

Venturing and Unit Service

1) What is Venturing?

- Venturing is a traditional program of the Boy Scouts of America (like Cub and Boy Scouting).
- Its members can be aged 14 (completed 8th grade) through 20, and can be male or female.
- Its Adult Leaders are Scouters older than 21.
- It has a very high level of Youth leadership (more than Boy Scouting, similar to the Order of the Arrow).
- Each *Crew*, the unit of Venturing (or *Ship* for Sea Scouts), can have its own focus – Crews can be very different from each other in their activity choices and styles.
- Historically, most of Venturing is similar to Exploring prior to 1965.
- Venturing became a distinct program when Exploring became a non-traditional program of the Boy Scouts of America in 1999. Most Outdoor Adventure (including Sea Scouts) and faith-based units became Venturing Crews while career oriented units became Exploring Posts. Arts, hobby, and sports based units chose which program to join.
- Like Troops and Packs, Crews select their own members (subject to National and chartered org rules).
- Venturing frequently uses outside experts of its membership (consultants) to deliver advanced programs.

2) What are Venturing's challenges?

- *There are few experienced leaders to serve as trainers and commissioners.*
- Many Unit, District, and Council level leaders have misconceptions about the program.
- Its small membership base means that its exposure to the public is miniscule.
- Its advanced program options means that *experts might be required to deliver the program.*
- It is dominated by “special case” units, which means that *traditional statistical methods of evaluation fail.*
- Its diverse program options provide great flexibility, but are less standardized, and therefore more difficult to demonstrate.
- Venturing was formed suddenly in response to legal issues affecting Exploring. Therefore it is *still in the “trial and development” phase.*
- The small number and wide dispersion of active Crews makes sharing more difficult.
- The overlap in age eligibility with Boy Scouting can lead to an adversarial perception.
- The language of Venturing and related programs is confusing (Venture vs. Venturing vs. Varsity, Leader vs. Adult vs. Advisor, etc.)
- There are a limited number of female adults available from Scouting to support the co-ed program.
- It is considered to be too low of a priority by most professional Scouters and Council-level volunteers, and very limited resources are applied at the National level.
- Most Districts and Councils have recruitment efforts for Cub and Boy Scouting, but not for Venturing.

3) What are Venturing's opportunities?

- It offers a desirable program for *high school aged youth*, which *predominantly quit Scouting* at that age.
- Its *program can be tailored on a unit by unit basis to provide programs attractive to all potential members.*
- It has *activity opportunities excluded from all other Boy Scout programs.*
- It has the largest potential Total Available Youth (TAY) of any of Scouting's programs, and therefore has massive potential for membership growth.
- Its desirability as a program for young adults (20's and 30's) and ability to transition youth into adult positions can increase adult membership growth.

4) What can Commissioners and Scouting Professionals do for Venturing?

- Learn about the program. *Attend Venturing Leader Training (VLT).* Visit or join a Crew.
- Provide basic unit support (don't neglect Crews!).
- Help to form units where they don't exist (and potential members do).
- *Help to recruit members into existing Crews.*
- Resist the urge to form units where existing units need members!
- Assist in developing healthy Troop to Crew relationships.
- Promote Venturing Roundtable and Venturing events participation by Crews.
- Help develop a “consultants” list (like a Merit Badge counselors list).
- Consider having a specialist ADC/ACC for Venturing.
- Support the formation of a Venturing Officers' Association (VOA) or Teen Leaders' Council (TLC)
- Utilize the Venturing Task Force (VTF)