



# OPERATIONS UPDATE

**04-9**  
**September**

## **DISTRIBUTION:**

- Scout Executive
- Section Chief
- National Committee
- Section Adviser
- Area Director
- Lodge Adviser

## **LODGE NUMBERS**

In December 2003 the national Order of the Arrow committee, unanimously decided to discontinue using lodge numbers for national reporting and registration purposes. The reasons for this change were to eliminate confusion with council numbers, reinforce that a lodge is an integral part of the council it serves, and embrace the uniform council numbering system used throughout Scouting.

Lodge numbers are not being taken away; they are just not going to be used nationally to report and register OA lodges. Instead lodges will be identified by lodge name, and council number. For example:

**Kansa Lodge, Quivira Council #198, BSA**

In the Order's beginning there was a historical significance to lodge numbers. They were sequentially assigned as new lodges were formed. Since 1915, lodge mergers have occurred many times. In recent years, merging lodges have been given the option of picking a "new number" anywhere a "number" was vacant in the sequence. Some lodges chose one of their existing numbers, others chose a number to match their council number, and still others chose the lowest or highest number available.

Councils that merge adopt one of their existing council numbers rather than obtaining a new council number. The council numbering system is universally used throughout Scouting.

Having one number for a council and another number for a lodge has generated confusion. This is especially true in the national office, for OA event registration, and all reporting functions. Elsewhere in Scouting, reporting is done by councils. Registration for all national activities and events is done by council contingents.

The Order of the Arrow is a Boy Scout program. Just like other programs of the Boy Scouts of America, it is delivered through the auspices of the local council. The lodge is not a separate entity unto itself. It is an integral part of the council operation and exists only because the council exists. The Order's vision as Scouting's national honor society is for every lodge to be an integral part of the council it serves.