

Advancement News

November/December
2014

Vol. 4, No. 7

Prepared. For Life.®

Previous issues are available at http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/advancement_news.aspx

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

Florida Sea Base Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators (CEAA)

January 11-17, 2015

Hurry! Conference is filling fast

As evidenced by the highest ever pre-registration for a national advancement workshop, the Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators, or CEAA for short, has established a well-deserved reputation for being a premier learning experience and workshop for council and district advancement-oriented volunteers and professionals. There is still time to sign up, but please hurry. It is possible we may need to cut off registration as we maximize the Florida Sea Base capacity.

Here is a sample of what you will experience during your week in the sunny Florida Keys, January 11-17.

First, you will have an opportunity to assist the National Advancement Committee in the development of educational materials and other resources that will be used across the country. Many of the PowerPoint educational tools posted at www.scouting.org/advancement are the result of previous CEAA conferences. This

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year's conference participants will view and discuss these existing materials and will be given the opportunity to make recommendations for additional tools to be developed for the future. Several members of the National Advancement Committee and its advisory panel will be on hand, along with representatives of the National Disabilities Awareness committee, to hear your ideas.

Better yet, you will be able to "road test" some of tools that were begun at last year's CEAA. Those in final development stages include "Including Scouts with Disabilities," "Effective Cub Scout Advancement," "Conducting Effective Eagle Boards of Review," and "Building and Sustaining High Performing Advancement Committees."

This year's conference will also provide participants an expanded list of interesting breakout opportunities dealing with topics such as Cub Scout issues, merit badge management, Eagle issues, increasing advancement, disabilities awareness, and advancement literature updates. Participants will have the opportunity to choose the areas of interest in which they want to spend some quality breakout time.

Wednesday has a tentative morning activity scheduled, but the afternoon will be time off for participants to relax and explore the Keys. In addition, a spouse program is being planned that includes snorkeling, kayaking, glass bottom boat tours, sunset cruises, and much more. Regrettably, there are no facilities or provisions for children at the Sea Base.

Do not miss your chance to visit the Florida Keys in January where you will have opportunity to engage in some amazing Scouting and advancement activities and camaraderie.

Registration is available at:

<http://reservations.scouting.org/profile/form/index.cfm?PKformID=0x34182ffbba>

January 17 Webcasts on New Cub Scouting Program

A new Cub Scouting program is launching June 1, 2015. To ensure you are ready for the transition, a number of webcasts will be held on January 17. To participate, navigate to:

<http://www.livestream.com/bsanationalcouncil>.

For Cubmasters

Sat., Jan. 17, 8 a.m. CST – or – Sat., Jan. 17, at 3 p.m. CST

Den Leader Webcasts

Sat., Jan. 17, at 9:30 a.m. CST – or – Sat., Jan. 17, at 4:30 p.m. CST

LDS-Specific Considerations *(View one of the above webcasts before viewing this one.)*

Sat., Jan. 17, at 11 a.m. CST – or – Sat., Jan. 17, at 6 p.m. CST



On Increasing Advancement

Journey to Excellence 2015: Advancement Remains Key Unit Benchmark

When the BSA instituted the Journey to Excellence (JTE) performance measurement and recognition program for councils, districts, and units, it did so with the promise that all the benchmarks would be reviewed annually and adjusted, as necessary, to reflect actual data and trends. The 2015 scorecards, available now at www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Awards/JourneyToExcellence.aspx, will live up to that promise—and more. Not only has the scoring system been revised significantly, but for the first time JTE's benchmark objectives are being grouped consistently into four competency-aligned areas across all Scouting unit areas of concern: planning and budget, membership, program, and volunteer leadership.

For those involved in advancement, the first thing you may notice is that “Advancement” is no longer the first objective listed on the pack and troop scorecards. Instead, it is one of the five interrelated components that make up the larger area called “Program.” The other four program-related objectives for packs are Outdoor Activities; Day Camp, Resident Camp and Family Camp; Service Projects; and Pack and Den Meetings. For troops they are Short-term Camping, Long-term Camping, Service Projects, and Patrol Method.

