

**Correlation of Roundtable Attendance and Quality Unit Achievement**

by

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**A Thesis**

**submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Commissioner Science  
Middle Tennessee Council  
October 2009**

## **Preface**

The following is a study analyzing the correlation between roundtable attendance and the achievement of the Centennial Quality Unit Award in the Elk River District of the Middle Tennessee Council. The analysis takes into account the nature of the Centennial Quality Unit Award requirements at the onset of the program in 2007 and 2008 and compares it with roundtable attendance in the Elk River District during those calendar years. District roundtable attendance records, district training, council membership, advancement and resident camp records were referenced as well as unit leader surveys and key leadership interviews to establish this correlation. The study outcome suggests a strong correlation between roundtable attendance and achievement of the Centennial Quality Unit Award. It can be concluded, therefore, that roundtable remains a viable means of commissioner service toward the success of units.

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## **Introduction**

In a volunteer organization such as the Boy Scouts of America, it has become even more necessary to demonstrate recognizable benefit from the volunteer efforts of its members. Unit leaders and volunteer parents may experience immediate satisfaction witnessing their youth enjoy first-hand experiences with friends, advancement and recognition, activities and outdoor experiences, as they receive leader training and plan their programs. In contrast, the goals of Commissioner Service are, at times, a bit more aloof with the primary goal of "helping units succeed." The Centennial Quality Unit Award launched in 2007 allowed Commissioners to work with unit leaders and parents in quantifying these efforts in a way that would be more relevant to their direct experience and control.

For roundtable commissioners, the ability to quantify the aid that may be given to unit leaders within a district toward Centennial Quality Unit goals may seem even more difficult to evaluate. "Some say that good attendance at roundtables is the best hallmark of roundtable success (Admin, p12)." By outlining the roll and directives of roundtable commissioners in comparison to the Centennial Quality Unit requirements, this study will seek to correlate attendance at roundtables with the achievement of the Centennial Quality Unit Award.

For the Elk River District, Middle Tennessee Council, the notion that this correlation exists occurred while attending an annual District Leadership Recognition Banquet in early 2009 at the end of the 2008 calendar program year. It was the second year a special Unit Roundtable Attendance Award had been presented. When the second year of Centennial Quality Unit Awards were being presented, it became evident that many of the same units were being recognized for both achievements. It was most encouraging to begin to expect that the district roundtables were being effective.

An opportunity to prove the correlation between units attending roundtable where they were being aided in meeting the requirements was clear and the circumstances were right. The roundtable commissioners and staff had been making a singular effort toward promoting, standardizing, and building an exciting program for the last two years. With trained roundtable leadership and improved program and communication, by the end of 2006, roundtable commissioners had established a regular, well-advertised and promoted monthly training with the commensurate attendance incentives and program goals.

The following pages will review the program responsibilities of roundtable commissioners and ideas available for their use in promoting and presenting a quality roundtable program. The standardization of the roundtable programs for the Elk River District will also be reviewed along with unit roundtable attendance and Centennial Quality Unit objective achievement data. Unit leader survey results regarding roundtable will be included and discussed to evaluate the subjective value of roundtable attendance toward Centennial Quality Unit achievement. In addition, the state of the commissioner force and interviews with leading district and commissioner personnel will add input. This data should aid in making suggestions for future improvement and result in a positive conclusion of this thesis.

### **The Function of Commissioners and Roundtable**

Right from the onset of the current 2006-2010 Strategic Plan of the Boy Scouts of America, the Commissioner Service has expected to be integral in carrying out the pillars of success contained within the plan starting with the first of the five guiding principles that, “every eligible youth has an opportunity to be involved in a quality Scouting experience (Strategic, p5).” Don Belcher, the National Commissioner at the time took the opportunity to reinforce the relationship of this goal to the newly unveiled Centennial Quality Unit Award program in the *Fall 2006 Commissioner Newsletter* when he was quoted as saying, “unit success is defined by the unit achieving Quality Unit status and demonstrating an improvement in the retention of its members.” Although this statement was directed toward unit commissioners, it was further stressed that all commissioners, “give direction in the key areas of support that are needed to successfully drive a quality program experience for each youth and his family (Commissioner Fall 06, p1).”

As the service arm of the district, every commissioner need only look as far as a *Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service* to know that, “your mission is to help units succeed (p6).” While this is a good foundation for all commissioners, the roundtable commissioner performs this function within the confines of the monthly roundtable meeting where these specialized commissioners can also, “find ways frequently to recognize them [leaders] for their good work,” and “provide tangible help to your unit’s leadership (Fieldbook, p6).” It is the function of roundtable commissioners to make roundtables, “fun, practical, inspiring, and full of skills and program ideas (Fieldbook, p19),” received through their own training and resources. While the *Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service* is a great start, the primary coaching and continued planning resources come from the

*Features* are filled with practical, hands-on and interactive delivery that provides a year-round program to aid leaders.

The specific requirements of the Centennial Quality Unit Award relate well to the goals of roundtable delivery in varying degrees with regard to meeting basic leader training, member recruitment and retention, advancement, outdoor experiences and activities, and annual program planning. Per the *Cub Scout Roundtable Commissioner Training Manual*, Cub Scout roundtable commissioners, “can help transmit training information to pack leaders to help encourage their recognition (p19)” and indicate that, “the outdoor-related segment will give leaders outdoor program ideas for their den or pack (p24).” The *Cub Scout Roundtable Guide* and *Program Helps* are full of ideas that can be engaged at roundtable for achieving advancement and recognizing those achievements through ceremony ideas within program-related activities on a monthly theme that carry leaders through the year and build an excellent program designed not only to retain, but recruit membership on a continual basis.

The *Boy Scout Roundtable Training* manual supports delivery of the Centennial Quality Unit Award requirements in a similar fashion. Boy Scout roundtable commissioners are encouraged to invite key district committee members to discuss training opportunities and encourage leader recognition. The advancement committee or key roundtable staff may be assigned the responsibility of making available merit badge counselor contacts and give advancement support with Eagle boards of review and assistance with courts of honor. The Camping Committee is directly vested in encouraging troop camping, long-term and high-adventure camp promotion, earning awards like the National Camping Award, Order of the

Arrow coordination, and perhaps coordinating Webelos Scout camping aiding in recruitment, retention and the outdoor program implementation (BS RT Trng, p21-23).

Although program emphasis in any one area may differ from month to month at roundtable based on theme or focus at any certain time of year, the overall intent of program delivery is the same. If presented and utilized successfully, it is apparent that roundtable program elements are designed to support the Centennial Quality Unit Award goals. They may not, however, be the only source just as roundtable commissioners are not the only arm of commissioner service. In an active scouting program, motivated unit leaders and parent volunteers have other resources available to them to help in delivering a quality program. Nevertheless, commissioners can continue to strive toward making their services even more vital as well. After all, “learning is a lifetime activity. As commissioners, we must continually adjust our skills to provide a more valuable service to our units. Therefore, commissioners should view learning as an important part of their Scouting lives—every month, every year (Admin, p100).”

