



This edition of *Realignment News* includes additional information regarding the 2006 Board Chairs and CEOs Meeting in Orlando, a first report on the January 17 meeting of CEOs from rural councils, and a clarification on the subject of “early adopters” in response to questions raised in the January 27 conference call with Board Chairs and CEOs.

Questions, comments, and suggestions for *Realignment News* are always welcome at jverhage@girlscouts.org or vwright@girlscouts.org.

ITEMS OF INTEREST >

Information on the 2006 Board Chairs & CEOs Work Session

Several of you have asked questions related to the agenda and we are delighted to provide some this preview. The meeting will include:

- Two separate sessions with demographers. During the first morning, we will meet the demographers and learn in-depth about the data and reference points that led to their map development. Over lunch we will have a chance to ask them more questions about their data, and afterward, they will introduce their map.
- Opportunities for state/regional group meetings. These groups will have many opportunities to begin or continue the process of identifying realignment options. The first will be on Monday afternoon following the presentation of the demographers map.
- Separate meetings of Board Chairs and CEOs. Board Chairs will have the opportunity to meet as a group with Patricia Diaz Dennis while CEOs meet with Kathy Cloninger. Both groups will discuss their individual and shared leadership responsibilities.
- Introduction of GSUSA’s plans to support councils through realignment. Tools, timetables, and support teams will be introduced, along with other tangible support that GSUSA will provide to help local councils through this process.

We have received many questions about the demographers’ map and what will be expected of councils on-site in Orlando. Councils will not be expected to make decisions about council jurisdictions at the Orlando meeting. Councils will be expected to engage in further discussion of realignment options and opportunities. If you have any questions about the process, please submit them to Jan Verhage at jverhage@girlscouts.org or Vicki Wright and vwright@girlscouts.org.

More About Mapping and Early Adopters

In response to questions raised during the conference call on Friday, January 27 we are pleased to clarify the following information regarding “early adopters” and the demographers map.

About “Early Adopters”

- Maps from councils that want to be considered as possible “early adopters” need to be received at GSUSA no later than February 7.
- To be an “early adopter” all councils whose jurisdiction is covered by the proposed map must be in agreement with the map that is submitted.
- To be considered, all councils in a state do not have to identify as potential “early adopters” unless the proposal is to form one statewide council. With large states, there may be multiple groups of councils who choose to submit as potential “early adopters”.
- A final requirement for selection as an “early adopter” is that there is general alignment between the map that is submitted by the group of councils and the map that has been developed by the demographer.
- Council groups will be notified if they have been selected as an “early adopter” before the meeting in Orlando.

About the Map from the Demographer Team

- The map presented by the demographer team in Orlando will be a resource to councils as they continue to discuss jurisdictional options.
- With the exception of those groups of councils who are ultimately selected as early adopters, proposed maps submitted by councils will not be used in the demographer’s presentation in Orlando.

Rural Council CEOs Share Insights

On January 17, a group of CEOs serving primarily rural jurisdictions met at GSUSA to share their concerns about realignment. CEOs from Montana, Colorado, Utah, Iowa, Nebraska, and Florida shared their personal concerns, as well as the concerns of their colleagues and constituents. The discussion was wide ranging, open, frank and insightful, and the messages were clear. We’re pleased to share some of their thoughts:

As more councils expand to include rural areas, these new councils will be required to think broader than they have in the past. They must have a commitment to ensure that all segments of the jurisdiction have a strong voice. Councils will be challenged with the reality that being “fair” is not the same as being “equal.” “One size will not fit all.” To be successful, a new council may have several different ways of work.

These CEOs felt strongly that as new councils are formed, national measures need to be in place to evaluate membership share not only by race/ethnicity and age group, but also by jurisdictional difference (i.e. urban, suburban, second city, and rural). The challenge of serving each of these areas must be recognized and our new high capacity councils must be held accountable for reaching all segments of these increasingly diverse areas.

