



VENTURING RECRUITING GUIDE

VENTURING • BSA

By: Bill Nelson (with a lot of help and information from information posted at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ventinglist>)

Welcome

Welcome to the fastest growing program in the Boy Scouts of America! Membership is up 15% over 2001 and the number of units is up 20%. This guide is intended to give you some ideas on how to promote your crew, plan your crew's recruiting activities and recruit new members. Much potential exists with Venturing growth. We have barely scratched the surface.

Venturing is Unique

Venturing is based on a unique and dynamic relationship between youth, adult leaders, and organizations in their communities. The Venturing program has been tailored for teenagers. They like the emphasis on extreme sports, high adventure, coed involvement and less emphasis on uniforming. Most of our crews are High Adventure crews. In many places throughout Arizona, there is no other program available to youth of High School age that provides the varied program we can offer, and almost no program can offer it at the price point we can.

A First Step

A first step for any successful recruitment effort is to appoint a Vice-President to serve as the Crew Membership Chair. This person will work with District level counterparts (such as the Crew's Unit Commissioner and the District Membership Chairman) in implementing a year round growth plan that incorporates all methods of recruitment. Another important responsibility is to work with the Advisor and

A Little of What Venturing Has to Offer

- Access to local and national BSA Camping and High Adventure facilities and expertise. Programs from extreme backpacking, offered at Philmont, through C.O.P.E. and repelling offered at local councils, through, high adventure canoeing, SCUBA and sailing excursions at national bases throughout the United States. No one can offer what we can for the price we can offer it.
- Local events/activities tailored for teenagers
- Expertise and program helps for:
 - 25 outdoor disciplines
 - 124 meeting plans
 - 15 super activity suggestions
- Seven Nationally recognized awards for young people
 - Four Nationally recognized awards for tenured adult leaders
 - Five-hour training for all adult leaders, which includes Youth Protection training
 - 8 –session Youth Leadership Skills Training Course
 - 27 Ethical Controversies modules
 - Module on how to use the parliamentary procedure
 - Module on how to introduce a speaker
 - Module on how to make a speech
 - CD – Interactive PowerPoint presentation on Safe Driving
 - Instruction on how to conduct an annual planning session
 - Instruction on the Division of Responsibilities in a group
 - Instruction on how to conduct a reflection
 - Survey for adults to determine expertise
 - Survey for youth to determine interest areas
 - Guide to Safe Scouting- which includes section on "Unauthorized Activities"
 - Low cost liability and accident insurance

For more info: *Passport to High Adventure* #4310

Crew Committee to insure that new Venturers are quickly and correctly registered, and that those completed registration forms and fees (for registration and insurance) are submitted to Council as soon as possible.

The First Rule

The first rule in recruiting is that a crew that is active, or has a lot of interesting activities on their calendar, will recruit faster than one which does not. An active crew will have enthusiastic members and the most effective recruiter in Venturing is a Venturer who likes their crew and its activities.

For ideas of what a Venturing Crew can do see your Venturing Leader Handbook (#34655B) and the following websites: <http://usscouts.org/venturing.asp> , <http://www.scouting.org/venturing/> , <http://www.venturing.info> . Crews belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, make sure you check out the resources at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gcventuring/files/> .

The Second Rule

The second rule is to make sure your adult leadership and your youth leadership are trained in Venturing. Venturing is a unique program and should be presented in its unique way. Venturing is not older Boy Scouts and training is the easiest way for the adults to understand how Venturing is different from Boy Scouts (just as Boy Scouting was different from Cub Scouting). For information on training, see the Grand Canyon Council Website at: <http://www.grandcanyonbsa.org> .

Publicity & Promotion

Your crew should construct an Information Sheet telling important details of your crew. This Information Sheet should include:

- A brief description of your crew's "personality" and/or philosophy. For example, if your crew primarily likes to go backpacking and concentrates on that heavily, then say that in a brief paragraph. Make whatever your crew does sound like fun!
- Pictures of some interesting crew activities
- Crew Number, District, and Sponsor
- Names and contact information of Leaders
- Day of week, frequency, and time of regular meetings
- Uniform requirements, if any
- Individual crew fees beyond national fees
- Frequency and type(s) of outdoor activities

- Indicate briefly the history of the crew. For example, tell what year it was founded, major accomplishments of the crew, etc.
- Describe the crew's demographics. That is, what is the crew's current size? Is it coed?
- Describe the kinds of community service your crew provides. Is it limited to work for/with the crew's sponsor? Does the crew engage in other community service?
- List the schools youth in the crew attend.
- End with a statement of welcome .

