

**Performance Metrics for the
Administrative Commissioner**

“You Can’t Manage What You Can’t Measure”

**A thesis in fulfillment of the
Doctorate of Commissioner Science, BSA
In cooperation with Middle Tennessee Council**

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Performance Metrics for Administrative Commissioner

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Abstract:

Administrative Commissioners, at district and council levels, are tasked with the responsibility for the success of the commissioner staff. The commissioner staff includes all commissioners, including unit, Roundtable, and administrative. As currently acknowledged, the future of Scouting is dependent upon the success of the traditional units, and in turn, this unit success is the specific responsibility of the commissioner staff working with the charter partner and the unit leadership. This has become even more apparent with the recent de-emphasis on the Learning for Life school-based programs. Therefore, the accomplishments of the commissioner program must be measured in a practical format placing emphasis on various aspects of commissioner service that will indicate the level of service and responsibility provided by the district and council. While the historic target of commissioner to unit ratio is an admirable one, it does a poor job of indicating the strength of the commissioner program or its direct relationship to unit health. There are several finite metrics that should be considered to obtain a better and more accurate measure of the commissioner program. These key factors would be staffing, unit visits, Roundtable attendance, Centennial Award, and Recharter. This thesis presents practical methods for analyzing each of these critical factors.

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PREFACE

Although I was never registered in Scouting as a youth, my bachelor uncle set an excellent example. Reared in the 1930s in Scouting, he served faithfully for almost twenty years as a Scoutmaster to the local troop. I only went on one troop outing with him, and sad to say, never was offered the opportunity to join Scouting in my own community. When my own son came along, we signed him up as a Cub Scout in 1982, and as they say the rest is history. Through the years my wife and I have both served in volunteer leadership roles and spent countless hours with the Pack and Troop at our local church. Later we served at both district and council levels, and continue to serve today.

With the majority of my professional experience in sales and management, I have been a natural fit for the commissioner role. While the real fun and joy of Scouting is working with the youth directly, my repayment to Scouting is by working with units and adults to ensure that each unit is one that I would consider suitable for my own son, or even more critically today, my grandsons.

This document points to some areas within commissioner administration that offer the opportunity to better understand and analyze commissioner service to units. I used some factual data from my council and some exhibits for representational purposes. This type of analysis, while fairly straightforward, does require additional time and effort to input the data and convert it into usable charts and graphs. However, these same graphs and charts can very quickly identify areas that need attention. The ultimate purpose is to openly share these data with the entire commissioner staff so that the impact of these items on unit strength becomes visible.

Chapter 1 – WHY ARE METRICS CRITICAL?

What does the term "metric" suggest? In today's society, it has become the standard term for a measure. Sometimes, we refer to the metric system rather than to our own English system of measures. However, the term metric is purely a measure.

***Definition:** Metrics are a set of measurements that quantify results. Performance metrics quantify the units' performance. Project metrics tell you whether the project is meeting its goals. Business metrics define the business' progress in measurable terms. ⁽¹⁾*

Common Units of Measure

As we consider how to measure our progress in commissioner service, things such as recruiting and visits we must find a common unit of measure so that large metro or small rural districts and councils can be measured fairly against one another and certain standards. Therefore, in almost all cases, absolute numbers of units, commissioners, visits, Roundtable attendance, and other factors must be converted into a common language using either ratios or percentages.

Performance

But wait, we are all volunteers, so we cannot be serious about measuring performance. That would suggest that someone might not meet the standards and need to be "fired" and replaced. Without intentionally hurting anyone's feelings, yes, that is exactly what must be done for the benefit of the program.

In today's legalistic world, it is necessary that each and every volunteer recognize that there are necessary and needful responsibilities for each particular position. The volunteer must fulfill the objectives and purpose of scouting in order to provide the program that the youth need in our society.

(1) F. John Reh, Management Consultant, www.About.com online reference "Metric"

In the case of the commissioner group, a specific responsibility for the health of each and every traditional unit exists within the district and council.

For the unit commissioner with responsibility for two or three specific units this is measured in his/her relationships with the unit shown through regular visits, the attainment of the Centennial Quality Award, and on-time recharter.

