

Advancement News

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER
2012

Vol. 2, No. 6

Prepared. For Life.™

Previous issues available at: www.scouting.org/scoutsource/GuideToAdvancement/Advancement_News.aspx

Advancement News Issues

Monthly issues will resume for October and November.

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

Advancement Educational Presentations Coming Soon

Four volunteer teams from the national Advancement Committee's Webinars and Education Task Force are in the process of designing and building education products that will help units, districts, councils and other interested parties better understand the advancement process.

One team is creating two courses, one lasting a full day and another a half-day. Both will help councils understand how to get the most out of the *Guide to Advancement* and the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*. The full-day course goes into more content detail than the half-day course. These courses will be taught by a newly organized cadre of nationally certified advancement instructors from around the country.

A second team is building a number of conversational-style slide presentations, with voiceover, that explain the *Guide* and the workbook. They will be flexible enough to use in a group setting or on an individual basis, as best suits the situation.

A third team is developing a short, much-needed merit badge counselor orientation program. It will consist of a slide deck and a script that council volunteers can present on a regular basis.

The fourth effort is the updating of an Internet Advancement program for use in helping units better understand the importance of Internet Advancement and how it works. All of these products are scheduled for release by January 2013. Future issues of *Advancement News* will keep our readers apprised of progress.

National Advancement Committee Presentation Video Available

The national Advancement Committee's session offered at the May National Annual Meeting in Orlando was taped and is now available on the *Advancement News* archive page. This presentation covered a variety of hot topics from the *Guide to Advancement* and can be found through the following link: www.scouting.org/scoutsource/GuideToAdvancement/Advancement_News.aspx.

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About Advancement News

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 support 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. The plan is to distribute *Advancement News* monthly, but we're flexible. It will go out when there is something important to say. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at advancement.team@scouting.org. Districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication.

Managing Subscriptions to *Advancement News*

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Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators January 21–26, 2013, Florida Sea Base

The CEAA is a learning experience for council and district advancement committee members, chairs, and staff advisors. More important, it is an opportunity for them to assist the national Advancement Committee in developing and testing new educational presentations. A number of national volunteer task forces have been building "beta" versions for sessions on the Eagle Scout service project, merit badge counselor orientation, Internet Advancement, and several topics from the *Guide to Advancement*.

Conferees will view and discuss the presentations, provide formal evaluations, and then assist in developing additional sessions to be released nationally later in the year. Copies of the presentations will be provided as part of the course fee. Though the primary intent is to evaluate beta materials and build new educational pieces for districts and councils, learning will take place as participants consider the content.

To register for the CEAA, go to www.scouting.org/Training/Adult.aspx. Download the form found under "2013 Volunteer Development Training at the National High Adventure Sea Base." Once completed, you can scan and send the form to judy.maldonado@scouting.org. For more information or questions, send emails to peter.self@scouting.org.

The Advancement Team on Twitter

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 best practices in advancement.

If you already have a Twitter account, follow us at @AdvBSA or BSA Advancement Team. If you don't have an account, it's quick and easy to set one up at www.Twitter.com. To limit incoming emails (tweets), you can select the Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

On Increasing Advancement Advancement for the Lone Scout

Lone Scouting is a program for boys of Cub Scout or Boy Scout age who for some reason find it difficult to attend regular meetings. It has been around since 1915 when William D. Boyce incorporated the Lone Scouts of America, which was merged with the BSA on March 1, 1924. Some of the circumstances that may make it difficult for a boy to attend regular Scout meetings are identified in *Guide to Advancement*, topic 5.0.3.0.

1. Home-schooled where parents do not want them in a youth group
2. U.S. citizens living abroad
3. Exchange students away from the United States
4. Disability or communicable illness that prevents meeting attendance
5. Rural communities far from a unit
6. Conflicts with a job, night school, or boarding school
7. Families who frequently travel or live on a boat, etc.
8. Living arrangements with parents in different communities
9. Environments where getting to meetings may put the Scout in danger

Note that Lone Scouting is not an alternative for those who just don't like the local units or cannot get along with them. That said, it is up to the local council to approve Lone Scout applications. This is done through the Scout executive or other designated staff member.

