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ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION
OF A RURAL SCOUTING
DISTRICT

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FORWARD

This is an attempt to bring to light a number of possibilities in the operation and administration of rural or sparsely populated areas where scouting units are small in size and scattered in distance and travel time.

It should be noted that these possibilities are not conclusions and should be used as guides to improve existing conditions. The author has had numerous years of experience in very large geographic and populated districts as well as districts of very small numbers of units, and large geographic areas. During these years it has been found scouting can function well in any district of whatever size and population if there are enough adults interested in helping the youth. We only have to dedicate ourselves to the time necessary to maintain and improve the scouting program and to instill the spirit of scouting into both boys and adult leaders. This appears to be an easy solution to any of our problems dealing with the growth in quantity and quality of the scouting program but most of the time it isn't as easy as it appears.

The material herein enclosed will deal with the many facets that cause the scouting units to function and bring good health programs to the boys. It is hopeful that you may find the perfect solution to your individual district problems in the following pages so you too can have a well operating district with healthy growing units reaching all that care to be called SCOUTS.

Other publications produced by BSA can be found in publication "Scouting's Library of Literature" No. 70-278 obtainable at no charge at your council service center.

LB6551	Show and Do for Adult & Troop Leaders	
LB6450	Den Chief Training Conference	Training
LB6623	Exploring Techniques-Post organization	
LB6627	Exploring	Exploring
LB3840A	Boy Scout Guide	Cub Scouting
LB3074	Recruiting Leadership	
LB3080B	Membership/Relationships	
LB3659	Index of Challenge	
LB3079A	The District	
LB6032A	Council and District Plan Book	DISTRICT
		COUNCIL &
LB3087A	Advancement Guidelines	
LB3701	Camporee Guide	
LB3081A	Camping Guide	
LB7255	School Night to Join Scouting	
LB3610	Organizing a Unit	
LB6515	Organizing a Boy Scout Troop	
	Merit Badge Pamphlets by Name	
LB6517	Merit Badge Counseling	
	Counselors	
LB6532	Guide for Recommending Merit Badge	
LB3703	First Aid Contests	
LB3082	Boy Scout Parent/Leader Orientation	Boy Scouting
		ACTIVITIES
	ACTIVITIES and CIVIL SERVICE	

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

One of the main weaknesses of district committees is the failure to assign specific responsibilities to the committee members. The Scouting Coordinators are of utmost importance.

on the district committee working together is of the committee assignments. The coordination of all those responsibilities which could be special projects and large and Scouting Coordinators, be given on the district committee, which include Members at and goals. It is important that those other members created and filled to accomplish your district needs should be obvious that other positions could be Even though these are the only positions listed, it

Chairman
Program
Finance
Membership

typical district committee: Chairman
Program
Finance
Membership
The BSA has from time to time changed the titles and numbers of offices or positions that need to be filled on a district staff and/or committee. As of this writing the following positions are included on a

Single District Administration

and any other similar activities.

County Fairs
Swimming weekends
Overnight hikes
Pow Wows
Show & Do
Canoe trips
Cub Scout Field Day
Camporees

for the following functions:

The program committee is generally responsible

together with the unit leaders.

out with the entire district committees working more than just the program committee and then carried small districts much of the activity is created by other committees and the Commissioner's staff. In course some activities are coordinated between the the scouting unit is dependent on this committee. Of program committee. Just about any activity outside functions depends a great deal on the efforts of the the activities in the district. How a district The Program Chairman is responsible for most of

to provide the support that the committee needs.

They should be assigned to specific committees so as be a part of the total functions of the committee. required to be there to represent their units and to

community. It can be approached by finding community of the boys if possible. Other leaders come from the These leaders should be found among the parents

the adult leadership.

potential is there, then it becomes necessary to get program in their age groups. When it is found the schools to find boys interested in the scouting district. This means they have to take surveys in the responsibility of establishing new units in the The Membership Chairman with his committee has

scouting.

positive attitude, like people, and have the spirit of she must be creative, resourceful, innovative, challenging position in the district committee. He or The person having this responsibility has the most The Membership Chairman has a never ending job.

committee.

finance are coordinated through the council finance and any other finance projects. Most efforts in also work the Sustaining Membership Campaign each year responsible for the finances in the district. They The finance Chairman and his committee are

leaders who know their people or if it becomes
necessary by "door to door" campaigns. It is
important to find persons who can work well with the
youth.