For the administrative commissioner, some additional factors such as having an adequate number of commissioners to properly service the units within the district, having those same commissioners trained and competent to service the units, and tracking those same commissioners to know that it is happening should be indexed.

Units with active unit commissioners do not provide distractions to the professional staff and keep the volunteer program in the hands of the volunteers.

Calendar Decisions

A dichotomy of timing remains within the entire Scouting program. At the youth and unit level, most events occur around the school year. Typically, district and council calendars are set around a school year. However, within the district/council levels and upward through the national organization all performance, personnel, and fiscal measurements have returned to the calendar year.

In either case there are pros and cons for measuring commissioner activities. While events can easily be scheduled under either calendar, for purposes of council and district tracking, more can be said for the calendar year.

Data Collection

Finally, the matter of setting up and maintaining this data can be intimidating. It would be best if an assistant council commissioner who is a strong analytical person were assigned this responsibility so that the council and district commissioners can focus on reviewing and acting upon the information found within these charts and graphs.

Chapter 2 – COMMISSIONER STAFF (Metric #1)

One of the most visible and direct responsibilities of the administrative commissioner is that of manpower for the commissioner staff. Much literature and writing already exist on the recruiting and training of commissioners but not as much has been discussed regarding the suitable levels of staffing and appropriate needs.

Unit commissioner staffing is a measure that has been reported all the way to the national council for many years. The historic measure for each council has been a ratio of one unit commissioner for each three traditional units. While this measure has provided a guide to the district, council and national, it has not been tied directly to how the unit commissioners are assigned, or whether they are actively serving the assigned units.

Sometimes, depending upon the particular strengths of the commissioner, these units may have been either three packs or three troops. While this assignment method plays to the individual strengths of a particular commissioner, it does not serve the whole program very well. In the most desired case, the unit commissioner is assigned to all of the units with the same unit number, i.e. Pack, Troop, and Crew 972. Ideally, these three units all have the same sponsor. In this situation, also, the unit commissioner has the opportunity to work with the leadership of the three units and ensure that they are cooperating fully and transitioning youth directly from one program to the next. Also the opportunity to ensure the proper development and meshing of unit leadership can be fostered throughout the three programs.

Data for this metric may be obtained directly from the Objectives Progress Report printed on a monthly basis from the BSA National system. This report gives a detailed breakout of the various totals for each program (Cub, Scout, Venture, membership and units) and shows a total of Unit Commissioners. From these numbers the unit ratio can

be quickly computed. However, this report does not provide the number of charter partners, or the number of roundtable and administrative commissioners.

The Scout Executive and other Executives can now access MYBSA and obtain similar information in a more user-friendly manner viewing the head count for the entire commissioner staff, with administrative, Roundtable and Unit Commissioners included.

This report, with its more spreadsheet-type format, provides a better look at the commissioner ratio and actually provides the official ratio in a finished form.

With this data, the administrative commissioner easily can graph a chart (Figure 1) that clearly exhibits performance to standards for the staffing function. This could even be further complemented with a secondary chart exhibiting administrative and Roundtable staffing.