"How large of a crew do you want?" The crew should get together and set a goal of how many new members to try to recruit each year. A typical goal is 5 new members who are between 14 and 15 years of age and have finished the 8th grade. Others would say, "if you are going to recruit, shoot the moon!" The decision is yours.

What type of people do we want in the crew? For example, small crew of friends is flexible, easily transported and comfortable.

You will want to target people without a Scouting background as well as those whom you knew from Scouting. Invite friends from school and the community. Invite them to an outing, not just to a meeting. Action draws young adults better than another classroom like environment.

Venturers are recruited at any age from 14 to 21. But keep in mind, that if you recruit youth in the earlier high school grades it is a lot easier than recruiting busy juniors and seniors who are worrying about which college to attend.

Some things your crew could do that have helped other crews recruit new members are:

1. Wherever we go, set up a table with picture boards which show your crew in action. These photos show not only high adventure activities, but conservation projects, community service activities, and participation local events. Also include photos of Venturers in sports uniforms, dance clothes, at school, church photos, etc. The table should have application materials. ¹
2. Bring your table to Scout-O-Rama! There is a market of High School Scouts there who are eagerly looking for something within Scouting that is new and different.
3. Volunteer to assist at Council and District events. When you volunteer, look sharp! If you become visible to commissioners and professionals, the council and district will refer people to you.

¹ *Jamie's Lessons Learned*, <http://venturing-mag.org/lessons/lessons5.html>

4. Submit articles to the Council newsletter on a regular basis. ²
5. Take your story to your local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. How to write a press release and example press releases are available in the Venturing Leader Handbook.
6. Talk to local troops about how Venturing can retain High School age boys in Scouting even if they are bored with Scouting.
7. Personal contact. This is probably the most effective recruiting tool we have. Talk it up!
8. Marketing visits & demonstrations. Strut your stuff! Demonstrate what you do at local fairs and festivals.
9. The crew should plan to hold an “open house”, annually, and it should be in the crew’s yearly calendar. Make it a “communications fest” with simple potluck food treats liberally dosed with friendly information about the nature of the crew.
10. Hold “partner activities” with other groups which normally does not do the kinds of outdoor activities Venturers do. For instance, the county extension agencies host 4-H clubs which normally do not participate in camping or outdoor activities; many Senior and Cadette Girl Scout troops do not “open-air camp”; and Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) do not camp at all. Invite their group to come along with your Crew on an outing.
11. Work on that public speaking – send letters to local civic groups offering a member of your Crew to share with them your latest “superactivity” or special event. Civic groups are always interested in what the youth of their community are doing, and many of them have members who have teenaged sons and daughters (or both). Make the presentation brief, filled with photos and graphics, and leave time for questions. Many of the resources explained in this guide can be used -- or create your own.

Recruiting never stops and the program sells itself if you get the message out. ³

High School Activity Interest Surveys

The High School Activity Interest Surveys are conducted at select Arizona High Schools and administered by the Grand Canyon Council. These surveys ask high school students about their hobby and vocational interests. The results of these surveys include contact information on the students and can really come in

² *Jamie's Lessons Learned*, <http://venturing-mag.org/lessons/lessons5.html>

³ *Ibid*

handy when you start advertising your Open House and crew. The results of the surveys are available from the Council office.

Friends

Again, the most effective recruiter in Venturing is a Venturer who likes his crew and its activities. As part of the Recruitment Drive, ask current Venturers to provide a list of non-Scout friends they would like to invite to the next crew meeting as part of their participation in the Recruitment Drive. Make a copy of the list, and return the original to the Venturer. The youth on the “prospects” list should be contacted by the crew member as soon as possible, and the youth should be invited to the planned recruitment event or open house.