All of these objectives were evaluated in previous years, but they were not presented as complementary parts of the answer to a bigger question: How do we measure the effectiveness of a unit's program? Starting in 2015, assessing an individual unit's advancement record will be seen as an integral part of that answer, not as just a stand-alone statistic. Its importance is reflected in the scoring system, which has increased the percentage-value of advancement to the overall score a unit needs to achieve the gold level.

Furthermore, in the past few issues of *Advancement News* we have described the personal growth and self-actualization opportunities afforded Venturers through that program's new awards structure. Appropriately, it should come as no surprise that the 2015 JTE Scorecard for crews for the first time will assess the advancement of its members as part of a crew's rating.

There are a number of similar changes in the 2015 scorecards in the other major areas; for example, membership will affect a unit's advancement score. The best way for units to start the 2015 recharter process is to complete the 2014 scorecard objectives. National benchmarks are useful, but continuous improvement of each unit's performance at the local level is really what JTE is all about.

Advancement Education: Spanish Eagle Coach Presentation Released

“Entrenador del Proyecto de Servicio para Eagle Scout,” the Spanish translation of the advancement education presentation “Eagle Scout Service Project Coach,” is now posted at the Educational Presentations link at www.scouting.org/advancement. The third of these presentations to be translated into Spanish, the training is intended to encourage more Spanish-speaking troop leaders to serve as district or council–designated Eagle project coaches according to the *Guide to Advancement* in topic 9.0.2.9.

The two other translated presentations include:

- Esenciales para los Consejeros de Insignias de Mérito (The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling)
- Adelanto Efectivo En La Tropa (Effective Troop Advancement)

Advancement Committee Mechanics

Growing the District Advancement Committee

Do you have so many people active in your district advancement committee that you cannot find jobs for all of them? Perhaps not, but most any committee can use more willing volunteers. Here is an idea that can benefit both units and districts.

Each unit should have an advancement coordinator, whose primary focus is youth advancement. Their responsibilities are outlined in the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 3.0.0.3. Find out who each unit's coordinator is, and make an effort to get to know them. Accomplish this not just by reading their reports, but by meeting with them to share ideas about ways the district advancement committee can help increase advancement.

Find out which issues create problems for unit coordinators, and do your best to assist. For example, help them to use the Journey to Excellence scorecard to see how they are doing, and review reports to see which boys may be lagging behind. Your local council registrar may be able to help you with statistical information to analyze these performance issues. More importantly, provide units with ideas on how to increase advancement and make sure they see you as a resource.

As you work with unit advancement coordinators, you will come to know their strengths and interests, and they will come to see the district and council advancement committees as resources they can trust. When you identify unit volunteers who have a passion for advancement, ask them to help others in the district with a specific project. Make sure it is something they can do at the district level while remaining active with the unit. In this way, we introduce them to district work without transferring their allegiance from the unit to the district.

When unit coordinators are ready to pass their advancement role on to others, consider formally inviting them to join the district or council advancement committee.

This "cultivation" process takes time, but eventually will produce a steady "crop" of experienced, advancement-focused volunteers who will help the council's program at every level well into the future.

Managing Subscriptions to *Advancement News*

Advancement News is designed for council and district advancement committees, advancement staff advisors, and Eagle processors. However, any Scouting volunteer or professional may subscribe.

Subscribing. Send a message to advancement.team@scouting.org, with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line. Indicate your name, email address, and council in the message text.

Unsubscribing. To decline future issues please reply and enter "REMOVE" in the subject line. We will remove the subscription within the next two weeks.

Receiving Multiple Copies. If you receive *Advancement News* at more than one email address, choose the one to be removed and reply with "REMOVE" in the subject line. Include a message requesting that we remove only that email address.

Duplicate Copies. If you receive more than one copy of *Advancement News* at the same email address, please reply to all but one of them with "DUPLICATE" in the subject line.

Address Change. If you want *Advancement News* sent to a different address, reply and enter "ADDRESS CHANGE" in the subject line. In your message, enter your council name and the email address you prefer.

Parent Orientation and Education

One of the responsibilities of the unit advancement coordinator is to instruct parents, guardians, unit leadership, and committee members on appropriate methods to encourage advancement (*Guide To Advancement*, topic 3.0.0.3). An ideal time to accomplish this would be during one or more of the unit's parent meetings that are required to meet the Journey to Excellence gold level. Since new Scout parents will be involved, the first of these meetings each year may need to be the most comprehensive, with those later used to "refresh" everyone's understanding.