Membership Drives are usually held in the early fall after school starts. School nights are held at

Chairman.

Sustaining Member Enrollment is a necessary campaign to help raise funds for council financing. It is a short campaign and is chaired by either the Finance Chairman or someone appointed by the District

SME Campaigns
Membership Drives
Open House
School Night
Monitoring Advancement Quality/Quantity
Eagle Boards of Review
Merit Badge Counsellor Lists
Assisting District Commissioner
Scout Week
District Awards Banquet

accomplished through the District Committee:
The following functions are examples that can be
unit. They include all Cub Scout and Boy Scout units.
functions which cannot be done by a single scouting
District operations and activities are those

Single District Operations/Activities

The Advancement program is a very vital part of scouting. It is the culmination of many parts of scouting. This is the area that needs monitoring by the District Advancement Chairman and District Commissioners. If advancement is progressing at a good pace, both quantity and quality, then you can be sure that the scouting program is in a healthy state. It is a good game to watch.

all scouting units participating. It can also be held in one central place with units. It can also be held on the same night in conjunction with a district wide open house of all scouting unit at their meeting place during a regular meeting time. Open House programs are usually held by a good school night program.

formulate a good school night program. school before hand to establish statistics to help new scouting unit. Normally surveys are taken in the chairman may choose this method also to establish a in the vicinity of a scouting unit. The membership various schools where scouting units hold meetings or

The District Commissioner is responsible for the scouting program being carried out in the district units. It is necessary at times that the District Committee assist him in carrying out his duties. As he and his assistants go about their visits to the units they find problems that need correcting. Many good prospects.

The schools in the area have many teachers who are it is sometimes hard to find someone who is an expert. are normally acquired. For those of a special nature for most of the required merit badges and those that this list up to date. Most communities have resources the District Chairman and they are expected to keep once it is established. A committee is appointed by originate one. It is important to maintain the list the District Committee. It is a very tedious job to Merit Badge Counsellor lists are established by assigned from the District Committee.

The District Eagle Board of Review is made up of at least three persons. The Chairman is appointed by the District Chairman and the members are usually

of these problems can be solved with the help of the committee.

The District Commissioner is responsible for district round tables through his Round Table Commissioner.

The Commissioner's complete functions can be found in other publications.

Scout Week each year is a highlight in scouting. There are many activities that can be arranged and carried out by the district committee. Small towns are great for the boys to participate in the functions of city or county government for a day. This can be done by each troop sending a representative to a district wide caucus where a mayor and other town officials are elected to office by the boys for an hour or day. These boy officials then take office and perform the duties of that office. It is a great experience for these boys to see how government works. Good Turns can be planned for this week. Litter clean-up in the community and conservation projects, for example.

A District Awards Banquet held each year is a very rewarding function of the district committee. Many recognitions can be accomplished at this time. Among those are outstanding troop/post/pack, scout leaders, cub leader/post advisor of the year, District Award of Merit, recognizing the Eagle Scouts of the year and other special awards.

wouldn't have to be available and do it all. district and have enough members so that a few could be made up of different individuals from each have an Eagle Board, it would be important if a Board Although it is only necessary for a district to

Counselors list for multi-district use. between the districts will produce a Merit Badge of counseling in all the districts. A joint effort these qualified individuals, it improves the quality counseling. By having a larger area to search out have qualified/experienced individuals available for merit badges. There are some merit badges that do not the help of qualified individuals to cover all the Most small districts find it difficult to enlist

responsibilities. be a shortage of help to carry out these badge counseling, and training courses when there may the single district such as Boards of Review, merit only those functions that cannot be fully developed by Multi-District Operations should be limited to

Multi-District Operations/Activities

All training courses require qualified persons who are familiar with the scouting program that they will be instructing. It has been found that small districts do not have enough individuals so qualified and who are willing to give all the time required to instruct. Although most councils have enough trainers to man these courses they are not always close enough for everyone to conveniently attend. Adjoining districts can put their resources together and do this with many more trainees in attendance. It is important that the training be convenient and that it be well publicized. Training is much better when more are in attendance. Much of scouting training is done through the resources available among the trainees. The district can be helpful to their boy scouts by furnishing to the local library or libraries a complete merit badge library. The cost of this library could be shared or completely donated by a local business or individual. This way the boys wouldn't have to buy each pamphlet as they need it. There should be one committee member assigned the responsibility for monitoring the library on a periodic basis.