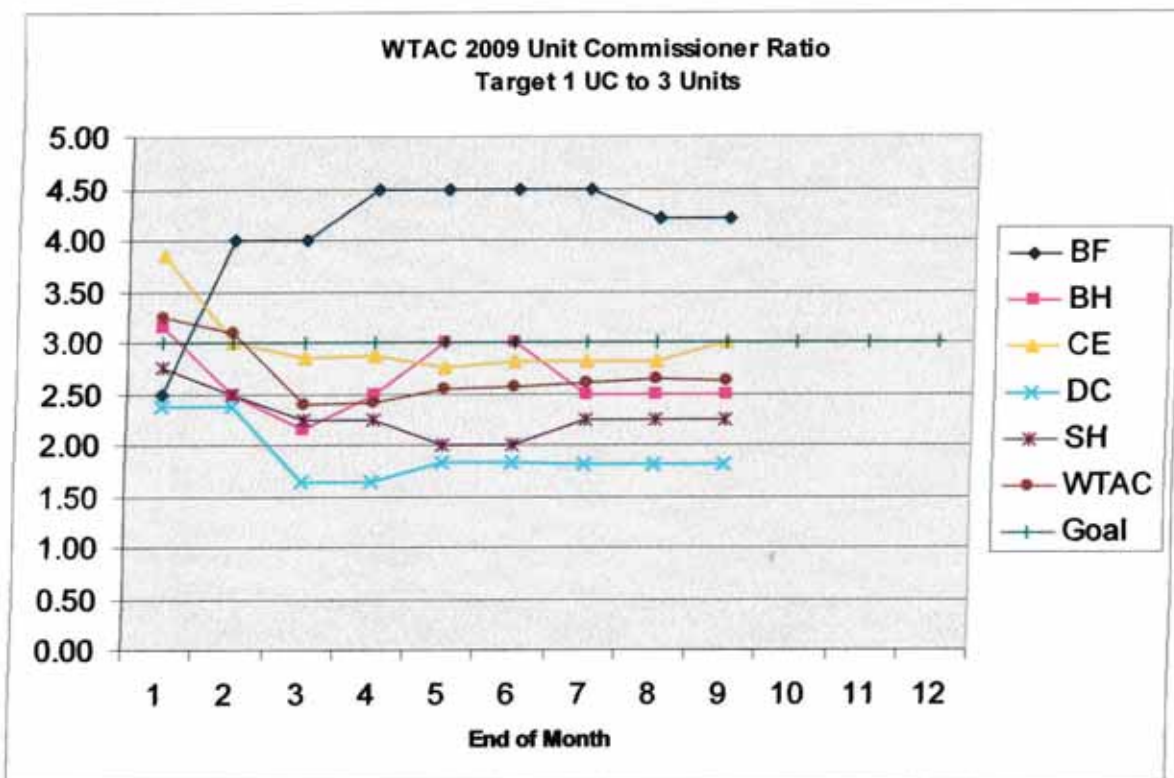


Figure 1: WTAC 2009 Unit Commissioner Ratio, Target 1 UC to 3 Units – Five districts are represented by initials and WTAC as West Tennessee Area Council charted against the National Council ratio goal.

With charting such as the one shown in Figure 1, the information on unit commissioner staffing becomes readily visible. It is easily determined that in one district (BF) some recruiting work is past due. However, we should not reach any final conclusions about service levels, as this chart only indicates names on rosters and does not include any performance characteristics.

In the future, a strong case can be made for matching one unit commissioner with one charter partner to ensure that it has three units (Cub, Scout, Crew) with one unit number assigned so that the natural progression of the BSA program is used. With this practice, the relationship of the BSA and the charter partner could be enhanced greatly. A unit commissioner with a single charter partner and three units could provide more insightful service to the charter, unit leaders, and unit parents. In the case where the charter does not have all three types of unit, it becomes the commissioner's mission to create that opportunity.

Chapter 3 – UNIT VISIT TRACKING (Metric #2)

With the introduction of the second version of BSA's Unit Visit Tracking System, more opportunities exist for the administrative commissioner to track unit visits without waiting for a report to come in during the monthly district commissioner meeting. While there are major opportunities for debate, simply stated the objective of the commissioner staff is to achieve at least one visit to each assigned unit during each month. Multiple visits would not be tabulated thus, either the unit received a commissioner visit or it did not. **The** new record keeping system offered by the National Council provides a record of the visits, but does not as yet provide any statistics, leaving this instead to the movement of the raw data to an Excel spreadsheet. From this, it appears that some manual entry will still be necessary to obtain a valid picture of the one unit – one visit concept.

WHAT IS A VISIT?

Among my own district commissioners and unit commissioners I already have heard substantial discussion of what is and what is not a unit visit and how to count them. A unit visit must be an announced and planned visit that has a specific purpose. A unit visit should be part of a year's outlined purposes (Addendum A - Annual Commissioner Plan) and, while typically a visit is to a unit meeting, a viable visit might also be to a committee meeting or a special meeting with the unit leader and/or committee chairman. A sanctioned visit might also include a visit of the unit commissioner to summer camp (with candy) while a troop is there.