The topics for a first meeting might include the following—some of which are best covered by the unit leader and committee chair, and some by the advancement coordinator:

What Scouting is all about: After citing the aims of Scouting, it is a good idea to use terms that parents will understand. Remind them that their wild and wooly six- or eleven-year olds running around in the next room will be the fathers of their grandchildren in not too many years! Though our common goal is for these boys to become men who live their lives by the Scout Oath and Law, we all need to remember that from the boy's point of view, Scouting has to be fun.

Who the leaders of the unit are: Parents want to know who is involved, so they know where to get help when they volunteer. At a minimum, the unit leader and committee chair should reintroduce themselves and quickly outline how they work together, particularly on advancement matters. At a troop's parent meeting, the Scoutmaster should introduce the senior patrol leader and let him describe his role.

The language of Scouting: New parents may not be familiar with the terms, "pack," "den," "troop," and "patrol," much less the relationships between them. Parents need to understand how the pack is organized, or how the troop is boy-run. This is also the time to explain the uniform policy, pointing out how the different badges their sons will earn will reflect their accomplishments.

What is advancement? The unit advancement coordinator should explain the mechanics of advancement. Cub Scout parents should be informed about the key role they play in encouraging their boys, signing off certain requirements, and attending pack meetings to cheer their Cub Scouts on. Boy Scout parents should learn they now have a new role. They no longer sign off requirements, but their continued interest in their son's progress is no less critical than it was in Cub Scouting. Finally, leaders and parents alike, should be reminded that advancement is a tool we use to make Scouting fun. It is not an end in itself and each boy should advance at his own pace.

Keeping parents informed invites them to become more involved in pack or troop management, which in turn, will keep boys in Scouting longer, giving us more chance to influence their character. Isn't that what we're all about?



From the *Guide To Advancement*

Record Keeping for Youth Member Transfers

Topic 6.0.0.4 of the *Guide to Advancement*, “Scout Transfers,” informs us that member identification numbers are unique only within each local council. They are not yet nationally universal. If a transfer is between units in the same council, a boy’s advancement records will follow him by his member ID number. When a Scout transfers to a unit in a different council, however, his membership number and related information from the previous council cannot be accessed by the new council.

When preparing to move to another council a parent or guardian may request a report called a “Person Listing” that shows the youth member’s advancement record. This report may be attached to the membership application for the new council. Alternatively the previous unit can provide an “Individual History Report” from any third-party advancement tracking software or an “Advancement Summary Report” from Internet Advancement.

Our founder made it clear that Scouting is different from schools where teachers maintain test and grade records. One way to maintain individual advancement records is in the Scout’s handbook, his signed “blue cards,” and collection of rank and merit badge presentation cards. This is also a good practice for any Scout, whether moving or not.

About *Advancement News*

Follow the National Advancement Team on Twitter! BSA Advancement Team, @AdvBSA

Advancement News is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America National Advancement Team and the National Advancement Committee. Its intent is to provide and clarify procedures found in the *Guide to Advancement*, announce various changes and updates in advancement, and to assist advancement committees in making decisions that can help increase the rate of advancement. Therefore, districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication. Our plan is to distribute six issues of *Advancement News* annually, but special editions may go out whenever there is important information to share. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at advancement.team@scouting.org.

Program Updates – 2014 and Beyond

Stay on top of the latest changes to Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing by visiting www.scouting.org/scoutsourc/programupdates.aspx

- Venturing award requirements and program overview
- Updated Venturing Frequently Asked Questions
- Updates from the National Annual Meeting
- Cub Scout youth handbook sampler
- Den leader meeting plans for youth handbook sampler adventures

Plus meet Ethan, the new Cub Scout guide.



The Cub Scout Angle



Webelos to Boy Scouts: When Should the Transition End? (Part 2)

October's issue of *Advancement News* highlighted a few basic concepts to engage packs and troops together for a seamless transition of Webelos Scouts into Boy Scouting. As promised last month, here are additional ideas that will help provide a smooth transition, and thus support retention and further advancement. To put it differently, the transition should not end until this year's new Scouts welcome Webelos-to-Scout arrivals into the troop the following year—and the year after that, and the year after that, and on and on.