Each Lone Cub Scout or Lone Boy Scout must work with a Lone Scout counselor—preferably his parent, but the counselor might also be a religious leader, teacher, neighbor, or Scouting volunteer. The Lone Scout counselor is a registered leader.

Cub Scout or Boy Scout advancement is conducted under the guidance of the Lone Scout counselor. Because Lone Scouts are not registered with units, some responsible flexibility with advancement may be used. This is not to say anything goes; Lone Scouting is not a place to register a boy simply to facilitate parental approval of advancement. Requirements for ranks, badges, or awards that can be met by one Scout working with his counselor must be fulfilled as written. If family members, neighbors, or friends can be like a “den” or “troop,” this may increase what can be met as established.

Some wording issues are simple and do not require council approval. For example, a Lone Scout may fulfill a position of responsibility by serving in his school, place of worship, in a club, etc. Where it is not possible to meet requirements as written, a Lone Scout counselor may suggest equal or very similar alternative requirements. These must have council advancement committee approval. A Lone Scout earns merit badges by working with council-approved merit badge counselors. Dissimilar requirements should be allowed by the council advancement committee only in extreme circumstances, or when they cannot be met without extreme hazard or hardship.

Advancement is reported by the Lone Scout counselor by sending the Advancement Report, No. 34403B, to the local council service center.

When a Lone Scout has completed the Eagle Scout requirements, he works with the district or council advancement committee in the usual way according to local practices (see “Boards of Review,” topic 8.0.0.0 in the *Guide to Advancement*). Since there is no “unit committee” for a Lone Scout, the unit committee chair signature line on the Eagle Scout application is left blank. No unit committee approval is required for the Eagle Scout service project proposal.

When circumstances prevent a boy from attending regular meetings, Lone Scouting is an option that should be considered. Promote this idea in your district or council. This may help retain the boy in Scouting longer, providing more opportunities to influence his character, citizenship, and fitness. Isn’t that what we’re all about?

Emphasizing Progress to First Class

The *Guide to Advancement*, in topic 3.0.0.3, “Unit Advancement Responsibilities,” item 7, says, “Establish practices that will bring each new Boy Scout to First Class rank within a year of joining, and then to Star rank the following year.” The question is, why does this objective exist, and is it worthwhile for unit leadership to coordinate and promote it?

Achieving First Class in the first year of Scouting membership has been a BSA emphasis for nearly 30 years, and its importance is covered in Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training. Simply put, it is a focused effort that, for example, can be used in new-Scout

patrols where a fast-paced program is presented that provides the learning experiences necessary for a youth to reach that critical First Class milestone. The goal is to keep each Scout involved, active, and interested in the troop for those important first few years. And what better way to measure achievement of this goal than individual advancement?

The aim is to give Scouts the basic skills needed to become fully integrated into the troop program, along with the activity, confidence, experience, and self-esteem needed for that decision to remain in Scouting. And it seems to work. Many troops using a new-Scout patrol and a First Class “emphasis” approach report higher retention—not only for the first year but through the first three. There also seems to be a correlation to the Scout eventually achieving Eagle Scout rank. For example, a random sampling of 200 Scouts who achieved Eagle Scout rank in 2011 conducted by the national Advancement Team showed that on the average, they had taken just 18 months to achieve First Class rank.

While a First Class emphasis stresses planning activities that are rich in advancement opportunities, the program should not become a must-do-or-fail initiative. Some Scouts will make it to First Class in a year or perhaps two, but others won’t. The important thing is that every one of them is given the opportunity and that the program—regardless of whether advancement takes place—is so good that youths have no reason to quit.

Once a Scout has mastered the required skills for First Class, he is a camper. He can get himself ready for an outdoor experience and survive comfortably. That’s the idea, anyway, and this is another good reason for teaching the skills required for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class as soon as possible. Whether the Scout shows up for enough outings and does enough work to complete the requirements are up to him. The responsibility of unit leadership is to make sure the opportunities are there and that they are so much fun that he wants to show up.