Canoe trips don't necessarily need to have a larger number to participate or more units in attendance, but it does help to have others in other stations and judging competition.

the form of resources and Boy Scouts to aid in manning events planned and you can also draw in more help in greater number of dens can compete. There can be more Cub Scout Field Day is by far better when a better quality of participation.

crafts, games, and other events gives all scouts a scouts. The competition in scouting skills, camp makes the activities much more appealing to all units in attendance. The scope of a larger camporee Camporees are by far better when there are many

Camporees
Cub Scout Field Day
Canoe Trips
Show & Do
Pow Wows
Special Overnight Hikes
Swimming Weekends
County Fairs

year. The following are some examples:
at times and aren't necessarily done each and every
enhance the overall scouting program. These may vary
Multi-district activities should be those that

meals available on campus on these occasions. There
assistance. It is sometimes possible to have room and
Community colleges are a good place to seek
during the entire year if indoor pools are available.
Swimming weekends are great. These can be held

well-prepared sessions.

outings when more people can participate in
Special hikes could consist of training type
from for both trainers and participants.

and Do's so that they too need more people to draw
Pow Wows require much of the same numbers as show

receive training of a much better quality.

staff, who are more proficient, then the trainees will
the training. If each district provides a few for
available leaders that there are few left to receive
one on, a small district will use so many of these
functions. Since there are so many required to put
man all stations and do other administrative
show and Do's to have many on the staff in order to
than a regular activity. There really is a need for
show & Do's are really a training function more

group to participate from year to year.

districts to learn the skills and provide a different

can be training for aquatic merit badges and other requirements during entire weekends or be a few weekends with competition between district swim teams. County fairs are always a great place for scouting. The story of scouting can be placed in front of many people. Displays of cubbing, scouting, and exploring, as well as pioneering projects built and demonstrated for all to see. All types of activities can be demonstrated such as first aid, unusual cooking, musical entertainment, scout skills, merit badges, home safety and many more. This is also a good place to recruit new boys into the program. An effort of some type should be undertaken to recruit boys by inviting them to meetings close to their homes.

or at all. these participants then you won't see them very often travel time. If your meetings aren't beneficial to may spend as much as 4 to 5 hours in meeting and rural districts who have to travel many miles and some impatient and give it up. There are many in your drag out too long until those individuals get information and need to be short enough so as to not enough for them to attend. Meetings are to impart should. We need to make these meetings meaningful have many people attend any of the meetings that they In the same vein we need to look at why we don't to impart such information to others.

important to their scouting job or unit, or are there in the form of hand out materials, information they attend these functions. What they receive may be functions, that they expect to receive something when in most of the district and council activities and surveying those individuals who normally participate It has been noted, through conversations and

The following pages are statistics gathered for three districts which have for the past two years combined those activities that would better fulfill the needs common to each of them.

They have only combined on an activity basis. Each have retained their identities and all other functions that a district normally does. They have assisted each other in many ways other than those listed but the decision to combine efforts in activities and training became necessary to increase the quality of the scouting and cubbing programs.

As of this writing, the results have been well worth the time and effort.

