



# SCOUTS CANADA

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**Date:** 22 June 2005 *By both email and hard copy*

**To:** **Members of the Board of Governors**  
**Council Commissioners**  
**Operations Advisory Committee**  
**Honorary Officers (Voting)**  
**All Voting Members and Other Appointed Voting Members of the Corporation**  
**National Youth Committee**  
**CED's to send to: Council Youth Commissioners and Group Commissioners**  
**Respondents to Draft 6**

**From:** **Mike Scott, Chief Commissioner and Chair of the Board**

**Subject:** **Strategic Plan 2005 -2015 – Draft 7**

## **Introduction**

This letter is a follow-up to my December 2004 call for comments on Draft 6 of the Strategic Plan, and to the update provided in my 11 May letter (see Scout Canada's web site – "What's New" page – Letter from the Chief Commissioner" – link is <http://www.scouts.ca/inside.asp?cmPageID=619>). Once again, I seek your input.

The Scouting Movement in Canada has a long and successful history stretching back almost 100 years. Many of you have been committed members for long periods. You can be justifiably proud of your contribution to achieving our Mission of helping youth along the voyage of self-discovery as they develop into responsible citizens. Or, as one of your submissions to Draft 6 states: "My own idea of the business we are in: Helping adolescent youth become the kind of adults I would like to have for my next door neighbours."<sup>1</sup> Our program is unique in this regard, and I believe that the basic tenets of our Practices and Methods are as relevant today as they have ever been. That said however, we are facing some challenging issues, and this is where we require your help and input to address these issues in our Strategic Plan.

## **Challenges**

Membership in Scouts Canada has been in steep decline for several years.<sup>2</sup> Efforts to arrest this trend, including the expansion of Scout programs, have not been successful. Theories on the reasons for the decline are many. Among them - a loss of "brand" identity with the public at large; ineffective marketing; a straying away from our core programs in an attempt to be all things to all people; and, a lack of inclusiveness for an increasingly diverse population. As well, societal trends bring increased competition for youth interests from other activities (organized sports, video games and generally more sedentary lifestyles), less volunteerism and, possibly, image issues of Scouting with youth (not cool). These trends are coupled with an inability to recruit and retain enough youthful leaders, definitely reflecting a lifestyle where, in many families, both spouses work. At the same time, society now demands increased insurance and oversight requirements, some of which were imposed without adequate consultation with members.

Membership decline has caused financial, organizational and morale problems. Leaders and infrastructure are aging. Council and national officials are sometimes seen as out-of-touch with leaders who deliver the programs. Leaders, increasingly burdened by administrative requirements, feel that they have no means to voice their concerns and have their views considered. Many have left the organization.

## **Strategic Plan – Draft 7**

The Strategic Priorities contained in the Plan aim to address these issues and create the conditions to reverse the decline in membership. Indeed, as suggested in a submission: "A strategic plan can have only one goal, to create the environment for growth."<sup>3</sup> These Priorities are founded on the Scouting Mission, Principles, Practices and Methods and a Vision of what the Scouting Movement in Canada aspires to be.

The enclosed **Draft 7** version accommodates and incorporates, to the extent possible, the common concerns and views expressed in the over 200 submissions received in response to Draft 6. There are major changes from Draft 6 and these include:

- The inclusion of Scouting's Mission, Principles, Practices and Methods and Vision.
- A shorter document with simpler language.
- A reordering/rewording of the Strategic Priorities based on submissions.
- Strategic Priorities/Desired Results that identify new initiatives while reflecting the importance of continuing to do well those things that support our Mission.
- Substantial rewrite of Action Plans section and the identification of priority items.
- An Action Plan section that is separate from the Strategic Plan document, that contains short, medium and long-term priorities, and that assigns responsibilities.

The Board of Governors aims to have the Strategic Plan ready for implementation by the end of this calendar year. In order to help narrow our focus on selected key priorities for the near term, you are requested to review the **Draft 7** and the List of Priority1 Action Plans enclosed.

Please send your comments (**by 15 September 2005**) to the National Office, Attn: Cheryl Dinelle (via E-mail - <cdinelle@scouts.ca> or hard copy to- 1345 Baseline Road, Ottawa ON K2C 0A7 or Fax: (613) 224-3571). **A Comment Sheet is attached to this letter to serve as a 'guide', but is not meant to constrain any comments you may have.** A web-based survey version will also be running by the end of June and the link to the survey is: <http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB224F42FSHVT>.

You should also be aware that the Board of Governors has directed Rob Stewart, our EC/ CEO, to conduct a parallel exercise with the Council Commissioners, focused on Action Plans, over this same period of time. It is anticipated that Commissioners will consult widely within their areas. **Draft 7** contains more than 80 possible Action Plans, many of which are new ideas submitted in Draft 6 comments. These Action Plans may well be modified as dialogue ensues between National, Council and local levels. For those interested, the full list of Action Plans will be available on the Scouts web site on the "What's New" page at: <http://www.scouts.ca/media/documents/actionplans7.pdf>, through the National Office via Cheryl Dinelle or from your Council Commissioner.

Finally, I reiterate that this Strategic Plan will only succeed if there is widespread identification with the issues, and buy-in from the members at large. Members must see their concerns reflected and concrete actions to address these concerns. In other words, this must be "our" Strategic Plan. Once approved and adopted, this Strategic Plan will orient Scouting in Canada for the decade to come.

In closing, let me thank you once again for your interest, input and support in this critical endeavor.



Mike Scott  
Chief Commissioner and Chair of the Board  
Encls. (3)

- Strategic Plan - **Draft 7**
- List of Priority1 Action Plans
- Comment Sheet

<sup>1</sup> K. Hugh Robertson: "Some thoughts on Scouting" Feb 15 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Total Membership declined from 300,000 to 200,000 from 1984-1999. It stood at 122,000 in Aug 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Edward (Ted) Claxton "General Comments on Strategic Planning Draft 6 December 2004"  
30 Dec 2004.