

Growing with Our Strat

by Rob Stewart

In February 2006, Scouts Canada's seven Strategic Directions were released to members of Scouts Canada. This document has been reproduced on page 9 to ensure all new leaders receive their own personal copy. A number of supporting articles were included in the February issue. I encourage you to seek a copy if you would like further background. It is important that we continue to maintain a focus on our seven Strategic Directions so that we do not lose the momentum that was established during the planning process.

Highlights of Success

1. Remaining relevant to Canadian Society

Our National Program Services Committee has been reviewing our programs to ensure they meet the needs of today's youth and adults. One of the hot topics these days is Climate Change. Scouts Canada has played a leading role in developing a climate change challenge program, achieving Gold in the 2006 Canadian Environment Awards. The Climate Change challenge is now part of all Scouts Canada's programs and in addition, has been endorsed at the world level of the Movement. South Africa and Sweden are two countries that have actively engaged our program, continuing to spread the word about Climate Change.

2. Broadening Volunteer Support

The same committee is working to adapt our training programs allowing maximum flexibility for today's busy



volunteer. We are also reviewing ways to attract younger adults to leadership roles. By pursuing the community volunteer hours required by students in some provinces prior to receiving a graduation certificate, it is hoped to introduce young leaders with fresh ideas into the Movement.

3. Strengthening Scouting's External Profile

We expect our Centennial celebrations will help achieve our third Strategic Direction. CJ'07 will be hosted by Camp Tamaracouta in Quebec. This event will attract 7,000 Scouts, Venturers and Scouters as

well as a great deal of media attention. In addition, a number of activities have been planned across the country including Sunrise Ceremonies, Beaver sleepovers and council Jamborees.

There are a number of fine examples of our members participating in local ceremonies, parades, food drives etc.; all serving to remind the public that we are part of their community. School talks continue to generate enthusiasm for Scouting amongst young people. One of our challenges in this area is to follow up on the interest we generate. There has been some evidence to suggest we must do a better job of connecting interested youth and parents with the local section.

4. Involving Youth

At all levels of the Movement, we are striving to reinforce the need to involve youth in all aspects of Scouting. This begins with seeking their input to program suggestions at the section level to having young people serve in all aspects of management and governance of Scouting. Scouts



Photos: Scouts Canada Archives

Strategic Directions **An Update**

Canada's By-law II provides for at least four youth to be members of the Board of Governors. Young people serve on the National Operations Advisory Committee and each council is encouraged to have a Deputy Council Commissioner for Youth. Young people are currently working to support the Gifts for Peace initiative of the World Organization of the Scout Movement. Worldwide, Scouting is striving to make a gift of peace to the world in celebration of our hundredth anniversary.

5. Enhancing Internal Communications

Although each Direction is important, this one was determined to be one of the key priorities of our Strategic Directions initiative. In the past we have not done a very good job of "speaking to ourselves" and the result was a lack of, or poorly communicated, information. We now have an Internal Communications Specialist working in the national office and Susie Mackie's key responsibility is to ensure all Scouters have easy access to all the information they require to perform their role in Scouting.

You may have noticed changes on our web site which serves as the key area for information. A new section has been added, "So You're a New Leader", containing details on resources new leaders will find helpful. A new feature will be a section entitled "Ask the Chief Commissioner". The purpose of this page will be to give you the opportunity to ask your Chief Commissioner (Glenn Armstrong) any questions you have about anything related to the Movement in Canada. A Commissioner's Newsletter provides regular monthly updates to commissioners, and a column (see page 8) in the *Leader Magazine* gives commissioners a chance to voice their thoughts.

Leaders can contact the webmaster (webmaster@scouts.ca) or Program Help (pgmhelp@scouts.ca) with questions or concerns on anything to do with Scouting, whether it's help finding out where to place a badge to the latest program ideas.



6. Becoming More Culturally Diverse

A diversity implementation committee has been established and working hard to provide guidance in a number of areas related to potential barriers to membership. Particular attention is being directed to establishing stronger links between Scouting and a variety of cultural/religious communities. These efforts have resulted in membership growth in a number of communities across Canada.

7. Scouting - Canada's 21st Century Youth Organization

The Board of Governors continues to strive for an atmosphere that recognizes the ability for a large organization to adapt to changing needs and requirements of its members while still respecting the abilities of local councils to function independently. One message received loud and clear from a number of Scouters was the need to stop unnecessary change and communicate effectively any required changes. There is work in progress on a review of the voting procedures within the Movement to ensure a manageable but democratic process for the election of officers.

We are continuing to work on providing a consolidated financial state-

ment to help us understand the true financial picture for the entire Movement in Canada, not just the national operation.

Moving Into the Future

So, how will we keep track of all these and dozens of other action items? The Operations Advisory Committee is designing a "scorecard" that will show results for each council, allowing for a quick analysis of our situation as a National Movement. This "scorecard" will be shared with all Scouters on our web site and through future issues of *The Leader*. It is our intent to identify the key action steps at all levels of the Movement, identifying who will accomplish those actions and by what date. This type of performance appraisal will help to maintain our focus on the seven Strategic Directions, ensuring that Scouts Canada continues to be an integral part of Canadian society.

In your role as a section Scouter, you can continue to focus on your primary goal of providing fun and challenging programs to all youth who enter your section. Let us know how we can enhance your ability to do that as we move together into the second century of Scouting.

Good Scouting! X

— Rob Stewart is the Executive Commissioner and CEO of Scouts Canada.