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Utah National Parks Council

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Internet Advancement

Starting in September 2006, every Scouting unit will have the ability to record youth advancements and achievements through the Internet. This applies to all Scouting programs, from Cub Scouting through Venturing. The on-line advancement program is provided by the National BSA Council and is intended to replace the existing paper-based process.

The Utah National Parks Council has been testing this program since June 2006 with a Beta group made up of volunteers throughout the council. The feedback has been positive, with good suggestions from the Beta team on how the council can better support volunteers and to make the overall process flow smoothly. Based on this feedback, the Utah National Parks Council will make the on-line advancement program available to all Scouting units starting in September. Further, the council plans to aggressively market the program with the intent to quickly move all Scouting units to this program as the council-approved advancement method.

Program Description

Each unit will designate a person as their advancement person. That person will receive from the council a unit identifier and a code. With this information, they can register an account with the on-line advancement program which they will use from that point forward. A unit can change their advancement person by contacting the council to have this re-assigned.

A unit would then submit all advancement by following the process below:

1. Log in to the on-line advancement program
2. Load their roster through either a) ScoutNET, or b) a council-approved management software (PackMaster/TroopMaster, Rank N'File, Scoutmate, ScoutSoft)
3. Provide dates of all advancements and earned badges for each youth in the unit.
4. Submit the advancements directly to ScoutNET
5. Print out the advancement summary report and obtain the required signatures
6. Bring the signed advancement report, along with all supporting documentation such as merit badge cards, Denali applications, etc., to the Council offices and pick up all advancements and earned achievements

Some of the many benefits gained from this process include:

- Units can verify that all advancements for each boy have been correctly entered into the official ScoutNET database, and make adjustments if needed
- Advancements entered in programs such as TroopMaster can be directly loaded into ScoutNET (no requirement to enter this information twice or to bring it into the Council Service Center)
- Advancement can be done 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- No waiting in line to have advancements verified at the Council Service Center - units can pick up advancements immediately

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- The on-line advancement program provides a simple order form that can be used to have advancements delivered to you through the mail
- Units can print out their official unit rosters as well as BSA membership cards

Timeline

The council will follow the schedule described below:

September 1	Training courses scheduled for District Advancement Chairs, District Training Chairs, and District Roundtable staff to educate them about this program
September 15	Program made available to the public
September 15	Flyers made available at all Council Service Centers, encouraging units to begin using the on-line advancement program
September 15	Training courses made available for the public (training will also be available on-line at the Council website - www.utahscouts.org)
September 15	Direct mailings done to each chartered organization with information about the on-line advancement program, encouraging them to attending the training and to begin using the new process
March 1, 2007	Internet Advancement is required for all advancement submissions.

Process Description

When a customer comes into a service center with a paper-based advancement form, the employee will do the following:

- Process the form as normal
- Notify the customer of the new Internet Advancement process and supply the customer with a copy of the flyer. Answer any questions the customer may have, emphasizing:
 - Internet Advancement has many benefits for them (see above)
 - They should begin using it from now on
 - They need their unit identifier (provide it to them if they want it)

When a customer comes into a service center with an Internet Advancement form, the employee will do the following:

- The customer does not have to have anything reviewed before shopping. They should be directed to do their shopping and then return to the cash register to purchase their items.
- At the cash register, receive their Advancement forms (they should have two copies).
 - Verify that the Advancement form has the proper signatures
 - Verify that the customer has included all merit badge cards and supporting documentation
 - If they only brought in one copy, request that they bring in two copies in the future
- Verify that the advancement items purchased match the summary on the advancement form
- Once the customer has left, and as time allows (but always within 24 hours):
 - If only one copy was brought in, make a second copy
 - Deliver a copy with signatures to the council Advancement department
 - Deliver a copy with all merit badge cards and other required applications to the appropriate district.