In any new council, there must be a commitment to bring services to girls, volunteers, and parents to the local level – whether it is a vast geographic region or compact urban city. And those services must be better than they were prior to the merger. This will involve a heightened commitment to customer service, along with a willingness to experiment with multiple delivery options.

The history and local traditions of all councils must be honored and recognized before, during, and after any merger. This is imperative for volunteers and staff and is particularly important in those cases where a council might be divided into multiple parts.

All of the insights shared by this group of CEOs will be used to guide the Realignment Strategy Team as resources are developed for council realignment. We will be sharing more information from this “listening session” with Board Chairs and CEOs at the 2006 Board Chairs & CEOs Work Session in Orlando.



1. Will the map that is presented by the demographer team in Orlando represent GSUSA’s vision of how council boundaries should be realigned? No, their map is not intended to be GSUSA’s official recommendation for boundary realignment. This map is meant to provide GSUSA and local councils with the first-ever view of council jurisdictions from a demographic point of view. GSUSA’s proposal for a new national map of Girl Scout council jurisdictions will be developed over the summer through continuing collaboration with both local councils and with our GSUSA demographer team. This final map will be presented to the National Board in August.

2. Do you expect that lots of Service Centers will close as a result of realignment? Decisions about local offices and service centers will be made by local boards of directors. That said, it is our full intention that realignment will result in increased services to girls and adults. The statistics from the recent nationwide restructuring of Alzheimer’s Association provide an interesting perspective. They reduced their number of chapters from 212 to 80 while *increasing* their number of offices from 200 to 300. Among the goals of their consolidation were the reduction of overhead and an increase in service in communities throughout the country.

3. If our rural area combines with a neighbor that serves a large urban area where salary ranges are much higher, will we operate with two separate salary ranges?

No, each newly formed council will establish one set of salary ranges for their employees that will be applied uniformly. GSUSA will provide suggested salary ranges to councils, as it currently does.

4. I hear lots about successful council consolidations but am wondering if there are lessons we can learn from consolidations that have not worked as well. Some of the lessons learned from more challenging consolidations track directly back to issues of communication with all constituencies and the importance of honoring the contributions of every council to all the discussions. Mergers that are most successful are those that have found a balance between honoring the past and building the future. Critical ingredients that are sometimes missing are patience in decision-making and a willingness to compromise. If you have some lessons learned that you would like to share, please send them to jverhage@girlscouts.org or vwright@girlscouts.org.

5. Once we begin the merger process, who will make decisions such as which cookie company to use, what the CEO search process will be, or who will serve on the new board? Once local Boards of Directors approve the proposed changes in jurisdiction, a realignment committee is appointed. This committee includes representatives from each of the merging councils. The committee—working with many active subcommittees—will establish the council structure and policies, define the delivery systems, integrate program and camping opportunities, and integrate databases. The committee will also establish the staff structure, hiring plans, and personnel policies. They will select the cookie company and other vendors and may oversee selection of the new CEO. In some cases, the realignment committee will be given the authority to make some of these decisions on behalf of the new council. In other cases, the newly elected board of the corporation may make these decisions.

6. Our current council jurisdiction includes two states. At the 2006 Board Chairs/CEOs Work Session in Orlando how are we going to be able to participate in the discussion with multiple states? At the Work Session, there will be many opportunities for council groups to engage in further discussion and to react to the demographer team's map. Multiple groups will meet in the breakout rooms and we will make every effort to place councils in rooms with the states that are included in their jurisdictions. Board Chairs and CEOs may want to attend different meetings and then check back in with each other as discussions proceed.

7. I understand that there will be support available to CEOs as we move into this merger process. What about the other council staff? We will be developing guidelines and resources for council CEOs to help staff in this time of transition. While GSUSA is not the employer, we want to ensure that current Girl Scout staff have as many resources available to them as possible, whether transitioning to a new job or working for a new council.

GSUSA is partnering with AGSES to offer targeted trainings for staff who wish to enhance their skills or effectively compete for a job in a newly formed council. As plans are finalized for these opportunities, information will be made available in a variety of

ways.