Crew Open House

An Open House is where your crew invites possible recruits to a function that will let them know what you do and how much fun Venturing is. The Venturing Leader Handbook has an outline for conducting an Open House. Here are some helpful hints to make your Open House a success:

The Planning

- 30-45 days in advance –Set a date for your Open House (best in mid-September thru late October) and contact your District Executive to request flyers, high school interest survey results, or other recruitment materials which can help advertise the Open House.
- Check for community and school conflicts with selected date
Concentrate on making it fun!
- Is your start time conducive to travel needs? Meal times? A teenager's schedule?
- Plan a gathering time activity or have a handout (anything beats staring at the wall).
- Plan each part of the Open House, give assignments and be sure it is youth run.
- 10-14 days in advance – Mail open house invitation letters, include RSVP card and crew three-month calendar.
- The day before: last minute phone calls to former members.
Using survey list make reminder phone calls to prospective new members.

The Meeting

- The young people like to be called young adults or students, not kids.
- Have the students sign-in on a roster as they are arriving

- Avoid language that is too technical and be careful to not "Venturing-Speak" before they know enough about the crew or Venturing to process the information.
- Present a crew three month calendar to students during the meeting.
- Make visitors feel welcome and included. Include them in an activity.
- Avoid jokes about initiation or hazing. Both are violations of BSA rules.

The Follow-Up

- Follow up with a visit and/or phone call. A youth should contact the prospective Venturer and the Advisor should make contact with the prospective member's parents.
- Use the roster from sign-in as a follow-up list to contact
- Send thank you letters to everyone that helped make the evening successful.
- Complete the registration of new youth and adults in a timely manner.

Working with Troops

Some crews have very good luck working with local troops or with troops that are sponsored by their chartering organization. The building of a working relationship is simplified when the chartering organization is the same, however you can discover contact data for nearby troops and develop a lasting cooperative friendship with those units of younger youth. This can be accomplished by annually inviting the adult and junior leadership of a nearby Troop to an "Open House" meeting held at the regular time of the crew's Meeting. It can also be set for a different time such as a weekend. This move encourages a line of friendship and communication between the crew which wants to recruit youth and the troop nearby who may be looking to for older youth to help with their program. Make it a "communications fest" with simple potluck food treats liberally dosed with friendly information about the nature of the crew and offers of jointly-sponsored activities between the troop and crew. It is also an ideal time for the crew to offer support in the form of instructors. Conversely, the Troop may be able to lend a hand with one or more of the crew's community service projects. Best of all, it provides an ideal opportunity to "sell" the best points about the crew in a casual atmosphere.

Resources to assist in this are a Video call *Venturing for Scoutmasters* and a PowerPoint presentation is available at:

http://usscouts.org/venturing/Presentations/A_Presentation_for_Scoutmasters.ppt

Top ten reasons why a Boy Scout troop should consider working with a Venturing Crew

1. Venturing can keep older boys, ages 14-18, engaged in the troop longer.
2. Venturing's new advancement program offers Scouts new challenges.
3. Venturing offers older Scouts challenging activities with boys and girls their own age.
4. Venturing offers additional leadership experience and training that can benefit the troop.
5. Venturing advancement requires Venturers to teach what they have learned to other groups.
6. Scouts ages 14 to 18 and adult leaders can be members of both a Boy Scout troop and a Venturing crew.
7. Older Scouts in the troop, especially troop leaders, are expected to participate in both units.
8. Venturers who are First Class and above can continue to work on Eagle Scout rank requirements.
9. A Venturing crew associated with the troop gives Scouts something to anticipate as they get older.
10. Venturing can help solve many of the Scoutmaster's challenges:
 - o Challenging older Scouts while continuing to attract and retain younger Scouts
 - o Competing with older Scout's growing interests: cars, girls, and high school
 - o Giving leadership/role model opportunities to all older Scouts

The First Rule, Again

The first rule in recruiting is that a crew that is active, or has a lot of interesting activities on their calendar, will recruit faster than one which does not.

Have a great year recruiting and growing your crew!

Recruiting Resources Available From MyScouting .org

Log into MyScouting.org and click on ScoutSource and then click on Venturing. This will allow for a detailed look at updated resources for the Venturing Program.