STATISTICS

TOTALS-YOUTH AND UNITS

TOTAL UNITS	POSTS	TROOPS	PACKS	YOUTH	EXP.	SCOUTS	CUBS	TIGERS	DIST (1)
12	1	5	6	217	49	75	88	5	JAN 85
10	0	5	5	126	0	53	68	5	JULY 85
13	2	5	6	228	81	53	94	0	JAN 86
13	2	5	6	204	79	55	70	0	JULY 86
14	2	5	7	218	52	55	110	1	JAN 87
11	2	3	6	137	36	40	61	0	JULY 87
12	2	3	7	291	67	44	157	23	JAN 88
11	1	5	5	205	50	66	86	3	AVER 1985
13	2	5	6	199	65	46	88	-	1986
12	2	4	6	194	35	44	107	8	1987
10	1	6	3	198	19	84	83	12	JAN 85
8	0	5	3	124	0	70	42	12	JULY 85
10	1	6	3	172	7	84	71	10	JAN 86
10	1	6	3	147	7	74	66	0	JULY 86
10	1	6	3	262	7	87	149	19	JAN 87
9	1	6	2	112	4	67	41	0	JULY 87
9	1	5	3	222	4	73	124	21	JAN 88
10	1	6	3	151	12	66	62	11	AVER 1985
10	1	6	3	174	7	78	81	8	1986
10	1	6	3	189	4	65	107	13	1987
10	0	5	5	173	0	52	111	10	JAN 85
10	0	5	5	146	0	34	102	10	JULY 85
10	0	5	5	235	16	39	180	0	JAN 86
11	1	5	5	151	16	45	90	0	JULY 86
10	0	5	5	196	0	61	115	20	JAN 87
10	0	5	5	139	0	46	70	23	JULY 87
9	0	4	5	225	0	55	140	30	JAN 88
10	0	5	5	164	0	37	119	8	AVER 1985
11	1	5	5	184	16	47	115	6	1986
9	0	4	5	148	0	48	75	25	1987

DIST (3)

The statistics shown do not reflect any significant change, if any, in the combined activities of the 3 districts monitored. It was not expected to be much of a change in such a short time.

The change has been in the attitude and spirit that has been shown by the boys themselves. They seem to take more interest in the activities because of the greater numbers involved. The camporees have shown a much larger attendance in numbers of troops as well as boys.

One of the most significant signs that this is an improvement is in the spirit of the adults. More adults are getting out and involved. All districts are showing increases of adult attendance at combined meetings and also in their own district activities. District meetings are improving because of more involvement.

For some years round tables have been nonexistent. They are now being held on a 3 district basis once a quarter. The attendance has been steadily improving.

The advancement program has shown improvement in most areas over 1985. The multi-district activities began in 1986 and by 1987 the training and planned programs began. The figures on the advancement chart show that there has been more activity in the Boy Scout program. The Cub Scout program appears to be moving up also.

ARROW OF LIGHT												
DIST (1)												
	BOBCAT	WOLF	BEAR	WEB	LIGHT	TEND.	2nd	1st	STAR	LIFE	EAGLE	BADGE
1985	48	3	4	6	0	11	4	3	3	3	108	
1986	29	7	1	2	3	6	7	4	3	2	72	
1987	75	35	15	13	5	13	7	5	4	3	82	
AVER 86/87	52	21	8	8	4	10	7	5	4	3	77	
DIST (2)												
1985	27	14	9	13	2	14	19	8	8	4	185	
1986	63	7	7	0	0	17	8	11	3	5	127	
1987	71	35	14	8	6	11	11	17	4	2	120	
AVER 86/87	67	21	11	4	3	14	10	14	4	4	124	
DIST (3)												
1985	95	35	13	3	10	0	0	3	0	0	1	
1986	37	30	4	8	5	5	4	1	0	2	0	
1987	80	14	13	2	0	16	8	9	4	0	1	
AVER 86/87	59	22	9	5	3	11	6	5	2	1	1	

Good Scouting

Scouting is a challenge. In these rural districts it is a greater challenge. You must be flexible in your approach to each situation. There may not be an answer readily available to you. Innovation becomes primary. By being flexible you can adapt to reality. Look at each situation in detail. Set your guidelines. Don't be so rigid in details that changes can't be made as you go along. You must be in step with your people. Don't set rigid standards that will alienate them. The most successful efforts are made by those who have a close personal feeling with those they are working with. "Walking in another person's shoes", brings you closer to that person. This will aid in the success of any scouting group. Most of all be sincere with each and everyone you associate with and the operation of your district will be much more successful.

THE SCOUTING CHALLENGE

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Approved: *1. Norman M. Compton, District Comm.* date: *4/15/88*
2. Bob Quaker, District Comm. date: *4/15/88*

Thesis: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION OF A RURAL DISTRICT
 This is to certify that all of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF COMMISSIONER SCIENCE have been fulfilled and required thesis has been approved by the faculty and I wish to be a candidate for degree at the MAY 1988 commencement.

To: Faculty of the Piedmont-Appalachian Cluster College of Commissioner Science.
 From: ROBERT D. LITTEL