Of course, there are no real shortcuts. Scouts must meet the requirements as written—no more, no less. In Scouting, learning is by doing, so boys need to be out actually practicing the skills. Thus, a First Class emphasis is about planning a focused program for the first 12 to 18 months, wherein each new Scout learns and advances as a member of his patrol and troop.

As the entire troop supports the new Scouts on their path to First Class, it will be inspiring to watch as each becomes a year more mature, a year stronger, a year smarter, and a year more skilled and knowledgeable about how the troop and patrol work. The result is a stronger Scout, a stronger patrol, and a stronger troop.

More information on First Class emphasis may be found on page 123 of the 2010 edition of the *Scoutmaster Handbook*, No. 33009.

Advancement Committee Mechanics

Advancement Committee

Position Descriptions

Advancement News is describing the responsibilities of 12 specialized council advancement committee positions identified in the October 2011 issue. These positions support the specific advancement committee duties defined in section 3 of the *Guide to Advancement* and quality advancement across all Scouting programs. This month we feature the camping committee and outdoors program liaison and the records keeper positions.

Camping Committee and Outdoor Program Liaison

This member of the council advancement committee works with the council's camping and outdoors committee to ensure that the Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing outdoor programs are rich in advancement opportunities and that they comply with national camp and advancement standards. Cub Scout resident and day camps should have robust and diverse choices for all the ranks. Boy Scout camps should offer well-planned activities for Scouts working on the trail to First Class and also those whose major focus is on merit badges. Camping programs for Venturers should help introduce the young men and women to Venturing advancement through activities that include the awards requirements.

This advancement committee member should also work in partnership with the camp director and program director to assist in the efforts to help provide a properly trained camp staff and merit badge counselor corps. Other responsibilities might range from recommending various camp facilities that may support unit advancement interests, to promoting advancement opportunities at high-adventure camps.

Records Keeper, Statistician

This member works with the council staff to track and analyze advancement across all Scouting programs and identifies how the council advancement program is performing in terms of Journey to Excellence objectives. Resources, training, and other efforts can then be properly administered for maximum results. Advancement statistics are also used by the council and districts in many other endeavors, including recruitment, marketing, fundraising, and camping.

Another critical responsibility for this position is to promote advancement reporting by all unit leaders, especially through Internet Advancement. This is critical for securing accurate data for analysis. Detailed record keeping and reporting can identify specific program improvements to enhance the advancement experience for all youth members. This may range from identifying successful programs based on outcomes and using them in promoting best practices, to evaluating potential advancement pitfalls and finding solutions.

The Cub Scout Angle

Fall "To Do" List—Summer Housekeeping and Handbooks

Whether joining a brand-new den of Tiger Cubs or an existing Webelos den, the first rank every Cub Scout completes is Bobcat. Working together as a den to go over the Bobcat requirements at one of the first meetings in the fall is a great way for both new and returning Cub Scouts to review the basics of Cub Scouting without singling out a new member. This method also provides a mentoring opportunity for den chiefs and returning Cub Scouts.

Here's another idea: Rather than rote recital, try using the Simon Says game to practice the Cub Scout sign, salute, and handshake as a pre-meeting gathering activity. Later in the meeting, incorporate another "fun with a purpose" game involving the Cub Scout Promise, Cub Scout motto, and the Law of the Pack. Remember, "Do Your Best" is not only the motto; it is also the standard for Cub Scout advancement performance.

Another equally important part of the Bobcat rank is the requirement for each new member, with his parent or guardian, to read and complete the exercises in the booklet *How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse*. Child abuse is a problem in our society, and this booklet helps children avoid potentially abusive situations. Leaders should encourage parents to fill out the Youth Protection booklet. This not only provides a record of this important step but provides the youth with a place to record his achievements all year long. It will become a memorable keepsake as he recalls his days in Cub Scouts and proudly displays the handbook at his Eagle Scout court of honor.

Speaking of handbooks, some packs distribute rank handbooks in June for the next year so Cub Scouts and their parents may begin working on the requirements at day camp, resident camp, pack campouts, and so forth. Many summer camps send home completed advancement lists, which indicate those activities that fulfill achievement, elective, activity badge, and other requirements. The den leader, however, may choose to review requirements completed and ask the Cub Scout, "Did you do your best?" before signing the achievement in the handbook.