### **Focus of the Centennial Quality Unit Award**

As the implementation of the new Centennial Quality Award program was being rolled out in 2006, councils and districts began promoting the Chief Scout Executive's design, "to recognize units, districts, councils, areas, and regions in achieving excellence in providing a quality program to a growing youth population in America at all levels of the Boy Scouts of America (Centennial Implementation, p3)." This would mean "an enhanced commissioner service involvement (p5)," and a simple extension of helping units succeed with the aim, "to improve the QUALITY of program in every unit in America!" according to the primary focus of the new program (p1). The Council Commissioner kicked off the award program to District Commissioners and announced a Council implementation schedule at the October 2006 Council Jamboree. Roundtable commissioners began following the implementation schedule by sharing the program with units at monthly roundtable meetings in November of 2006 (p6). Unit Commissioners were to visit each assigned unit and discuss the unit's goals toward achieving the award starting in the calendar year 2007 (p7). These reports would return through the district commissioner staff on to the council to be monitored monthly, tracking reports shared and a celebration planned for recognizing achievement annually (p7). The groundwork had been laid and the details to be delivered, developed, and accomplished.

Each year a commitment to the award was to be made by units due February 15<sup>th</sup>, reviewed, and then claimed as early as November 1<sup>st</sup> if all of the goals set by each unit were achieved within that calendar year. Six primary areas were to be addressed each year with the ability for units to determine their own achievement goals to a certain extent. While slight changes did evolve between the 2007 launch and 2008, the requirement category goals

remained the same: 1. Training, 2. Recruitment, retention, and on-time recharter, 3. National Parent Initiative, 4. Advancement, 5. Outdoor experience and activity, and 6. Annual program planning (2007 & 2008 Centennial, p1). These were the primary measurements determined to best answer the question, “Did we accomplish the goal of providing a quality program to our youth by achieving the requirements (Centennial Implementation, p5)?”

Some units experienced adjustments during the launch period since the new Centennial Award Program was to be conducted on a calendar year basis rather than simultaneous to annual recharter dates which were not always on a calendar basis. The new requirements also called for units to achieve all six of the goals set rather than a required set of requirements plus an added number from a broader selection of requirements. While the previous requirements were set percentages or numbers according to the plan, the Centennial requirements were almost completely set by the unit themselves. This key change was included to enable more units to join the ranks of quality achievement allowing them to make goals according to their own developmental progress rather than a non-incrementally relevant standard of achievement. This significant difference was implemented to create a, “high degree of volunteer relationship and involvement in the goal setting and follow-through process (Centennial Implementation, p5).”

In a *Side-by-Side Comparison of the 2007-2008 Centennial Quality Unit Award Forms*, achievement number one required units to establish a percentage of their direct contact leaders to complete Basic Leader Training and Youth Protection. In 2007 the criteria specified “for their position,” where the 2008 commitment form did not include this wording (p1). The 2007 interpretation of requirements stipulated that if a leader was newly registered, they would need to commit to getting trained, but would not keep the unit from earning the

award (2007 Centennial, p2). The 2008 interpretation of criteria, continued direction was given to develop a plan to have leaders trained as well as newly registered leaders and added that each unit should have a unit trainer to work with leaders needing training (2008 Centennial, p2). Both of these interpretations, while slightly changed from one year to the next, expanded the opportunities for units to achieve adult leader training.

Centennial achievement number two deals directly with the process of retention, recruitment and on-time recharter. This 3-fold achievement had some evolution between 2007 and 2008 as well. In 2007, units were encouraged to indicate they had a percentage goal toward retention of “members,” (Side-by-Side, p1). It is not known whether this may have been interpreted to include adults in any cases or not. This portion of the achievement for 2008 called for “excellent programs to achieve our goal of \_\_\_\_ percent youth retention (p1).” This seemed to be clearer in the area of retention to focus on youth retention. At the same time, the recruitment portion of this criteria for 2007 required recruitment of a specific number of new youth, while the 2008 criteria specific recruitment of “new members” (p1). Implementation of the retention and recruitment could have been interpreted with some variation. The final area of criteria regarding recharter remained clear that units were to recharter on time.

Centennial achievement number three was directed toward the new National Parent Initiative effort which seemed to be largely unknown at the time of the Centennial Quality Unit launch. In 2007, the requirement to, “commit to recruit \_\_\_\_ new adults to be active” was very loosely interpreted and did not specify registration (2007 Centennial, p1-2). In 2008, there was a shift from the assumption that a unit was participating in the national parent initiative to be, “the spirit of the National Parent Initiative,” to recruit \_\_\_\_ new parents/adults

to assist our unit program (2008 Centennial, p1).” In 2008, the interpretation expanded to direct that, “every parent should be asked to help with at least one specific task,” and still did not specify that registration was required (p2). This requirement has remained a highly subjective achievement and may generally be included in unit efforts toward recruitment in achievement number two.

Centennial achievement number four is one of two requirements that prescribe a specific percentage or advancement to be achieved. In the 2007 launch, the option was given to achieve a minimum of 60 percent advancement or improve by 10 percent over the prior year encouraging units both to set a goal felt to be attainable or at least improve on the prior performance (2007 Centennial, p1). This created a necessity for units to have a benchmark total of advancement from the prior year related to their membership totals in order to determine if an increase occurred toward the 10 percent increase option. In 2008, the percentage was to be named solely by the unit (2008 Centennial, p1). In both years, the advancement requirement was specific as rank advancement and not merely activity recognition (2007 & 2008 Centennial, p2) and remained a factor of membership.

Centennial achievement number five is the second of two requirements that prescribe a specific percentage this time toward youth members participating in outdoor experiences or activities. In 2007, the option was given to achieve 70 percent of members involved in outdoor experiences or one activity per month, or improve the percentage over the year before (2007 Centennial, p1). The improvement option required units to be able to determine what their own percentage would have been for the prior year or be resolved to reach the 70 percent mark or set out one activity per month. In 2008, the units were again to be named solely by the unit as either outdoor experiences or group activities. There was no option for

one activity per month or an increase over the prior year (2008 Centennial, p2). Interpretation for both years included that pack meetings qualified and requested that units indicate in advance which outdoor experiences or activities would qualify (2007 & 2008 Centennial, p2) leaving units to take advantage of some flexibility.

The final centennial achievement number six did not change in either year and clearly resounded with the Boy Scout motto to “be prepared” with a commitment to, “conduct annual program planning,” as well as to, “provide the financial resources to deliver a quality program to our members (Side-by-Side, p1).” It should be noted that even though this requirement is last in the list, it certainly cannot be considered the least important since it often true that without planning most, if not all, of the other achievements could not be accomplished or supported. It is with the aim to help units succeed that commissioners set out to provide units with the tools they needed to become a quality unit.

### **Elk River District Roundtable Standardization**

Until late 2005, the Elk River District, Middle Tennessee Council, operation had become confused possibly because of a continual change in professional assistance with no one District Executive remaining for more than six months on average. In 2005, a District Executive returning to family and his own scouting area as a youth was placed in the Elk River District with the intent of remaining and applying efforts to stabilizing a willing but small group of volunteers. By 2006, that small number had become more focused on providing the kind of service that training and scouting guidelines professed. With a concerted effort, district members began to determine who was performing in what capacity with a systematic goal of determining what could be done and what was still needed. It was clear that an eye toward recruiting more capable and willing volunteers was needed.

Key members of the district committee and commissioner corps began to identify the active district and unit leadership and establishing a way to communicate with them since they appeared to be largely operating independently from each other. An email list was established for all unit leaders and chairman and they were informed about the benefits of the monthly leader roundtable meetings, leadership training and program planning available for the coming year. At the same time, a concerted effort to develop engaging and interactive roundtable meetings and training events were planned through newly recruited adult volunteers out of those units who had maintained a certain level of success and involvement. It was clear by the end of 2006 that this communication was beginning to increase roundtable and training attendance as well as enthusiasm from still more adult volunteers.