- For part of the requirements for the Arrow of Light rank, Webelos den leaders should work with troop leaders to plan visits to troop meetings. Here Webelos Scouts and their families can obtain a copy of the troop's activities calendar for the upcoming year. Packs can also invite the Scoutmaster and troop youth leaders to special pack activities and to meetings with specific dens. These visiting Boy Scouts can even help run parts of the meeting. This will help create familiarity and a level of comfort for the Webelos Scouts and their families as they ease into the troop.
- Webelos Scouts should visit several troops, if possible, because different troops have different focus areas. One troop may gear its program toward hiking and backpacking, while another may be highly involved in water activities, such as kayaking or canoeing. Visiting several troops will give a picture of what activities each troop enjoys above others. What a troop enjoys doing will also create a focus for certain troop-led advancement opportunities related to merit badges and achievements.
- Once boys have joined a troop, the Scoutmaster and troop youth leaders should plan activities for these new Scouts that will get them involved quickly. This should include a transition conference that touches on the meaning of the Scout Oath and Scout Law, the advancement program, troop camping, the patrol method, summer camp, personal equipment, and the annual troop calendar. The troop needs to work closely with new Scouts and parents to ensure their needs are met and that their move has been natural and fun. A goal should be to attain the Scout badge as quickly as possible, and then immediately begin work on the next ranks. Every effort should also be made to ensure that all new Scouts attend summer camp. (One hint to Scoutmasters: invite the new Scouts' former Cubmasters to visit the troop at summer camp.)

Specifics for Cub Scout Programs in the LDS Church

Transition information for all ranks, including a table providing guidance for Webelos badge transition, is available at www.scouting.org/programupdates by clicking on Transition Guidelines.

Merit Badges: Enhancing Our Youth's Competitive Edge

Chess: An Age-old Game Made New

For a game that has been around since the 6th century, chess has proven to be extremely popular among today's computer-savvy Scouts. In fact, since it was introduced in 2011, more than 62,000 Scouts have earned the Chess merit badge, placing it among the top 25 earned in 2013.



The newfound popularity of the merit badge comes as good news to proponents of another Scouting initiative, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), because the language of chess is algebraic notation. Requirement 4a indicates that Scouts should “demonstrate scorekeeping using the algebraic system of chess notation.” The following suggestions may be helpful in learning this system.

- Use a demonstration board to teach the names of the squares on a chess board. Say something like “Each square has a first and last name. The first name is a letter, the last name is a number.” Then ask Scouts to come up to the board and place a chess piece on squares that other Scouts call out.
- Whenever solving chess problems, always ask Scouts to name the square to which a piece is moving.
- Have chess score sheets available. They are designed for recording moves in a game and can be purchased online. Select a chess game from the newspaper or a chess booklet. Call out the first five moves of the game and ask Scouts to write down the notations for the moves on their sheets. Then ask them to make the moves on their chessboards. Then write the correct notations on a whiteboard and make the moves on a demonstration board. See how many Scouts made the correct notations.

Ask two Scouts to volunteer to play a game in front of the group. The other Scouts record the moves by writing the notations down for both players. After the game is over, or when the leader calls time, have the Scouts re-create the game on their individual chessboards and discuss strategies and concepts they observed that are part of the merit badge requirements.

Replaying the game from the notation provides the opportunity for reflection and also guidance from experienced players.

So, what are you waiting on? It's your move!

Cooking Merit Badge: The Clock Is Ticking

Scouts beginning work on the Cooking merit badge on or after January 1, 2015 must use the new requirements introduced in late 2013. Any Scout who began work on the Cooking merit badge prior to January 1 using the old requirements may continue to use those requirements until he finishes the badge. For questions, see *Guide to Advancement*, topic 7.0.4.3, “What To Do When Requirements Change.”



Counselor's Compass: Merit Badge Newsletter on the Horizon

The Boy Scouts of America announces a new information resource entitled "Counselor's Compass." This publication, to be issued as an e-newsletter, will support merit badge counselors in four ways:

- **Things to do.** What new counselors should do prior to counseling a merit badge, such as become familiar with *Guide to Advancement* and the educational presentation, [*Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling*](#), available under "Advancement Educational Presentations" at www.scouting.org/advancement.
- **Steps for Success.** Tips that can be helpful for both new and experienced counselors as they work with Scouts, such as the importance of using the latest pamphlet and requirements.
- **Glad You Asked.** Articles that address commonly asked questions sent to merit.badge@scouting.org.
- **News You Can Use.** Merit badge fun facts, and information on new badges.

