



***Northeast Georgia Council, B.S.A.
Advancement Committee***

To: All Boy Scout, Varsity and Venturing Unit Leaders

From: Ed Foster, Council Advancement Committee Chairman
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Subject: Merit Badge Counselor Update

Date: March 10, 2008

I wanted to update everyone on where we are on getting the Merit Badge Counselor approval and recharter process completed. All of the district advancement committees now have copies of their district's registered and approved counselors. They are able to give you a list of the counselors we have that work with your troop. We are finding that many counselors did not let the Boy Scout Service Center know they wanted to remain merit badge counselors at the end of 2006 so they did not get renewed in 2007. This has resulted in some counselors having to resubmit the adult application and merit badge counselor application to get approved and back in the system. We also have a large number of counselors that we do not know what unit they work with. Your district advancement committee will be working with the units to try and tie these people to a unit so recharter in 2008 for counselors will be smoother for everyone.

On the subject of notification of counselors that they have been approved. We started in October 2007, either calling or emailing counselors when they were approved as a merit badge counselor to let them know they had been approved. Most were contacted within four weeks of turning in their paperwork. In early December we fell behind due to the vast number of merit badge counselor applications we were receiving and were not able to contact counselors that had turned in applications. If you have turned in a merit badge counselor application prior to April 1, 2008, you may begin counseling four weeks after turning in your application unless you are notified otherwise. We will resume notification of counselors of their approval beginning April 1, 2008, and expect to be able to notify them, in most cases, within four weeks of their turning in their paperwork.

There is some confusion on the approval process of becoming a merit badge counselor. In review, to become a counselor an adult must fill out a BSA adult application listing in the position code box the number "42". They also write in the position (description) box "Merit Badge Counselor". There is no fee involved to register as a merit badge counselor. They must also complete a "Merit Badge Counselor Information" form. This form asks for the badges they wish to counsel and if the subject is a vocation, avocation or if they have special training in the subject and asks for some brief information. This information must be provided in order to be approved in the subjects listed. BSA requires that a new adult application be submitted for each position in which an adult wishes to register. In other words, if you are currently registered with BSA in a position (Scoutmaster, committee member, Den Leader etc) you must still fill out a new adult application to register as a merit badge counselor. If you are currently registered as a merit badge counselor and wish to add or delete badges you only need to submit a new "Merit Badge Counselor Information" form properly filled out listing the badges you wish to add or delete. The requirement of submitting an adult application for each position you wish to register in is a national requirement not a requirement created by the council. In filling out these forms we ask that you please print and write legibly. We have received some that we can not read and therefore can not process.

We appreciate and want to thank all of the units for their patience and understanding while we have been working on getting all of this sorted out. Although it has been frustrating and time consuming on everyone's part we are close to having it completed and should be able to ensure that counselors get reregistered at the end of 2008 in an efficient and timely manner. But most importantly we will be able to provide our scouts with counselors for badges they wish to work on when they can not find a registered and approved counselor "in house" as they are the reason we are all involved in the program after all.