From the growing foundation and momentum in 2006, the district could clearly say that it had fully planned, promoted and adequately staffed monthly leader roundtable

programs for Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, and full offerings of district-level Cub Scout and Boy Scouts basic training as well as Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation training for the first time in 3 years. The email communication with accompanying flyers for district events as well as area and council events and growing utilization of a basic district website was taking root. Adult volunteers were being challenged not only to commit to the tasks for which they were recruited, but to perform in them as well.

Prior to the 2007 calendar year key district leadership positions were filled with formal goals for commissioner service including roundtable attendance and promotion. In a bold move, the District Chairman, having begun in 2006, continued a second term in 2007 with a newly recruited District Commissioner, Cub Scout Roundtable Commissioner, and Boy Scout Roundtable Commissioner. The District Commissioner had many years of Boy Scout leadership experience, but was new to the commissioner corps and was replaced by 2008 with a more experienced and available member of the district committee as the District Commissioner. The Cub Scout and Boy Scout Roundtable Commissioners, however, had both experience as roundtable staff and as experienced and capable training team members and had already begun planning the 2007 roundtable year coinciding with the Centennial Quality Unit launch.

The Cub Scout and Boy Scout Roundtable Commissioners had previously been actively involved with promoting the program year with regular monthly email communications reminding leaders of upcoming roundtable and the monthly focus information, posting on the developing district website, and providing encouragement at every roundtable and training leading up to 2007. To continue increasing attendance in 2007 a unit attendance recognition award was created to encourage units to at least be represented

at as many monthly roundtables as possible. The Roundtable Unit Attendance Ribbon emulated the progress record for unit leadership awards by recognizing at least four months of roundtable attendance (Leadership Training, p50-61) with the bronze award, at least six months of roundtable attendance with the gold award, and eight or more months of roundtable attendance with the silver award. The award progression followed the Cub Scout arrow points, Boy Scout palms, and Venturing recognition progression in the order of bronze, gold and silver. It was hoped that with at least one communicative member of each unit in attendance, the unit would benefit with any information or program that was presented.

In addition to the promotion and recognition, both the Cub Scout and Boy Scout roundtables sought to provide program that benefited actual attendance, not just a conduit for information. The Cub Scout roundtable provided a monthly newsletter that captured everything that might be presented from the *Cub Scout Roundtable Planning Guide* plus district news and contacts. This document was printed in black and white and given to those who attended which could then be emailed in full color to those in attendance who provided an email address. These email addresses were also used for other communications of the district. The leaders who attended could then pass this newsletter along further to other leaders in the unit. In addition, actual attendance at Cub Scout roundtable would give leaders demonstrations and variations of the printed material that made it beneficial to be present. Many items that were hands-on resulted in take-home samples or provided free giveaways to those who made the effort to attend. In 2008, an individual leader recognition rounder was added to promote more attendance and encourage new and experienced individual leaders who would rotate into the Cub Scout area much more often than the Boy Scout side.

The Boy Scout roundtable began to utilize the program according to roundtable basic training as well as take advantage of experienced leadership making presentations to those who attended roundtable. In addition to email announcements of the upcoming topic or need to focus on participation by units in Boy Scout outdoor or event planning through the year, experienced leaders found a benefit for returning to roundtable and all leaders continued to be encouraged by a social time and highly value the networking achieved at roundtable that may or may not occur elsewhere. Even though minutes of the Boy Scout roundtable discussions were distributed after each month's meeting, they could not take the place of the compounded general knowledge that would be shared at the meeting benefiting those in attendance more than those who could not attend.

With this formula and continued recruitment of roundtable staff from enthusiastic and uniquely experienced unit leadership, the attendance for both the Cub Scout and Boy Scout roundtable has continued to grow on average each year and continues to do so. Nothing seems to be able to take the place of a venue whereby volunteers can come together and be educated, encouraged and enthused, and ultimately revitalized than at roundtable which can only add up to the end result that roundtable commissioners and staff are helping units succeed through their monthly programs as designed.

### **Quality Results in the Elk River District**

It is important to detail the basis on which the quality unit data in the Elk River District is formulated for the purpose of this study. The Centennial Quality Unit results used for this study are taken from the Middle Tennessee Council compiled record for the Elk River District not from the individual Centennial Quality Unit Achievement forms for the years 2007 & 2008. The physical forms were not available and only used to report whether units actually achieved the goals they set for themselves or not. On that basis, other data will be used to confirm these results based on district totals for the areas of achievement being studied with the understanding that the units would have had to meet or exceed the goals they set for themselves resulting in maintenance or increase in overall totals for the district in each category.

For the purpose of this study, the areas of achievement being focused upon will be in the criteria relative to training in general terms, retention and recruitment, advancement, and outdoor experience relative to resident camp attendance. Only Cub Scout and Boy Scout units will be analyzed as these were the only units who had a roundtable available to them. It is understood that for the Elk River District, no Venturing Crews achieved the Centennial Quality Unit Award in 2007 or 2008 and there was no Venturing Forum in the district to aid them. No correlation, therefore, can be developed between Venturing Crews attendance at roundtable and the achievement of the Centennial Quality Unit Award in this study. Also, in order to aid in a uniform study of the data, any unit that had dwindled to the point of not functioning for the purpose of recharter, were merged, or dropped by the end of 2007 or had not completed a full program year in 2008 were disregarded for purposes of considering a correlation between roundtable attendance and Centennial Quality Unit Award achievement.

With regard to Centennial achievement number one, training results within the district in the face-to-face training courses for Leader Specific training can be tracked directly. New on-line training now available makes the ability to track training more difficult when reports are not readily available on the basis of who has completed training, but rather on the basis of who is not trained for their position. While having information about who is not trained is helpful in guiding district training teams in locating what leader positions need training, it is not as helpful in reflecting how complete training has been. With the advent of Troop Committee Challenge being available by internet, Troop Committee Chairman and Troop Committee Members can now receive complete basic training on-line. Youth protection also remains an on-line training which is required by all registered volunteers in the State of Tennessee and, therefore, is not being considered for the purpose of this study.

District totals regarding training relative to the Centennial Quality Unit Award will only be analyzed on a unit percentage basis in hopes to support confirmation that this requirement was achieved. Basic training that may have occurred in other districts is not known or being considered in this study, but may have contributed to overall results. In the district, the following face-to-face training statistics can be confirmed for packs and troops in the years 2007 & 2008 for basic leader training as follows:

**Elk River District  
Pack Basic Training**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Packs</b>	<b>Leaders</b>	<b>% Increase in Units</b>
<b>2007</b>	20	67	77%
<b>2008</b>	21	62	81%

**Elk River District  
Troop Basic Training**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Troops</b>	<b>Leaders</b>	<b>% Increase in Units</b>
<b>2007</b>	5	17	31%
<b>2008</b>	2	11	13%

Exhibit I

It is clear by these results that Cub Scout packs were confirmed to meet or exceed their training goals each year, not based on total number of leaders obtaining basic training within the district, but leaders spread over the number of packs meeting unit goals. Understanding that leadership positions within a troop do not change as frequently as pack positions is evident in the number of total leaders and units seeking training for Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters. These totals do not take into consideration the on-line training that is evidently occurring for Troop Committee Chairman and Troop Committee Members in order for troops to report achieving their training goals.