Managing Subscriptions to *Counselor's Compass*

Subscribing to *Counselor's Compass* is similar to subscribing to *Advancement News*: Send a message to merit.badge@scouting.org, with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line. Indicate your name, email address, and council in the message text.



COUNSELOR'S COMPASS

Eagle Issues

Countdown to Eagle

In a recent survey, troop leaders were asked, "At what point has time run out when a Scout is unable to earn the Eagle rank?" Their answers were overwhelmingly, "At age 18." While it is true that all requirements must be completed prior to his 18th birthday, a closer evaluation reveals that some other milestones actually deserve more focus.

Simply stated, even though a board of review can be scheduled after his 18th birthday, if a Scout has not earned Life rank by age 17½, he will not have the necessary time to complete all of the requirements. Similarly, a Star Scout needs at least six months at that rank to be eligible for advancement to Life, and a First Class Scout needs at least four months at that rank to advance to Star. Using that formula, we see



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that a Scout must have a minimum of 16 months of eligibility remaining from the date he becomes a First Class Scout to complete the Eagle Scout requirements in time.

In reality, it would be exceptional for a Scout to advance from First Class to Eagle in 16 months. Not only would all other requirements need to be completed on schedule, but unit leaders would be obligated to plan boards of review on very specific timelines in order to keep the Scout on schedule.

For young teenagers, it seems like their 18th birthday will never arrive, but for our Eagle candidates this milestone approaches at warp speed. Unit leaders should make the effort to be sure their Scouts fully understand the timing involved in the countdown to Eagle.

The Venturing Perspective

Handbook for Venturers Released

The *Handbook for Venturers*, No. 33494, was released in mid-September. Completely re-written, the new handbook is divided into five chapters.

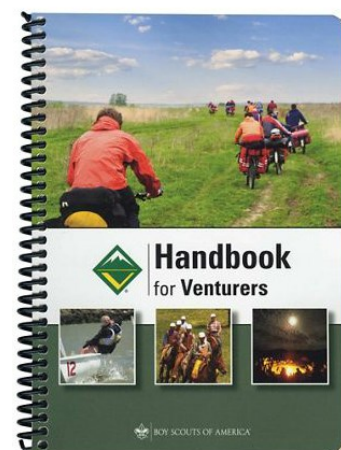
Chapter 1, “Venturing Essentials,” describes where Venturing fits in the BSA organization and provides an overview of the program. It also covers leadership in Venturing, Venturing officers associations, and the new Venturing awards.

Chapter 2 explores what Venturers do. It describes the ALPS model—the four areas of program emphasis: Adventure, Leadership, Personal Growth, and Service—and how the model guides the program that the Venturers develop. It also covers topics such as, the three tiers of Venturing adventures, crafting the crew’s visions, setting goals, facing ethical controversies, and the benefits of service.

Chapter 3, for more experienced Venturers, focuses on how to plan and lead the crew’s adventures. It includes detailed information on planning activities, which not only serves to organize exciting adventures and significant service projects, but also provides a laboratory for developing essential life skills.

Chapter 4 is a resource section. It includes information on planning, leadership, and adventure, and also program resources such as the BSA’s high adventure bases and the specialty awards. The book closes with chapter 5, “My Venturing Trail,” which helps members record adventure and service experiences and track progress on award requirements.

Two companion volumes are also available. *Venturing Awards and Requirements*, No. 34784; presents specific detailed requirements for Venturing’s awards; details the requirements for the TRUST, Quest, and Ranger awards; and describes other opportunities for Venturers. The *Venturing Advisor Guidebook*, No. 34655, presents practical advice on everything from how to set up a crew, to how to support Venturers in their next great adventures.



What Do You Think?

Eagle Scout Palm Survey

A survey seeking opinions on Eagle Scout Palms and their requirements was released to all *Advancement News* subscribers on November 19, 2014. The survey will remain available for response until midnight, December 18, 2014. Until then, it can be accessed at http://scouting.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6Wo5KPKrUaj7APj.