A unit visit is not when the unit commissioner happens to bump into the unit leader at the grocery store, or when the unit commissioner calls the committee chairman with a question. It is also not when the unit commissioner and unit leaders are at the monthly roundtable, although all commissioners should be there.

Unit Visit Analysis

The analysis of unit visits can be very revealing in that it can display patterns and can detail the performance of the unit commissioner. If units are not being visited, then commissioner service does not exist, and the people carrying the title of commissioner are merely placeholders. Spreadsheet tracking can be more specific using the UVTS. Analysis is most easily done using a percentage of units within the district that are visited each month. Again, the value is either yes (1) or no (0).

The resulting chart showing unit visits (Figure 2) is derived from Table 1.

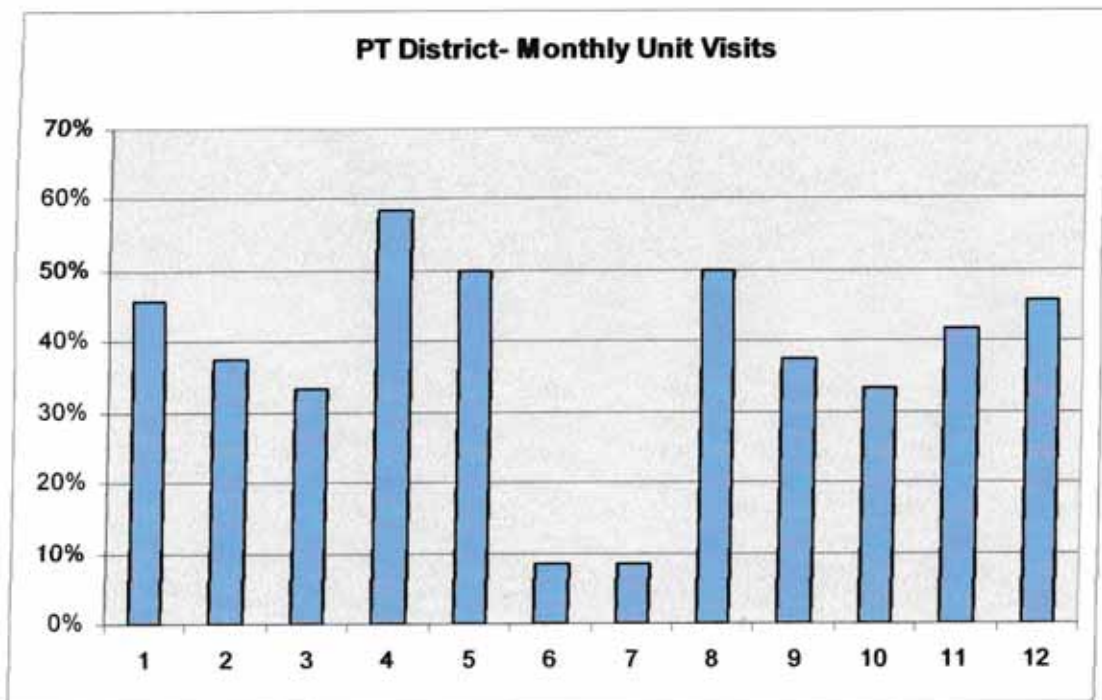


Figure 2: PT District – Percentage of Units Visited Monthly

Table 1: Excel spreadsheet showing visits recorded for PT District.