With regard to Centennial achievement number two, membership and retention was tracked by the council and reported in a final stacking report for the years 2007 and 2008. This report is available at the council and only Elk River District membership totals were extracted. Since the focus of the 2007 Centennial Quality Unit Award achievement number two focused on retention of members and number of youth recruited, the final totals for the Elk River District in the 2007 stacking report were represented as follows:

**Elk River District Membership Results**

Membership		
2006	2007	% Growth
1857	1935	4.20%
New Adults		
2006	2007	% Growth
75	92	17%

Exhibit 2

It seems to be quite clear by these totals that there was an increase in growth in total membership and new adults between 2006 & 2007. With the focus of the 2008 Centennial Quality Unit Award achievement two focused on percentage of youth membership retention and total new member recruitment, the final totals for the Elk River District in the 2008 stacking report were represented as follows:

<b>Elk River District Membership Results</b>		
<b>Traditional Membership</b>		
<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>% Growth</b>
1404	1408	0.30%
<b>Traditional Youth Retention</b>		
<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>% of Goal</b>
60%	54.30%	90.50%

Exhibit 3

It is apparent the membership totals were recognized as growth over the youth retention between 2007 and 2008. By these result totals it might be said that those units who achieved quality unit did so by meeting their respective retention and recruitment goals even though it is not apparent the district totals reflect this overall.

With regard to Centennial achievement number four, rank advancement for Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts was a clear achievement in both 2007 and 2008. Totals were taken from Elk River District Advancement Reports at the end of each calendar year and are available at the council for further review. Units not only increased in total number of advancements, but the percentage of units increasing their totals grew. These figures represent a clear victory with improvement to the program.

<b>Pack &amp; Troop Advancement</b>			
<b>2007 Pack Advancement</b>	<b>% Packs Increasing</b>	<b>2008 Pack Advancement</b>	<b>% Packs Increasing</b>
326	23%	504	69%
<b>2007 Troop Advancement</b>	<b>% Troops Increasing</b>	<b>2008 Troop Advancement</b>	<b>% Troops Increasing</b>
524	38%	870	81%

Exhibit 4

With regard to Centennial achievement number five, the outdoor experience can be examined relative to reports regarding youth participation and unit attendance at camps in the council. These totals do not take into consideration camps visited out of council or unit camping. The following totals were reported from the camping department based on Middle

Tennessee Council resident camp participation in 2007 and 2008 with total number of Cub Scouts and Packs attending and Boy Scouts and Troops attending. Each year had an increase in both based on the exhibit below:

<b>Elk River District Resident Camp Totals</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Boy Scouts</b>	<b>Troops</b>	<b>Cub Scouts</b>	<b>Packs</b>
<b>2007</b>	127	11	39	7
<b>2008</b>	132	12	44	10

Exhibit 5

In addition to increases in summer resident camp, the Boy Scout Winter Camp also saw an increase from 3 units to 5 units participating in this relatively new winter program. Using training attendance at Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO) enabling packs to camp as a unit, the district saw 27 adult leaders from 10 packs trained in 2007 and 15 more leaders from 10 packs (including six packs never having trained outdoor leaders before), the district went from 40% of the packs certified to camp as a unit to 64%. These are clear indicators that the outdoor program is a growing success.

Without having the actual Centennial Quality Unit Achievement forms to review, this researcher accumulated data from the best available reports in order to project a sense of the degree of achievement on a district basis. Most areas of achievement seem clear in the overall analysis, especially since the Elk River District was also recognized as being a Centennial Quality District in 2008. Representation of the above figures were compiled from available data and allowances interpreted based on information understood, but not necessarily available. Detailed reports from which this data was taken are available in the Middle Tennessee Council office through the Field Director, Camping Department, Registrar, and Advancement Secretary. Official reports were not included in the appendix to protect the general identify of active and individual units.

## **Statistical Data**

In an effort to determine whether there may be a correlation between roundtable attendance and Centennial Quality Unit Award achievement, it was first necessary to study roundtable attendance records and review of the units who achieved the Centennial Quality Unit Award in 2007 & 2008 for both Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts in the Elk River District, Middle Tennessee Council. Fortunately, as part of the improved development of the Elk River District and desire to measure improvement in roundtable attendance, both the Cub Scout and Boy Scout roundtable commissioner determined to record attendance as one measure of their progress. These records were obtained from each roundtable commissioner and summarized for comparison with the district's report of Centennial Quality Unit achievement.

As of 2005 and prior, the roundtable attendance had been no more than literally a handful of committed leaders who sought information or were using the venue to meet other district leadership to complete projects separate from the purpose of roundtable. The commissioners at that time were doing the best they could, given the resources at hand. Within 2006 efforts, the Cub Scout roundtable grew from six participants representing five packs to 17 participants representing eight packs and the Boy Scout roundtable five participants representing four units to eight participants representing eight units. This was truly only scratching the surface.

The Cub Scout roundtable attendance tracking showed an increase of steady attendance through 2007 and 2008. The 2007 attendance reached an average of over 24 leaders a month representing 20 out of 26 packs in the district at some point throughout the year, with the highest attended meeting being the startup of the Program Planning emphasis

in August, 2007, reaching 41 pack leaders in 14 packs. Attendance by 14 different packs was maintained each month through the end of the year. A total of 87 different leaders were exposed to Cub Scout roundtable in 2007. These results were followed in 2008 by a slight decrease to an average of 23 leaders a month still representing 20 packs, with the highest attended meeting again being program kick-off in August, 2008, with 30 leaders in 11 packs, followed by January, 2008, with 27 leaders in 13 packs focusing on Blue & Gold banquets. A total of 69 different leaders were exposed to the Cub Scout roundtable in 2008.

<b>Pack Roundtable Attendance &amp; Unit Roundtable Award Comparison</b>						
<b>Year</b>	<b>Cub Scouts</b>	<b>Packs</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Bronze</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Silver</b>
<b>2007</b>	87	20	24.36	2	5	7
<b>2008</b>	69	20	23	9	6	5

Exhibit 6

As seen by Exhibit 6 above, while the total leaders in attendance may have reduced, the same numbers of packs were being reached and more packs were added to the bronze and gold attendance award categories for their frequency in attendance throughout the year.

The Boy Scout roundtable attendance tracking showed steady increase through 2007 and 2008. The 2007 attendance reached an average of over 12 leaders a month representing 14 out of 15 troops in the district at some point throughout the year, with the highest attended meeting being the startup of the well-advertised program year in September, 2007, reaching 21 troop leaders in 13 troops. A total of 32 different leaders were exposed to the Boy Scout roundtable in 2007. These results were followed in 2008 by an increase to an average of almost 13 leaders a month representing 12 troops and one new Venturing Crew, with the highest attended meeting being February, 2008, with 19 troop leaders in 11 units. A total of 37 different leaders were exposed to the Boy Scout roundtable in 2008.

**Troop Roundtable Attendance & Unit Award Comparison**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Boy Scouts</b>	<b>Troops</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Bronze</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Silver</b>
<b>2007</b>	32	14	12.45	2	2	6
<b>2008</b>	37	12*	12.9	0	2	7

\*Not including 1 Venturing Crew

Exhibit 7

As seen by Exhibit 7 above, more leaders were reached within two less units in 2008, but more units attended more frequently increasing the number of units receiving the Silver Award for increased number of months attending in 2008.