As a reminder, parents (or adult partners) sign for Bobcat trail and Tiger Cub achievements, with the den leader then approving and recording that progress in the den's advancement record. For Wolf, Bear, Webelos, and Arrow of Light advancement, den leaders (and their assistants) take the lead in approving requirements. Parents or guardians who help out (or who sent their sons to camp) may be asked to assist. Finally, leaders should remember to submit completed advancement reports through Internet Advancement or to their council service center as part of their Journey to Excellence.

What's the Procedure?

Multiple Rank Advancements and Boards of Review

Younger Scouts returning from a weeklong adventure at summer camp have sometimes completed requirements for more than one rank. Can these advancements be considered at a single board of review? Since each rank has a separate set of requirements, and each requires a board of review, there must be a separate one for each rank. They may be held one after the other or at different meetings as determined by the unit; however, the national Advancement Team recommends spacing them out somewhat and using different members for each board.

Similarly, there must be a separate unit leader (Scoutmaster) conference for each rank. Each conference can cover different subjects or suggest the Scout reflect on questions asked at the previous one. Questions can even be posed for the Scout to think over and answer at the next conference.

Each rank is treated individually because each stands alone in its importance. Spacing out the boards of review helps Scouts consider each rank as a progression to the next, rather than "blurring" them together. While the boards should be conducted soon after completing all the requirements, they should not be held so quickly that the Scout is not properly recognized for each accomplishment.

Addressing this issue is necessary due to the number of questions on the topic directed to the national Advancement Team. However, our statistics suggest that finishing Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class at the same time is the exception rather than the rule. After the average Scout has earned Tenderfoot, it takes him approximately five months to become Second Class, and another four months to achieve First Class.

Merit Badges—What's New?



Search and Rescue

August 20 was the "earn date" for the Search and Rescue merit badge—that is, the first day a Scout could begin working on the requirements. Pamphlets and patches were scheduled to appear in Scout shops and online by mid-August.

The best places to start looking for merit badge counselors are your local search and rescue associations, fire or police departments, and search and rescue canine groups, as well as federal rescue organizations. For contacts near you, visit the website for the National Association of Search and Rescue at www.NASAR.org.

Resources for New Merit Badges

Is your council or district looking for additional resources to support all the new merit badges recently introduced? Consider the following organizations and their Web links:

- **Robotics**—The Robotics Education and Competition Foundation, which exists to connect students, mentors, and schools in every community to a variety of successful and engaging technology-based programs: www.robotevents.com.
- **Chess**—U.S. Chess Federation: www.uschess.org.
- **Welding**—American Welding Association: www.AWS.org.



Hiking Merit Badge: The One-Day, 20-Mile Hike

Earning the Hiking merit badge can be a rewarding experience for many Scouts. The badge helps youth learn how to hike safely and how to build endurance, and it can increase awareness for the beauty outdoors. Young men begin with short hikes and build to a one-day, 20-mile trek. Furthermore, as each goes down his personal trail toward becoming an Eagle Scout, he may even choose Hiking over Swimming or Cycling as one of the 21 required merit badges. This gives the Hiking merit badge some added importance, which should be considered by Scouts and their leaders.

Over the years, the question often gets asked whether or not this merit badge's requirements allow for an extended rest period or overnight stay during the one-day, 20-mile hike. "After all," goes the argument, "isn't a 'day' 24 hours in length?" The answer lies in the intent of the requirement: to give Scouts a grand, culminating experience. A 20-mile hike divided equally by an overnight stay essentially results in two 10-mile hikes and defeats that intent. Scouts should feel a great deal of accomplishment when completing the Hiking merit badge, especially after a single 20-mile hike. Breaking that hike into multiple parts takes away from that experience.

From the Guide to Advancement

Service Projects—at the Core of Scouting

For every Boy Scout rank, the Scout must demonstrate Scout spirit by living the Scout Oath and Scout Law in his everyday life. This includes helping others. A Scout's duty to others often takes the form of service projects or service hours, and these are integrated into the advancement program beginning with the Second Class rank.

