

The Trail

Cub Scouts - Boy Scouts - Venturing



Don't Forget The Website & Facebook

In case you hadn't noticed it, the Greater St Louis Area Council has a new website. It's got a great new look, and lots of great functionality. Hopefully you find it easier to use and more helpful.

The home for Gravois Trail can be found here: [Gravoi Trail Website](#)

Also, for those of you comfortable with Facebook, Gravois Trail has a Facebook page located here: [Gravois Trail Venturing](#)

Finally, don't forget to send your email address to us so we can be sure you are on our mailing list:

Josh Bollam: joshua.bollam@scouting.org
Jerry Fix: jerry.fix@gmail.com

The newsletter can also be seen online at:
<http://stlbsa.org/gravoistrail/>

Welcome Back !

Hopefully everyone had a great holiday season. It's hard to believe it's already over. Seemed to go fast this year.

Now it's time to prepare for a busy winter season of Scouting activities.

Please note a new name below. Our new GT District Activities Chair is Debby Noah. Welcome Debby and thanks for joining the GT District Committee.

As a reminder, below is contact info for all the committee chairpersons for the GT District:

Commissioner: [Neil Phipps](#)
C. 314-560-2836
phippna@prodigy.net
Activities: [Debby Noah](#)
C. 636-222-2751
debby.noah@gmail.com
Advancement: [Jere Strobl](#)
C. 314-780-5256

Camping:

OA:

Membership:

Training:

Communications:

Development:

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[Keith Guller](#)
kguller@essexind.com
[Michael O'Donnell](#)
eaglescout721@gmail.com

District Directors Corner

We have recently created a new online form for units to quickly and easily log their community service hours.

The information gets sent directly to us so that we can log the information through national's good turn site. This eliminates the need for units to remember their username and password.

Flyers will be distributed at upcoming roundtables directing units to the new Kintera site. A badge and link is also located on the front page of our website for "Log Service Hours" which will take them to the same place.

Please help us spread the word and encourage your units to log their hours. Click [HERE](#) to visit the site.

Membership

I hope everyone has had a safe Holiday season and ready for another year of outstanding Scouting adventures. At this time all Packs should have put together their Webelos Transition plan and are working through it with a Troop (if not please let me know so we can work together and get one in place). I anticipate many variations of these plans and how they will be executed. If for any reason you find yourself stalled or having any troubles executing your plans please let me know as soon as possible so that I can jump in and assist in any way possible. Also, I would like to see if we can't get our numbers up concerning Scouts that do transition compared to the number who drop out. If you have any dropped Scouts, whether it be during this transition or within the first year of Boy Scouts, please let me know. I would like to see if we can't address some of the current issues to assist with changes needed for future years.

I know one issue is "camping" where I'm looking to address that by identifying troops that their youth don't like camping where they do more STEM types of activities where we can push those types of youths toward those troops where we don't lose any more Scouts. If you are one of those troops please let me know so that I can assist you with putting others in touch with your troop and also if needed pair you up with another troop that does camp where your scouts are still able

to get their rank requirements. My goal is to give all boys a chance at Scouting regardless of their likes and dislikes.

Also, with a new year starting I will be looking for other individuals to assist me with the District Membership Committee. If you are an adult where your Son has moved up and on or an adult looking to assist Scouting in a greater capacity please let me know. Regardless of whether I am able to plug you into my committee or another committee at the District level your assistance is very much needed across the District.

Yours in Scouting,
Ken McFadden
Gravois Trail Membership Chair



The Commissioners Report



The Role of the Unit Commissioner

Do you realize that one of your unit's best resources may be closer than you think? Unit Commissioners are a wealth of knowledge for help or guidance in any situation. Taking full advantage of any resource, however, requires understanding what the resource can do for you.

What is a Unit Commissioner?

The commissioner is the liaison between the local council and Scouting units. The commissioner's mission is to keep units operating at maximum efficiency, maintain regular contact with unit leaders, coach leaders on where to find assistance, note weaknesses in programs, and suggest remedies. Every unit should have a Commissioner. The presence of a Commissioner does not mean there are problems with the unit.

What does a Unit Commissioner do?

- Visit with units on a regular basis at unit meetings, leader meetings and outings.
- Acts as a friend, coach and counselor to the unit and unit leaders.
- Represents the district and council to the unit.
- Assists the unit in addressing problems before or after they arise.
- Shares knowledge and experience with the leaders.
- Addresses questions or concerns.
- Assists with administrative tasks, such as rechartering.
- Offers encouragement and support.
- **Ultimately helps your unit succeed!**

Who is my Unit Commissioner?