In reviewing the units who achieved the Centennial Quality Unit Award for 2007 and 2008 in comparison to whether they attended roundtable or not, the following correlation was found simply on the basis of the Quality Units being represented at roundtable. Both years, a total of 35 units achieved the Centennial Quality Unit Award. In both years, 21 out of 26 packs and 14 out of 16 troops were the recipients. In 2007, 17 of the 21 packs who achieved quality unit also attended roundtable. In 2008, 16 of the 21 packs who achieved quality unit also attended roundtable. In 2007, 12 of the 14 troops who achieved quality unit also attended roundtable. In 2008, 11 of the 14 troop who achieved quality unit also attended roundtable. It might be interesting to note here that neither of the two crews in 2007 or four crews in 2008 achieved quality unit and there was no Venturing forum available to them.

**Correlation of Quality Pack to Roundtable Attendance**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Packs</b>	<b>Quality Pack</b>	<b>Attended Roundtable</b>	<b>% Correlation</b>
<b>2007</b>	26	21	17	81%
<b>2008</b>	26	21	16	76%

Exhibit 8

As shown in Exhibit 8 above, the correlation percent between packs achieving quality unit based on roundtable attendance alone in each year is high. Please see Appendix A for more detailed analysis.

**Correlation of Quality Troop to Roundtable Attendance**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Troops</b>	<b>Quality Troops</b>	<b>Attended Roundtable</b>	<b>% Correlation</b>
<b>2007</b>	16	14	12	86%
<b>2008</b>	16	14	11	79%

Exhibit 9

As shown in Exhibit 9 above, the correlation percent between troops achieving quality unit based on roundtable attendance alone in each year is even higher. Please see Appendix B for more detailed analysis.

In each set of comparisons above, the same number of units achieved quality unit in each year, while the percentage of correlation decreased slightly due to one less unit attending roundtable that achieved quality unit. In each situation for each set, one pack and one troop who had achieved quality unit and attended roundtable in 2007, went on to achieve quality unit in 2008 without attending roundtable. Both of these units had experienced leadership who through other resources and training were able to meet quality unit requirements in 2008. Review of these units and other non-correlations will be discussed further in the survey results and exploratory interview chapters.

## **Survey Results**

In an effort to receive input from units regarding their subjective views as to whether roundtable attendance aided them in achieving the Centennial Quality Unit Award, a survey was developed and sent to units in an attempt to determine whether units felt they were helped by roundtable, had issues with attending roundtable, and/or had other resources that helped them achieve the Centennial Quality Unit Award. Survey questions were based on whether they attended roundtable or whether they did not attend roundtable regardless of whether they achieved the quality unit award. However, units were advised as to whether they had achieved quality unit in any given year and directed to answer corresponding questions accordingly.

A trial of the survey was conducted at a district committee meeting and refined based on input from district committee members associated with units in various categories, those who attended or did not attend roundtable and those who achieved or did not achieve quality unit. With the final format the unit leader or committee chair in most cases was contacted by email or phone and asked to respond. In some cases, the most active member who regularly attended roundtable was asked to make input on behalf of the unit and in a few cases where leaders were difficult to contact because of their lack of district involvement, unit commissioners or a district representative associated with the unit answered on their behalf. The email communication network that had begun in 2006 made response from nearly all units involved effective by email.

Survey results were received from 22 out of 26 packs, an 85% response rate, and 15 out of 16 troops, a 94% response rate. Of the units that responded 19 packs attended roundtable and 6 packs did not in any given year while 13 troops attended roundtable and

three troops did not in any given year. The units that attended roundtable in either 2007 or 2008 were asked to answer questions 1-7 and units who did not attend roundtable in either 2007 or 2008 were asked to answer questions 8-13. Please see Appendix C for the Centennial Roundtable Survey.

Those units that attended roundtable were asked if they felt roundtable aided them in achieving the quality unit award with regard to five of the Centennial Quality Unit Award Criteria: 1. Did you receive information about Basic Leader Training, 2. Aid in improving your program toward recruitment and membership retention, 3. Aid in improving your program toward increasing rank advancement, 4. Aid in encouraging your units to include an increase in outdoor experiences or activities, and 5. Aid in preparation for annual program planning? The resulting answer totals are below:

<b>Question Results 1-5 for Units Attending Roundtable</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Packs % Yes</b>	<b>Troops % Yes</b>
1	82%	73%
2	82%	73%
3	68%	80%
4	77%	80%
5	77%	87%

Exhibit 10

It is clear from these results that most units felt they received aid in achieving Centennial Quality Unit Award criteria by attending roundtable.

For those units who attended roundtable, question 6 also asked if roundtable was not their only information source and units were asked to list other sources that may apply. Finally, question 7 asked them to rate their opinion regarding the statement, "Roundtable attendance assist our unit in achieving the Centennial Quality Unit Award with 1-Strongly Agree, 2-Somewhat Agree, 3-Not Applicable, 4-Somewhat Disagree, or 5-Strongly Disagree. The results to these questions are indicated below:

<b>Question Results 6 &amp; 7 for Units Attending Roundtable</b>		
<b>Response 6</b>	<b>Packs</b>	<b>Troops</b>
<b>Other Sources</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>#</b>
District Website	6	5
Council Website	7	5
Training Chairman	9	4
Commissioner	3	3
Other Leader	2	0
Professional	2	3
VIP*	3	2
<b>Response 7 Rating</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly Agree	55%	40%
Somewhat Agree	18%	27%
Not Applicable	9%	20%
Somewhat Disagree	0%	7%
Strongly Disagree	5%	0%

\*Volunteer Information Planning or Annual Program Planning

Exhibit 11

Of the 32 units that responded, 11 also received information on the district website, 12 on the council website, 13 from the Training Chairman, 6 from their commissioners, 2 from other leaders, 5 from their professional, and 5 via the Council Volunteer Information Planning or the District Annual Program Planning sessions. This is not a significant amount compared to the resources delivered at roundtable. In fact, information about many of the resources above are also provided at roundtable. Other resources listed by units included a pack comment that they relied heavily upon their unit commissioner and a troop advising they used an internet scouting network.

The overall rating provided by packs and troops as to how strongly they believed roundtable was aiding them in achieving the Centennial Quality Unit Award varied between packs and troops. Just over half (55%) the packs felt very strongly that roundtable assisted them while 18% somewhat agreed. By the same token, less than half (40%) felt strongly that roundtable assisted them while 27% somewhat agreed. More troops (20%) than packs (9%)

felt that roundtable was not applicable to their Centennial Quality Unit achievement, no packs were ambivalent about whether they somewhat disagreed with 7% of troops saying they somewhat disagreed. No troops strongly disagreed that roundtable assisted them while 5% of the packs did. Taking an overall consensus view as to whether units felt that roundtable aided their achievement, 73% of packs and 67% of troops either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed. These are significant subjective findings in favor of roundtable from those units who attended.

Those units that did not attend roundtable were asked why they did not attend roundtable. Of the responses received, only 6 packs and 3 troops did not attend. Their responses are below:

<b>Question 8 Results for Units Not Attending Roundtable</b>		
<b>Response 8</b>	<b>Packs</b>	<b>Troops</b>
Inconvenient Day	0	0
Inconvenient Time	1	0
Too Far to Travel	2	2
Conflicts with Events	0	0
Did Not Need	1	0
Have Other Sources	1	1

Exhibit 12

Four of the total units not attending were units in the outer perimeter of the district and, for understandable reasons, said that roundtable was simply too far away to travel. One pack that listed roundtable as an inconvenient time said so because their unit meetings were scheduled for the same time. One pack commented they had not understood the importance of roundtable and two other units cited they had other sources.