For Second Class, the Scout must participate in an approved service project lasting at least one hour. This may be a troop project like a highway cleanup or helping the chartered organization, or it could be a project undertaken by a patrol. With the Scoutmaster's approval, it could even be something a Scout does alone. Often, of course, the service time is fulfilled by assisting with an Eagle Scout candidate's project.

Star and Life ranks each require participating for at least six hours per rank in service projects approved by the Scoutmaster. The requirements do not say that the service time or the projects must be approved beforehand, but a discussion with the Scoutmaster may prevent any issues at a board of review. Note that no council, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add a planning requirement to the Second Class, Star, or Life service project requirements.

The Eagle Scout candidate must plan, develop, and give leadership to his service project. And the key to evaluating this requirement comes in looking at its impact, not the number of hours spent on it. The *Guide to Advancement* covers the Eagle Scout project requirement in detail in section 9.

For any service project, someone should keep track of participants and time spent, not only so Scouts get credit toward rank requirements, but also to facilitate reporting on the Journey to Excellence website. The JTE report must be broken down by BSA and non-BSA youth and adult members and nonmembers. See <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsources/Commissioners/Journey.aspx> for more information. The unit leader or unit committee may designate someone for collecting and reporting this information.

Service Is at the Core of Scouting

"A Scout is helpful."
"To help other people at all times."
"Do a Good Turn daily."

Awards and Recognition

Messengers of Peace

At the first world jamboree in 1920, Lord Baden-Powell called on participants to carry the spirit of the jamboree home "so that we may help to develop peace and happiness in the world and goodwill among all Scouts." Scouts around the world have been answering his call ever since. Today, Scouts are working for peace by solving conflicts in their schools, building links between divided communities, teaching their peers about health and wellness, and repairing environmental damage.

Messengers of Peace is a World Scout Committee initiative designed to promote and recognize service projects that contribute to world peace. These provide renewed focus on this longstanding aspect of Scouting and offer a new way to connect and share with Scouts from other parts of the world without leaving home.

Peace is defined in Scouting not merely as the absence of war, but as encompassing three dimensions:

1. The personal dimension: harmony, justice, and equality
2. The community dimension: peace, as opposed to hostility or violent conflict
3. Relationships between humankind and its environment: security, social, and economic welfare, and relationship with the environment

Any service project with a significant impact on the community in any of these dimensions can qualify for recognition. Packs, troops, teams, crews, and ships can submit projects online through the Journey to Excellence and enter "Messengers of Peace" as the partner organization. A certificate will be generated, and all participants are eligible to wear the new Messengers of Peace ring patch.

Additional program resources and support are available online at www.scouting.org/messengersofpeace.

Cyber Chip Update

In response to the many questions presented to the national office: "If parents do not allow their youth to 'like' the BSA Facebook page, can they still earn the Cyber Chip without meeting the Facebook requirement?"

Answer: Yes. If parents do not permit their children to access Facebook, a Scout can still earn the Cyber Chip without "liking" the BSA Facebook page. This is completely understandable, and is the reason the requirement states "With your parent's permission."

The Cyber Chip promotes knowledge to help families and volunteers keep youth safe while online. Age-appropriate material is available covering cyberbullying, cellphone use, texting, blogging, gaming, and identity theft. Resources are available at www.scouting.org/cyberchip.

The Venturing Perspective

Promoting Venturing Advancement

Venturing advancement can have a tremendous impact on the lives of young men and women by helping to develop character and prepare them for the future. Here are a few ways to promote Venturing advancement within a crew.

1. Inform

Many Venturers do not even know the advancement awards exist. Go to www.scouting.org/venturing to learn more about them. Tell your Venturers about the benefits of earning awards.

2. Build Advancement Into the Crew's Program

Center crew activities around an award. Work toward learning the subject matter and completing the requirements. For example, for the Outdoor Bronze Award, include sessions about backpacking in each meeting and on crew outings and events.

3. Courts of Honor

Regularly hold courts of honor to recognize those who have advanced and received awards. Recognize Venturers who have made significant contributions to crew successes.

4. Track and Tell

Use a chart to track advancement for each Venturer. Then let each know about those few requirements left to earn one of the awards.