- The Commissioner Staff is made up of 9 Assistant District Commissioners and 38 Unit Commissioners.
- Unit Commissioners are generally assigned to a related group of units, such as a pack, troop and crew with the same chartering organization.
- Not all units have a Unit Commissioner assigned. When no Unit Commissioner is assigned, the Assistant District Commissioner acts as the Unit Commissioner.

A current Commissioner chart is posted on the Gravois Trail web page **HERE**

If you are interested in becoming a Unit Commissioner, please contact Neil Phipps (phippsna@prodigy.net).

Camping

Are You Ready for a Klondike?

This years Klondike is January 31. Beaumont Scout reservation.

Chad Mange has put together a fun filled day of events. Capped off with Sled races Saturday afternoon.

The manual is on the Districts Website **HERE**. Please sign up and bring your troop out for the day.



District Dinner

The District Dinner will be held January 23rd at Andre's South Banquet Facility (4254 Telegraph Rd St. Louis, MO 63129).

The dinner will start at 6:30 pm. The two highlights of the evening will be the **SPARK PLUG Award** presentations for the those Pack/Troop/Crew volunteers who show that extra spark when delivering the program to the youth.

The second highlight of the evening will be the presentation of the **District Award of Merits**. The District Award of Merit is a Council level award that can be bestowed on District level volunteers for their service above and beyond to the youth of the District. Nomination forms can be found on the District Website. To register for the dinner go **HERE**. The Cost for the dinner is \$26/person which includes dinner and drinks. This is a non-uniformed adult event.

Order of the Arrow

Gravois Trail Order of the Arrow
Chapter Banquet Notice

When: Wednesday, February 11, 2015

Where: Genesis Banquet Center
2651 Telegraph Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63125

Time: Doors open 6:00 p.m.
Banquet starts 6:30 p.m.

Banquet will start at 6:30pm with a business meeting and entertainment immediately following. The cost of the banquet is \$13 before February 1 and \$15 starting February 1.

Please mail a check made out to 'GSLAC' to Gravois Trail OA Banquet, 4568 W. Pine Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108.

If you have any questions, please contact Chief Garrett Knapp at (314) 401-2839 or Banquet Adviser Joe Shaver at (314) 249-5142. See everyone there!

Venturing

New Venturing Awards... Say What?

Maddy Agers, VP of Communication GT VOA

If you're reading this, you are probably wondering what the deal is with the new Venturing award requirements. I mean, they seem confusing. What does all this mean? Well, I'm here to break it down for you, so wonder no more!

The New Awards

Venturing Award -

This is something new people should get soon after formally joining the program. Participation in an interview and an induction ceremony are required. You will need to take the Personal Safety Awareness training, but that's the hardest part! And if you were registered before June, you automatically get this award. That was easy, right?

Discovery Award -

As far as training you'll need to take a standard first-aid course, a standard CPR course, goal setting and time management courses, and an ILSC Course. Beyond that, you will need to participate in at least two Tier II or Tier III adventures. These adventures can range in level from crew to national. There are a few more things you'll need to do - like 24 hours of volunteering, making goals, and completing the Crew Officers Orientation. It sounds like a lot of work, I know. But in the end, you will be stepping out and learning more about the world of Venturing! (And that Discovery Award patch will look mighty fine on your uniform!)

Pathfinder Award -

This is a rather lengthy one on the requirements. Meant to expand your capabilities and skills, this award challenges you. You will be planning and being a leader for both a Tier II or III adventure, and a crew project. You'll also get to choose to either serve as an officer in your crew OR staff a leadership training. You'll be doing personal reflection and goal-setting, and learning more about the world and yourself.

Summit Award -

This is the highest award in Venturing, on par with Eagle Scout. At this point, you will have been growing and challenging yourself with the last few awards, which means that you could be a completely different person by now! You'll get to plan and lead a service project, create a personal code of conduct, and complete a structured personal reflection. You'll get to mentor another Venturer in the planning of a venturing activity. You'll also get to lead an ethical controversy and take more advanced training. This award is taking everything you've learned and molding your capabilities!

All in all, these new awards are nothing to be scared of. In fact, you've probably done many of these things already! I know I did not go into complete depth with the requirements, but if you've got a handy Venturing Handbook, you can read each step in more detail. These awards will challenge you, but they will draw so much of the person you're meant to be out of you. So, be excited - a new door to success just opened!

Go [HERE](#) for a complete list of the new requirements