The next *Advancement News* survey concerns the National Advancement Committee's advancement educational presentations. The committee would like to know what you think of the presentations and how often you might use them. The presentations may be accessed via scouting.org/advancement.

From the Archives

The Cub Scout Angle: What Is “Do Your Best”? (March 2012)

Do Your Best. Not only is it the Cub Scout motto, but it is the standard for Cub Scout advancement performance. Even though Cub Scout-age youth can have very different developmental timetables, we know they can succeed if we teach them to always do their best.

Thus, Do Your Best means to do one's own *personal* best. It is not a competitive standard. For example, D.J.'s personal best may be quantitatively better than his fellow Cub Scout Brian's best, but as long as D.J. and Brian each does his own personal best, both have met the standard. Do Your Best does not mean do it perfectly. When a boy has done his very best, accomplishment is noted, and the requirement is met. See the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 4.1.0.4.

As a boy begins in Cub Scouting, his parent or adult partner should sign off in his handbook for the Bobcat trail and Tiger Cub achievements. The den leader then approves, and progress is recorded in the den's advancement record. For Wolf, Bear, Webelos, and Arrow of Light, den leaders and their assistants take the lead in approving requirements. Additionally, parents or guardians who help at meetings may be asked to assist.

Generally, between the parent or guardian, den leader, and assistants, they will know if effort put forth is truly a Cub Scout's best or if he should be reminded to give the requirement another try with his own personal best. When Do Your Best is the evaluation and parents or guardians get involved, Cub Scout advancement achieves success.

Hear it First on Twitter

If you want the news first, follow the National Advancement Team on Twitter. Topics cover the FAQs received at the national office, clarifications on policies and procedures, news on changes and new releases, and best practices in advancement.

If you already have a Twitter account, follow us at '@AdvBSA' or 'BSA Advancement Team.' If you do not have an account, it is time to take the plunge. It is a quick and easy process to set up an account at www.Twitter.com. To limit incoming emails ('tweets'), you can select BSA National Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

Did You Receive these Tweets?

December 3: Effective 1/1/15: Scouts starting Cooking MB must use new requirements. If started with old reqs before Jan 1, can finish MB using old reqs.

December 1: Did you know that 3 National Advancement Committee educational presentations have Spanish translations? See them at tinyurl.com/kqpboyx.

December 1: Check out the new National Advancement Committee educational presentation: "Including Youth with Disabilities" at tinyurl.com/kqpboyx.

October 8: Does the Declaration of Independence assert a moral vision for us? A Scout's answer could win \$1,000 scholarship: bit.ly/BSAEssay

September 29: Final version of new Cub Scout requirements released. Effective 6/1/2015. (Note that the link included in this tweet has expired. The information, however, may be found at www.scouting.org/programupdates.)

September 28: New *Handbook for Venturers*, *Venturing Advisor Guidebook*, & *Venturing Awards and Requirements* book now available at scoutstuff.org

A Peek Ahead

Here is a glimpse of what we are working on for the next issue of *Advancement News*. As always, actual content may vary somewhat based on a number of considerations, especially to accommodate "late-breaking news" of immediate importance to our subscribers.

Topics Planned for January/February

On Increasing Advancement: *2015 Boy Scouts Requirements Book*

Advancement Committee Mechanics: Venturing Specific Training—Advisors and Committee Members

The Cub Scout Angle: Cub Scout Advancement—New Methods, New Materials

Merit Badges—Enhancing Our Youth's Competitive Edge: Whitewater Merit Badge Updated

Special Necessities: Advancement Planning Resources Now On Line

Helpful Links

Here are some links to the most current materials of interest for Scouters who are involved in the administration of advancement. These and many more resources are available via the Advancement Resources page at www.scouting.org/Advancement.

[Eagle Scout Rank Application](#)

[Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#)

[Educational Presentations](#)

[Guide to Advancement](#)

[Merit Badge Counselor Information](#)

[Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project: Information for Project Beneficiaries](#)

[On Increasing Advancement](#)

[On Increasing Advancement video link](#)

If any of these links are not working, please let us know at advancement.team@scouting.org.

