commissioner qualifies after he/she has presented at least five *Boys’ Life* roundtable features during 2005.
- An administrative commissioner qualifies either when 50 percent or more of the units in his/her area of service are 100% *Boys’ Life* units, or when he/she has a 10 percent or more increase in 100% *Boys’ Life* units on December 31, 2005 vs. December 31, 2004.



National Meeting Attendance

All council commissioners should plan on attending the **National Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., May 24-26, 2006**, and the commissioner electives to learn more about how to do their job better. Mark your calendar now and plan on being there.

Philmont Courses for All Commissioners; Your Family Can Attend!

All commissioners are invited to attend one of the courses offered at the Philmont Training Center in the summer of 2006. A DVD is available from your council to give you details of what is offered for your districts’ adult volunteers and their families. Show this promotional DVD at commissioner staff meetings, district committee meetings, and at roundtables.