Units who did not attend roundtable were further asked about where they got information for each of the areas under study toward achieving the Centennial Quality Unit Award in questions 9. If they participated in Basic Training, 10. Improved program toward

recruitment and retention, 11. Improved program toward increasing rank advancement, 12. Encouragement in increasing outdoor experiences and activities, and 13. Annual program planning. Those answers are compiled below:

<b>Questions 9-13 Results for Units Not Attending Roundtable</b>					
<b>Question</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Packs Other Sources</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
District Website	1				
Council Website	2	1		2	1
Training Chairman	2				
Commissioner					
Other Leader	1	2	1	1	1
Professional	3	2			2
VIP					
Council Office					
Internet		1		1	2
Other		1			
<b>Question</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Troops Other Sources</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
District Website	2				
Council Website	1	1		1	
Training Chairman	1				
Commissioner					
Other Leader					1
Professional	1	1			1
VIP					
Council Office		1			
Internet				1	1
Other		1	1	1	2

Exhibit 13

Nine units in all that responded did not attend roundtable, and only one to four packs and one to three troops noted they had other sources for certain areas of Centennial Quality Unit achievement. Most of the other sources for training information were the district and council websites, directly from the training chair, other leader or professional. For membership and retention ideas, four units went to the council website, office or relied upon another unit leader or the professional. For advancement ideas, one unit referred to another leader.

Outdoor experience and annual planning information was sought at the council website, internet, another leader or their professional. The troops responding to these questions that did not attend roundtable tended to be units with long-term experienced leaders who knew that certain information was needed and where to get it. One unit commented throughout by saying that they had a resourceful troop committee, supportive community and a Cub Scout pack that fed into their troop that was relied upon since they felt they were too far away to come to roundtable. These are the kinds of answers that would be expected from units that did not or could not attend roundtable. One comment seemed to sum up the opinion of those who do not or rarely attend roundtable was that it was, “always helpful when I go, but not necessarily toward achieving quality unit.”

## **Exploratory Interviews**

In an effort to understand any anomalies that may have appeared in the research data and to understand leader and unit positions beyond what surveys may have revealed, interviews were arranged with the Elk River District's key three as well as the Cub Scout and Boy Scout Roundtable Commissioners. Along with insight each position may have offered, each district leader was asked questions related to the Centennial Quality Unit Award and how the district has helped in providing training information, advancement ideas, membership and retention ideas, outdoor program, and annual planning. They were also asked to share how they felt participation was this year compared to last year to give an indication if the program has continued to progress. Finally, they were asked to express how they felt the district has contributed to units earning the Centennial Quality Unit Award in all of the areas above, some of the areas above, or whether contributing to this achievement was even a fully conscious effort.

First up, the Elk River District Executive, Dale Turner, was asked about six units in 2007 and eight units in 2008 who achieved the Centennial Quality Unit Award without having representation at roundtable in those years. In reviewing each, he began by noting that four of the units (two packs and two troops) who achieved quality unit in 2008 and did not attend roundtable had attended roundtable in 2007 and achieved quality unit then. Many of the resources provided through contacts at roundtable in 2007 were utilized in 2008 even though they did not attend that year. One of the packs had good lingering leadership that remained a resource even though they could not attend roundtable. The other pack was linked to an outstanding troop with very active leadership involved in roundtable that assisted them.

The two troops were both troops that were some distance away where it was difficult to attend, but they had excellent leadership who had even received Wood Badge training.

Mr. Turner went further to share that the three units that did not attend roundtable in either year but achieved the Centennial Quality Unit Award included a pack with knowledgeable and trained leadership who had really moved on to boy scouts, but was remaining to help the pack recruit new members. Membership drives were successful in the beginning of each program year, but membership was not sustained by the next program year. The units got information to do everything right, but chose not to remain with the program. The other pack had trained guidance from one of the few trained Charter Organization Representatives and received a great deal of assistance from him, but were a small pack that had nowhere to go but up, so simple improvements were enough to achieve the award. The final troop in this situation was one that was able to work heavily with another troop that did attend roundtable and had also achieved been successful in achieving quality unit standing.

Mr. Turner thought it was interesting to see that in the final three units that did not attend roundtable in either year, but had achieved the quality unit award in 2007 only, had been active with roundtable in prior years. Each of these situations was unique and unfortunate with one pack having had good leadership transition out in 2007 and new leadership bringing personal issues that interfered with performing the program. The other pack's primary leader was called up for active duty where the unit had revolved around that person's leadership. That unit continued to struggle even though it received a great deal of direct professional help. The final troop now, fortunately, has good leadership that has become active with the district and should begin seeing progress again.

It is clear that the professional in the cases above focused attention on units that had little or no assistance through unit leaders or other district personnel with achieving the Centennial Quality Unit Award. Since the Centennial Quality Unit is an important measure of District Executive success, the direction where effort was needed became clear. Dale Turner commented that, "The Centennial Quality Unit guidelines helped me as a professional focus my efforts where they needed to be in order to help struggling units succeed. Units with leaders who attended roundtable and used other resources available to them were getting the assistance they needed." He continued to observe that district assistance in the area of commissioner service is growing dramatically now in the Elk River District which should make his job in these areas of difficulty a lot easier. Ultimately, Dale Turner agreed, "Units who attend roundtable are more likely to achieve Quality Unit (Interview Turner, 10/08/09)."

The Elk River District Commissioner, Bill Morgan, shared comments about the growing commissioner service and expressed that unit commissioners on an increasing basis are getting training information to units and answering a lot of questions for leaders. The biggest increase in service has been over the last eight months in the year after the period for this study. The past years of commissioner service in the Elk River District have been with a kind of understanding that unit commissioner are experienced leaders who had an expectation of being "invited" to visit units if they had problems. That attitude is definitely changing with recruitment of unit commissioners from enthusiastic units who are quality unit achievers and understand the benefits of continued leader training like roundtable. The 2009 commissioner corps is very much guided by what units need to be successful in qualifying for the Centennial Quality Unit Award.

Mr. Morgan expressed that the commissioner corps benefits a great deal out of what comes from roundtable meetings and encourages leaders to attend to receive these benefits. Packs and troops who attend roundtable are encouraged and have become more enthusiastic as a result. Roundtable does lend to ideas for improving their program which, in turn, improves their recruitment and retention goals. While information is regularly presented about the outdoor program at roundtable, unit commissioners do really push the outdoor program and are being successful at this. Basic leader training has really stressed the annual planning process possibly more so than roundtable, but roundtable stresses attendance at these trainings on a regular basis. Some information may be coming from our newly improved district website and by word of mouth from other leaders. Mr. Morgan also commented, "I do believe we are having some cross-communications between units. This is a new development. The Search, Discover, Share that the Tigers know is working with units as well."

When asked to express observations about any interesting dynamics in the district functioning, Mr. Morgan shared that he sees a greater interest in the leadership, more friendly atmosphere in the last couple of years, more hands going up when we ask for volunteers because they want to be more involved, better trained leadership, and enthusiasm at the roundtables leading to district involvement and overall growth and education the leadership we have. In 2007 and prior years, commissioners generally used the position as a way to stay in scouting without having any responsibilities. As District Commissioner, Bill Morgan's cry was issued, "You've made reservations at my table, please come put your feet under it." This year should prove to be one thousand percent better than even last year. Helping units succeed by achieving the Centennial Quality Unit Award was an intentional goal because, he

says, “this is really our report card on how well they’re doing and providing them with the material to get it done through unit commissioners and roundtable is definitely doing the job (Interview Morgan, 10/12/09).”