Unit #	Charter	Commissioner	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
P0011	UMC, Ripley	J Brown	1		1	1	1			1		1	1	
P0022	UMC, Jackson	C Watson	1				1				1			1
P0033	FBC, Dyer	B Wilson	1	1		1	1			1		1		1
P0044	Rotary, Jackson	T Barnette	1		1	1	1	1		1	1		1	1
P0055	UMC, Camden	D Loyd												
P0066	LDS, Jackson	C Gillespie	1	1	1		1			1	1			1
P0077	Rotary, Shelby													
P0088	FBC, Savannah	D Alexander		1		1	1				1		1	
P0099	St Ann, Jackson													
P0111	COC, Union City	C Armstrong		1	1	1	1		1	1	1		1	1
T0011	UMC, Ripley	J Brown				1				1		1		
T0022	UMC, Jackson	C Watson			1	1				1			1	
T0033	FBC, Dyer	B Wilson		1	1	1		1		1	1		1	1
T0044	Rotary, Jackson	T Barnette		1		1	1		1	1	1		1	1
T0055	UMC, Camden	D Loyd			1							1		
T0066	LDS, Jackson	C Gillespie	1				1				1			1
T0077	Rotary, Shelby					1							1	
T0088	FBC, Savannah	D Alexander	1			1					1			1
T0099	St Ann, Jackson			1								1		
T0111	COC, Union City	C Armstrong	1			1				1			1	
V0033	FBC, Dyer	B Wilson	1	1		1	1					1		1
V0044	Rotary, Jackson	T Barnette	1		1		1			1			1	1
V0088	FBC, Savannah	D Alexander	1			1				1		1		
V0111	COC, Union City	C Armstrong		1			1					1		
Mth Totals			11	9	8	14	12	2	2	12	9	8	10	11
Ttl Units			24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
% Visits			46%	38%	33%	58%	50%	8%	8%	50%	38%	33%	42%	46%

Chapter 4 – ROUNDTABLE ATTENDANCE (Metric #3)

The Roundtable Attendance metric is really one of measuring unit attendance at the monthly Roundtables. The number of total people attending is always a factor for excitement and participation yet, the commissioner objective is to have all units participating because units that are not regularly attending are missing the BSA program. The commissioner staff is responsible for the program but should remember to maintain the emcee role and not try to be the main act each time. Since the Roundtable is a commissioner program, it is assumed that each person on the commissioner staff should participate as well. Graphic representation of the unit attendance (Figure 3) is derived from data in Table 2. Although this figure includes all unit types this should likely be broken into Cub, Scout, and Venture detail, either in a single graph or three separate ones.