5. Uniforms

Encourage crew members to wear the official Venturing field uniform and to proudly display their awards and recognitions to help promote advancement.

6. Mentor Program

Develop a mentoring program where each Venturer has an adult mentor or an older youth member who will encourage and work with him or her to complete award requirements.

Special Necessities

Challenges With Advancement

There have been a number of calls to the national Advancement Team concerning Scouts near the top of the trail to Eagle who are dealing with challenges finishing merit badges or service projects due to their mental capacity. In one specific case, the team was asked for guidance on an Eagle project for a Life Scout who has the mental capacity of someone perhaps as young as a Tiger Cub.

These issues instantly take us back to the statements often made with pride that just some 5 percent of Scouts achieve the Eagle Scout rank. And, while there are several things that factor in to why this is the case, the one consistent thing we can all agree on is because it is hard! The 21 required merit badges, along with the project, challenge a Scout to reach above and beyond his normal level of expected knowledge, abilities, and achievement.

This should present challenges to all Scouts, and especially those with special needs. It is important to remember that the *Guide to Advancement* offers help and suggestions on advancement for Scouts with special needs, but one thing is clear: A Scout is expected to "meet the requirements—no more and no less—and he is to do exactly what is stated." The *Guide to Advancement* in topic 10.2.2.0 also says, "Requirements for merit badges may not be modified or substituted."

Every Scout along the trail to Eagle must complete the same requirements for merit badges. The only exceptions can be alternative merit badges, but there are no alternative requirements or waivers for individual requirements for merit badges.

The special-needs Scouting specialist on the national Advancement Committee offered the following in response to this issue. "As an individual with a disability, I have come to learn there are some things in life I am just not going to be able to do. I have also learned there is a real difference between making an accommodation and changing a requirement.

"I want to be sure we do our best to include Scouts of all abilities in our programs, but, we must recognize that the advancement program is challenging, and not every Scout—with or without a disability—will be able to complete every rank and merit badge. This should not, in any way, take away from the overall experience. There are many Scouts who join for the fun, the leadership experience and opportunities, and the outdoor adventures. They can do most of these things regardless of how far they advance in rank."

It is important for adult leaders of individuals with special needs to recognize this and do their best to provide meaningful program opportunities, while helping Scouts achieve whatever advancement is possible. Someone with the mental capacity of a young Cub Scout is not ready to be an Eagle Scout. Cub Scout requirements are much different than those for Boy Scouts, and the level of difficulty required for the trail to Eagle presents challenges a Cub Scout could not accomplish.

An additional resource to consult is *Scouting for Youth With Disabilities Manual*, No. 34059.

What Do You Think?

***Guide to Advancement and Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* Revision Survey**

This month's survey is devoted to feedback for the second editions of the *Guide to Advancement* and the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, both scheduled for release in the first quarter of 2013. Currently, two volunteer task forces formed out of the national Advancement Committee's Advisory Panel are going through both publications in detail. Their findings will be combined with yours if you are able to take the time to complete this critical survey.

We consider this effort so important that we plan a special mailing to all *Advancement News* subscribers shortly after this August/September issue is released.

Note that anonymous responses are not accepted for any of the *Advancement News* surveys. This is primarily because of the importance the national Advancement Team places on the ability to communicate with survey respondents should more information be needed about their answers.

Completing the survey will take approximately 20 minutes, depending on the details of your responses. It will be helpful, but not required, if you are able to consult the *Guide to Advancement* as you provide your answers. If you have suggestions for either the *Guide* or the workbook that do not fit in the space provided in the survey, please consider sending a detailed email message to advancement.team@scouting.org.

http://scouting.us.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_bdm1BICcXJ9E57

A Peek Ahead

Watch this regular feature for a glimpse of what is slated for our next issue. Please understand, however, that the actual articles may vary somewhat based on a number of internal considerations.

Topics Planned for October

Opportunities for Advancement

Administrators: Update on New Educational Opportunities for Volunteer Advancement Administrators

The Cub Scout Angle: Den Advancement

Advancement Committee Mechanics: Internet Advancement Specialist and Merit Badge Chair

National Advancement Committee: Report on One Year of Volunteer Service