The Elk River District Cub Scout Roundtable Commissioner, David, Woodfin, has continued the program standardization established since 2007 when he took over in May of 2008 and is encouraged that attendance and participation have continued to increase. As far as consciously addressing the Centennial Quality Unit Award criteria in roundtable, he reflected that roundtable has been very fortunate to have very current training information to distribute. Attendance at roundtable by other trained leaders who can echo the benefit of these trainings has been a tremendous benefit. Monthly advancement ideas continue to stream to participants by passing along all the ideas that come to him through the *Cub Scout Roundtable Planning Guide* and is put entirely in the *Elk River Currents* roundtable newsletter. Discussion and publications at roundtable are also continually promoting the outdoor program and, along with promoting trainings for this like Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO), has been very successful.

In the areas of membership and retention or annual program planning, Mr. Woodfin did not feel that roundtable was necessarily focusing on these. Naturally, the roundtable program features presented are designed to lead to a great program that should lead to membership growth and retention, but these program ideas are not consciously presented for the purpose of increasing or retaining members. As for annual planning, roundtable does review the next month’s theme and in this way lends to annual planning, but this is more on a continual basis and not necessarily to set the year. The monthly themes, however, are made available and packs have the option to build their annual plan around them.

Mr. Woodfin shared that the Elk River District has been fortunate to continue in recruiting a fairly large and enthusiastic staff from participants who have successfully implemented the roundtable program in their units and who achieve the Centennial Quality Unit Award. Attendance always seems to increase in the fall when new leaders are making their way and coming to see what roundtable has to offer them. Those who see the benefit continue to come. Units who see the benefit seem to commit a leader who continues to attend on their behalf and then become their roundtable resource. When asked whether he felt Cub Scout roundtable had contributed to units earning the Centennial Quality Unit Award, he replied, "Yes, most definitely, in all the areas above, save those previously mentioned as not being a conscious factor in roundtables (Interviews Woodfin, 10/13/09)."

The Elk River District Boy Scout Roundtable Commissioner, Doug Ratliff, had a slightly different perspective on the impact of roundtable attendance related to the Centennial Quality Unit Award. He shared that since Boy Scout leaders often stay in their scoutmaster and assistant scoutmaster roles for a lengthy period of time, many of them do not attend roundtable in order to receive additional training or information that they are not already aware of being available as such. He states, "Leaders already have roundtable attendance as part of their schedule and come together to confirm details for events and activities they have already purposed to be involved with." As far as achieving the Centennial Quality Unit Award, his feelings are that, "they're not becoming quality units because of roundtable; they're coming to roundtable because they're quality units. They're just using the resource to accomplish what they have already been trained to do." This comment seems to reflect some of the general overall survey responses from troop leaders.

Mr. Ratliff did go on to suggest that leaders do benefit from being at roundtable because of the way the program is being presented with the sharing of scouting memorabilia and shown 'n tell items from their past scouting experiences as well as the discussions and networking opportunities that just can't be captured in written form or other media. The roundtables do announce all trainings available, provide merit badge counselor information and eagle board procedure information, promote camping heavily and meet to work out the details of upcoming camporees which are often coordinated by specific units who recruit help. As for membership and retention as well as annual planning, like the Cub Scout roundtable, these are not consciously presented, but everything that is presented and discussed lends to improving the program and filling out details of the annual plan leading to improving membership and retention.

When asked about attendance compared to last year, Mr. Ratliff was very encouraged and noted that so far in 2009 the average attendance has actually increased slightly again. A new improved district website which links to school calendars and other unit calendars has made leader activity planning more successful in helping to ensure the least amount of conflict to the unit and district events. The council calendar has also been changed to enable updates and has reduced confusion when the nature of an event or date has changed. So, with other resources, roundtable for troop leaders has become more of a social network as much as a place to refine what they have already determined to accomplish. Mr. Ratliff concluded by saying that, "Scoutmasters that no longer have kids involved in scouting attend roundtable for the companionship (Interview Ratliff, 10/13/09)."

The Elk River District Committee Chairman, Ray Young, was most helpful in evaluating where the district stands with regard to past performance and future goals. He is in

the unique position of having served as the Boy Scout Roundtable Commissioner in 2007 before taking over the District Committee Chair position in 2008. As the Cub Scout Roundtable Commissioner involved in launching the unit attendance award in 2007, I was privileged to work with him before transitioning to the District Training Chair position. Together, we have continued to work toward improved district functioning. Mr. Young and I both realized the need to keep records like roundtable attendance as a measure of roundtable performance. The Centennial Quality Unit achievements have certainly been used as both a goal setting tool and a measure of the overall district and commissioner corps success. Roundtables had been poorly attended prior to 2007 and were rather dull focusing mostly on calendar review which he felt could be gotten off the council website.

Mr. Young shared, "Personally, I believe the district has been providing a lot more to the units during the past couple of years as compared to the previous years." Boy Scout camporees are planned well in advance, are more coordinated efforts, and are higher quality. The Boy Scout method is being used and the troops are stepping up earlier and developing good programs by getting the boys involved. Troops are volunteering more to be of assistance recognizing there is district support for their efforts and program leaders are not alone. District events are now more visible in the community, day camps are better coordinated and are also certified, and we have even added a Webelos weekend. There are lots of leader training opportunities as a result of growing training team efforts and leaders are being equipped with proper tools and confidence to take on district projects that also help units succeed. Mr. Young concluded by saying, "The key has been to get more good people involved to share the load, and thus the district can provide more activities and support functions (Interview Young, 10/12/09)."

## **Proposal for Improvement**

With the continued growth that the Elk River District is building and anticipating, it is difficult to propose improvement, when plans for improvement are already underway. The District Committee Chair has demonstrated that through continued recruitment, training and support of volunteers within the district, many hands will make light work. With a quality program in place at the district roundtables the cycle can continue to invite and recruit capable and enthusiastic leaders who would be willing to step up to the district level and raise the bar still higher. While continued recruitment at the roundtable commissioner level has proven to be beneficial and will continue, recruiting more unit commissioners would multiply the commissioner efforts already being developed. Roundtable meetings appear to be the place where more and more capable leaders are being identified for broader purposes among the units who are being successful as a result of their participation.

The District Commissioner has a special eye on roundtable attendees with the intent of recruiting more unit commissioners from successful and enthusiastic leaders who see the benefit of roundtable and the resources it provides. More of the district's new unit commissioners are realizing the advantages of their units attending roundtable making their job easier. As the District Executive pointed out, his focus usually fell to those units who did not attend roundtable to help them achieve minimal goals. A gap in communication between roundtable attendance information and the unit commissioner force needs to be closed. It is proposed that the attendance information be regularly communicated to the District Commissioner in order for unit commissioners to be informed of units who are not attending roundtable. Information can then be passed along through unit commissioners as well as encouragement to attend in the future or interviews as to why units have not been attending.

In reviewing the roundtable training guides and resources for roundtable program development, it is apparent that the focus on delivery of roundtable does not necessarily parallel aid toward all of the centennial quality achievements. This may be a future development as improved commissioner resources is an area that has only recently come under scrutiny and review. In the mean time, it is proposed that roundtable commissioners consciously present Centennial Quality Unit achievement assistance at roundtable meetings and keep a tally of the number of times certain presentations are given and the nature of the presentations. Comparisons can then be made at the end of the year to quantify whether roundtable assisted in specific achievements for units who achieved the Centennial Quality Unit Award and attended roundtable for these presentations.