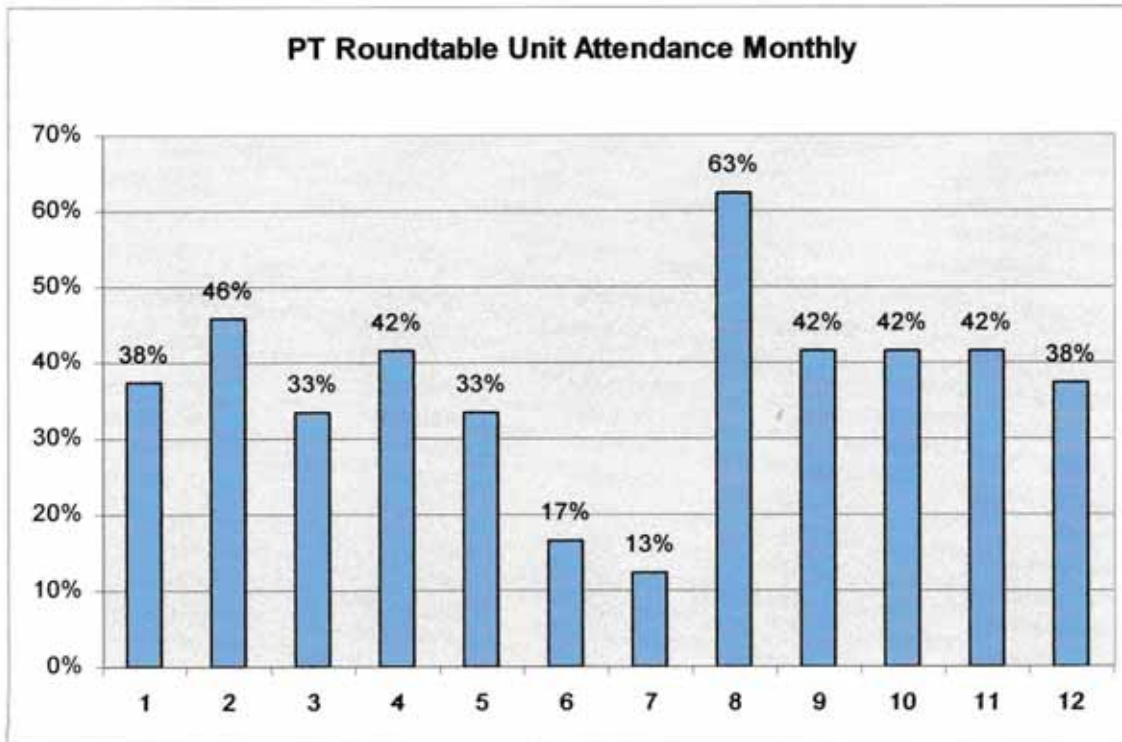


Figure 3: PT Roundtable Monthly Unit Attendance

Table 2: Excel spreadsheet showing unit attendance at monthly PT District

Roundtables

Unit #	Charter	Commissioner	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
P0011	UMC, Ripley	J Brown		1	1	1		1		1		1	1	
P0022	UMC, Jackson	C Watson	1	1	1		1			1	1	1	1	1
P0033	FBC, Dyer	B Wilson		1	1	1	1			1		1		1
P0044	Rotary, Jackson	T Barnette	1	1							1	1		1
P0055	UMC, Camden	D Loyd	1											
P0066	LDS, Jackson	C Gillespie	1		1	1				1	1	1		1
P0077	Rotary, Shelby									1				
P0088	FBC, Savannah	D Alexander	1	1	1	1		1		1	1		1	1
P0099	St Ann, Jackson			1	1		1				1	1		1
P0111	COC, Union City	C Armstrong	1		1	1		1		1	1		1	
T0011	UMC, Ripley	J Brown				1				1				
T0022	UMC, Jackson	C Watson												
T0033	FBC, Dyer	B Wilson		1			1			1		1	1	1
T0044	Rotary, Jackson	T Barnette	1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1	
T0055	UMC, Camden	D Loyd												
T0066	LDS, Jackson	C Gillespie	1	1		1	1		1	1	1	1	1	
T0077	Rotary, Shelby									1			1	
T0088	FBC, Savannah	D Alexander		1		1	1		1	1	1		1	1
T0099	St Ann, Jackson		1							1				
T0111	COC, Union City	C Armstrong		1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1
V0033	FBC, Dyer	B Wilson												
V0044	Rotary, Jackson	T Barnette												
V0088	FBC, Savannah	D Alexander												
V0111	COC, Union City	C Armstrong												
			9	11	8	10	8	4	3	15	10	10	10	9
			24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
			38%	46%	33%	42%	33%	17%	13%	63%	42%	42%	42%	38%

Chapter 5 – CENTENNIAL AWARD AND RECHARTER (Metric #4)

The unit commissioner is responsible for ensuring that each individual unit achieves the Centennial Quality Award and is on-time with its recharter papers.

These two aspects become critical elements for the success of the unit, for its tenure within the scouting organization, and the smooth operation of the district and council. If units are attaining the Centennial Award (Quality Unit) and doing their recharter on-time, then the entire district and council can focus on program enhancements since the underlying foundation of paperwork is occurring without incident. On the other hand, if units are not attaining the Centennial Award and recharter paperwork is delayed or ignored, then valuable time and effort by commissioner and professional staff is diverted from their other important responsibilities.

Because both of these factors can be identified discreetly as either successful or not successful, but if using a yes or no indicator, no specific need exists for a chart or graph. However, these are factors that definitely should be considered in the final measure of commissioner performance. We will address both of these factors in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 – UNIT COMMISSIONER PERFORMANCE (Metric #5)

The question of individual unit commissioner performance can be a sensitive one. Again, in the recent history of Scouting, many individuals have looked upon the unit commissioner role as one of honor but one without any real responsibilities. In the new BSA it is imperative that we change this perception. While the unit commissioner should be one who is respected, the role requires dedication and commitment to the task of ensuring that the units in one's care are strong and growing.