With the realization that the impact of roundtable as a commissioner service lacks a definite way to measure its success except through attendance, specific goals that can be tracked may be a productive shift. It is proposed that resources provide a format of delivery for roundtable that incorporates program elements toward units achieving the quality goals along with an incentive program for roundtable commissioners that can check off when quality elements have been delivered throughout the year. These suggestions parallel the shift in unit commissioner service from maintaining a certain ratio of unit commissioners to units to the more important task of actually visiting the units a certain number of times per year while accomplishing specific goals with them when they do.

Recent district committee training has helped to emphasize increased communication between district committee functions. Part of this communication has been realized by an improved district website. In addition to making more use of posted information from and about roundtable, other committees would benefit by increasing delivery of information

through roundtables and unit commissioners. The more information provided at roundtable, the more participants will see continued benefit for roundtable. The more participants receive information at roundtable, the more participation there will be with the efforts of district committees. Improved communication with and through roundtable should increase the number of hands going up and continue to add to the success of units and the district.

## **Conclusion and Summary**

It would appear this study has clearly proven the understanding that increased attendance at roundtable is a measure of success for roundtable commissioners. That there is in fact a correlation between units who attend roundtable and units that achieve the Centennial Quality Unit Award was more difficult to determine. It is believed that this study, with minor exception, has proven statistically with a great degree of confidence that roundtable attendance has contributed to the success of units achieving quality unit status to a great extent. In addition, survey results and interviews confirm that whether quality unit goals were consciously provided or sought that roundtable continues to be a viable source of encouragement and camaraderie for both new and experienced leaders.

The issue seemed not to be as much whether roundtable was helping units succeed, but how to measure if, in fact, it was helping and how. Roundtable commissioners are given a hard enough task of presenting an interesting and energetic program each month without being left to wonder if they are being effective. While attendance totals are an indicator of the interest leaders have in attending, they do not indicate the reasons they attend. While roundtable surveys may request input from participants what they value about the meeting, they do not measure if specific goals are being achieved. This study was able to determine to what extent units who attended roundtable were being aided in achieving specific goals.

It is hoped that more avenues of measuring the effectiveness of roundtable toward helping units succeed will be developed on the district, council and national levels. If Centennial Quality achievements are to be a standard to reach, more program toward aiding in reaching those goals should be established. Centennial Quality achievements need not be too far reaching for a venue like roundtable among commissioner service. Continued

conscious efforts toward delivery in roundtable program to meet such goals are being realized. To quote a popular film phrase that has become an anthem for those striving to develop a vision, “If you build it they will come (Field of Dreams, 1989).”

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**Correlation of Pack Quality Unit Achievement and Roundtable Attendance**

Unit Type	Unit #	QU 2007	RT 2007	Correlation	QU 2008	RT 2008	Correlation	Survey
Pack	1	Yes			Yes			Yes
Pack	2	Yes				Yes		Yes
Pack	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	4		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
Pack	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	9	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	10	Yes						Yes
Pack	11	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	12				Yes			
Pack	13	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	14		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	17				Yes	Yes	Yes	
Pack	18	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	19	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes
Pack	20	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	21	Yes			Yes			
Pack	22	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Pack	24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pack	25	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes
Pack	26		Yes			Yes		Yes
<b>Units</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>% Attending Roundtable</b>			77%			69%		
<b>% Not Attending Roundtable</b>			23%			31%		
<b>% Quality Unit Attending Roundtable</b>				81%			76%	

Pack numbers above correspond to actual unit numbers on file with the Middle Tennessee Council

**Correlation of Troop Quality Unit Achievement and Roundtable Attendance**

Unit Type	Unit #	QU 2007	RT 2007	Correlation	QU 2008	RT 2008	Correlation	Survey
Troop	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
Troop	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Troop	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Troop	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Troop	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Troop	6	Yes			Yes			
Troop	7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Troop	8		Yes			Yes		Yes
Troop	9	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Troop	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Troop	11	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Troop	12	Yes						Yes
Troop	13	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Troop	14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Troop	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
Troop	16		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Units</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>% Attending Roundtable</b>			88%			75%		
<b>% Not Attending Roundtable</b>			13%			25%		
<b>% Quality Unit Attending Roundtable</b>				86%			79%	

Troop numbers above correspond to actual unit numbers on file with the Middle Tennessee Council

## Centennial Roundtable Survey

This survey is seeking to establish whether there is a correlation between Roundtable attendance and the achievement of the Centennial Quality Unit Award. The district/council record indicates whether your unit did or did not achieve the Centennial Quality Unit Award in the given year listed below:

Unit Type & Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Quality Unit 2007: _____	Quality Unit 2008: _____
--------------------------	--------------------------

For any year your unit attended Roundtable, please answer questions 1-7 whether your unit achieved Centennial Quality Unit or not.

1. Did you receive information about Basic Leader Training at Roundtable? \_\_Yes      \_\_No
2. Did participation in Roundtable aid in improving your program toward recruitment and membership retention? \_\_Yes      \_\_No
3. Did participation in Roundtable aid in improving your program toward increasing rank advancement? \_\_Yes      \_\_No
4. Did participation in Roundtable aid in encouraging your unit to include an increase in outdoor experiences or activities? \_\_Yes      \_\_No
5. Did participation in Roundtable aid in preparation for annual program planning? \_\_Yes      \_\_No

6. If Roundtable was not your only information source, please list others that may apply:

- |                     |                |                |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| __District Website  | __Commissioner | __Professional |
| __Council Website   | __Other Leader | __VIP*         |
| __Training Chairman | __Other _____  |                |

7. Please rate your opinion regarding the following statement where 1= strongly agree & 5= strongly disagree. Roundtable attendance assisted our unit in achieving the Centennial Quality Unit Award.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Not Applicable	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
—	—	—	—	—

For any year your unit did not attend Roundtable, please answer questions 8-13 whether Quality Unit was achieved in either year or not.

8. Why did your unit not attend Roundtable? Check all that apply.

- |                               |                     |                      |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| __Inconvenient Day            | __Inconvenient Time | __Too Far to Travel  |
| __Conflicts with Events       | __Did Not Need      | __Have Other Sources |
| __Other: Please Comment _____ |                     |                      |

## Centennial Roundtable Survey

9. Did your unit participate in Basic Leader Training? \_\_Yes      \_\_No  
 If yes, what were your sources for Basic Leader Training information? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> District Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional
<input type="checkbox"/> Council Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> VIP*
<input type="checkbox"/> Training Chairman	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please Comment _____	

10. Did your unit receive aid in improving your program toward recruitment and membership retention? \_\_Yes      \_\_No  
 If yes, what were your sources for recruitment and membership retention resources? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Council Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional
<input type="checkbox"/> Council Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> VIP*
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please Comment _____	

11. Did your unit receive aid in improving your program toward increasing rank advancement? \_\_Yes      \_\_No  
 If yes, what were your sources for rank advancement resources? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Council Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional
<input type="checkbox"/> Council Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> VIP*
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please Comment _____	

12. Did your unit receive aid in encouraging your unit to include an increase in outdoor experiences and activities? \_\_Yes      \_\_No  
 If yes, what were your sources for increasing outdoor experience &/or activities? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Council Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional
<input type="checkbox"/> Council Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> VIP*
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please Comment _____	

13. Did your unit receive aid in annual program planning? \_\_Yes      \_\_No  
 If yes, what were your sources for annual program planning resources? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Council Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional
<input type="checkbox"/> Council Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> VIP*
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please Comment _____	

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your input will help toward improved service to units.

\*VIP – Volunteer Information Planning or Annual Program Planning