With a new focus coming down from National on visits, and the continuing responsibility of Centennial Quality Awards and Recharter, the unit commissioner's responsibility can be quantified to a much greater degree and the performance of the unit commissioner can be evaluated per unit in some variation of the following.

UNIT COMMISSIONER EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation for each unit commissioner may be modified as each council sees fit, but for purposes of this document, I have chosen the following criteria and according a ranking in importance, as Roundtable attendance, Centennial Award, and on-time recharter most likely will follow if unit visits are the primary focus.

Unit Visits (one per month, twelve months)	60%
Unit Roundtable Attendance (each month)	10%
Unit earns Centennial Quality Award (yes/no)	15%
Unit has recharter papers in on-time (yes/no)	15%
Total	100% for each unit

Following the evaluation of each unit, the average for all units of the respective commissioner is tallied and then reviewed with the commissioner.

Using my imaginary district again, we can look at the following chart (Table 3) and derive some interesting information about unit commissioner performance.

Table 3: Excel spreadsheet showing scores derived from Unit Visits, Roundtable attendance, Centennial Award, and Recharter factors by unit.

Unit #	Charter	Unit Commissioner	Unit Visits Max 60%	Unit RT Attend Max 10%	Centennial Max 15%	Recharter Max 15%	Unit Total
P0011	UMC, Ripley	J Brown	35%	9%	15%	15%	74%
P0022	UMC, Jackson	C Watson	20%	11%	0%	0%	31%
P0033	FBC, Dyer	B Wilson	35%	9%	0%	15%	59%
P0044	Rotary, Jackson	T Barnette	45%	6%	15%	15%	81%
P0055	UMC, Camden	D Loyd	0%	1%	15%	15%	31%
P0066	LDS, Jackson	C Gillespie	35%	9%	15%	0%	59%
P0077	Rotary, Shelby		0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
P0088	FBC, Savannah	D Alexander	25%	11%	15%	15%	66%
P0099	St Ann, Jackson		0%	8%	15%	0%	23%
P0111	COC, Union City	C Armstrong	45%	9%	0%	15%	69%
T0011	UMC, Ripley	J Brown	15%	3%	0%	15%	33%
T0022	UMC, Jackson	C Watson	20%	0%	15%	0%	35%
T0033	FBC, Dyer	B Wilson	40%	8%	15%	15%	78%
T0044	Rotary, Jackson	T Barnette	40%	11%	15%	15%	81%
T0055	UMC, Camden	D Loyd	10%	0%	15%	0%	25%
T0066	LDS, Jackson	C Gillespie	20%	11%	15%	0%	46%
T0077	Rotary, Shelby		10%	3%	0%	15%	28%
T0088	FBC, Savannah	D Alexander	20%	10%	15%	0%	45%
T0099	St Ann, Jackson		10%	3%	15%	15%	43%
T0111	COC, Union City	C Armstrong	20%	13%	0%	15%	48%
V0033	FBC, Dyer	B Wilson	30%	0%	15%	15%	60%
V0044	Rotary, Jackson	T Barnette	30%	0%	15%	0%	45%
V0088	FBC, Savannah	D Alexander	20%	0%	15%	0%	35%
V0111	COC, Union City	C Armstrong	15%	0%	0%	15%	30%

We can observe several interesting items from the information on Unit Commissioner T Barnette who has three units. Even with the unit scores providing an average of 69% $(81\% + 81\% + 45\% / 3)$; this unit commissioner is obviously doing an admirable job.

Reviewing the visitation figures, and then considering the value of Roundtable attendance, Centennial Award, and Recharter, this type of scoring will likely be above average for most unit commissioners who are active.

It is not our purpose in this document to actually propose the suitable levels for each commissioner's performance, but to introduce practical measures that can be modified and used by the administrative commissioner in an effort for continuous improvement of *the commissioner service to the units within each district and council.*

Chapter 8 – SUMMARY

The avowed purpose of any individual who wears the wreath of service on a commissioner patch should be either to directly or indirectly help with service to the units (Cub, Scout, Venture) within the Boy Scouts of America. The challenge of this is to remember that it does take all of us to achieve this goal, and recognizing that each has different personal strengths and different specific responsibilities. Those in the administrative commissioner role to the district and council must ensure that the other commissioners working with us are proving effective in their service as well.

While some of this may appear to be an effort to make commissioner service more like work with bosses and employees, it requires a resolution on the part of each individual to remember that while our roles and responsibilities in Scouting are volunteer, they are serious for the health of the units involved. Placeholders have no place in Scouting. Some people have either more or less to offer in talent and time, but in either case, they must actively contribute.

Returning to the thesis subtitle, we quoted a statement that has been attributed to any number of well-known figures that “you can't manage what you can't measure.” The figures and tables offered within this thesis provide a framework for exactly this concept. We have all seen repeated evidence in both professional and personal lives that the things that are measured are the things that over time become important. For the administrative commissioner, the items discussed in this document become metrics that can provide some actual insight into performance of the entire commissioner staff. However, as valid as these metrics appear to be, we should never forget that it is our responsibility not only to provide training and support but also to ensure that we have the correct individuals for the job to be done. As valid as these metrics may be for actual performance, they may not fully measure a person's passion and dedication to Scouting.

Sometimes an individual should be re-assigned to other responsibilities more fitting to his or her passions and particular talents.

So, when a council wishes to manage and measure their commissioner service, the administrative commissioner needs to consider these key factors: staffing, unit visits, Roundtable attendance, Centennial Award, and Recharter. This document presents practical methods for measuring and analyzing each of these critical factors.

Addendum A – COMMISSIONER ANNUAL PLAN

Due to a variety of factors, our council has elected to modify the Annual Commissioner Service Plan as outlined in the Commissioner Administration Manual, however, that plan has remained the guide with the changes really relating to timing and not to content. Using this program, the unit commissioner has a specific purpose for each monthly visit with his assigned units.

Commissioner Annual Service Plan

January – Centennial Award contract, summer camp plans

February – Charter presentation

March – Unit Uniform Inspection

April – Leadership inventory

May – Membership inventory

June – Visits at summer camp

July – Visits at summer camp

August – Annual planning

September – Youth Protection Training

October – Start recharter process: turn in Centennial Award

November – Recharter process

December – Finish all recharter papers

ADDENDUM B – CENTENNIAL QUALITY AWARD

The Centennial Quality Award is one of those items as earlier discussed that is connected to the calendar year. The new methodology of the Centennial Award is basically a contract between the unit and the district that agrees upon objectives and goals to be met that are specific to the unit. The role of the unit commissioner in this contract is critical as he or she is the council representative in this case. The focus of this program is to make the Award attainable, while encouraging the unit to show progress in the various areas of interest.

ADDENDUM C – RECHARTER PROCESS

The recharter process has become greatly modified within our council based on two recent factors.

First, our council opted to modify the recharter process such that all units recharter at a single time during the year (deadline December 31). From the positive perspective, this provides a clear focus on this event, and publicity and group opportunities present themselves so that the entire commissioner staff can focus on this event. This also fits nicely in the calendar year as discussed earlier. Simultaneously, there is a downside to having one due-date as this event occurs during our traditional holiday season. We lose some days when the actual Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays occur, and some days to office closings at the CSC. While the holidays do present a challenge, the benefits of a consolidated recharter period appear to outweigh the negatives from occurring during the holiday season.

Second, with the implementation of the online recharter process over the past several years, the process has become more accurate and less tedious. Our council has tried several tactics to make this as fun and simple as we can to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of this necessary paperwork.

September (late) – DEs prepare current unit rosters with any notes for fees prepaid

October Roundtable – pass out current official rosters to all units for them to review

November 1 – online recharter process opens; unit access codes available

November (early) – each district holds a Computer Night Recharter, units can bring their materials and get online with commissioner assistance and complete all except signatures. Unit is then ready to take final printout with signatures and check to CSC.

December 31 – Online recharter access closes. Any recharter not completed must be handled manually with the resulting hassle and headaches.