

# Advancement News

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Previous issues are available at <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/advancement-news/>

## Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

### Philmont Training Center 2020 Summer Advancement Conferences



Advancement is recognized as a key indicator of a successful unit. So, it is reasonable that learning how to enhance Scouts' advancement opportunities would be important. One way to do this is by increasing knowledge of BSA's procedures governing advancement. Thus, whether you are a volunteer or a professional, in need of a refresher, or you are new to advancement procedures, the opportunity you are seeking is available this summer at Philmont Scout Ranch.

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Florida Sea Base Advancement Conferences scheduled for January 19-25, 2020 have been cancelled. We apologize for any inconvenience this cancellation may have caused. Please check out the other courses being offered during this time period.

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Two fabulous advancement-related conferences will be provided.

- **Advancement Mechanics, Issues, and Solutions** Conference June 21-27, 2020, will connect participants to an in-depth understanding of the essentials of advancement and an appreciation for the rationale behind the policies and procedures governing them. It will also steer participants towards a wealth of advancement resources available on [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org), and engage them, through group discussions, on effective ways of resolving all types of advancement issues and challenges that may arise. The target audience is unit, district, and council level volunteers and professionals who deal with advancement issues.
- **Scouts BSA Advancement** conference July 5-11, 2020, will provide units and leaders with a great overview of advancement processes, but more importantly will familiarize participants with program-building concepts that produce advancement opportunities and promote youth retention. The target audience includes new troop leaders and advancement coordinators but will be a great refresher for established leaders and others interested in unit issues.

More information about Philmont conferences will come in future issues of this and other newsletters plus your council office, Facebook, and an assortment of emails and media sources. Right now, you should mark your calendar to set aside a summer date for a fantastic family vacation at Philmont.

Don't wait, begin planning now!!

## Group Merit Badge Instruction

[Scouting.org/advancement](http://Scouting.org/advancement) offers an excellent source for guiding the management of **group** merit badge instruction. The [Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide](#) (No. 512-066) is found under the "Merit Badges" section at the website referenced above. This guide helps Scouting volunteers and approved community organizations apply the characteristics of a high-quality merit badge program when planning any merit badge event where group instruction will take place. The guide follows the national advancement policies as presented in the [Guide to Advancement](#), Section 7, *The Merit Badge Program*.

The guide covers the important topic of planning group instruction, including badges to be offered, securing appropriate facilities, using only experienced and registered merit badge counselors, requiring council advancement committee approval of plans and budgets, procedures for participant registration, setting expectations that partial competitions are the norm, publishing event guides, record keeping, and post event evaluation.

Most importantly, following the policies of the *Guide to Advancement*, the *Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide* states very clearly that merit badge counselors must be registered, that a Scout must complete the requirements as written, and that the Scout must personally complete the requirements.

Details on the use of the Application for Merit Badge ("Blue Card") is found in Section 7.0.0.2 of the [Guide to Advancement](#).

## Implementation Details for First-Time Members Entering Scouts BSA

Temporary transition rules are available online

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/Implementation-Details-for-Scouts-BSA-Final.pdf>

Visit this site to review the guidelines for those girls and boys who joined Scouts BSA in 2019 to follow the trail to become Eagle Scouts.

## On Increasing Advancement

### Positions of Responsibility in Scouting Programs

*Advancement News* recently completed a year-long series examining the Methods of Scouting and their impact on the youth in Scouting. Leadership Development as one of those methods is tied in with many others, and its effectiveness can be greatly influenced by the circumstances the Scout experiences during their tenure in that position of responsibility.

For each opportunity, the Scout will be impacted by several factors:

- Importance of all positions starting in Cub Scouting and continuing through the various program areas
- The position and what the real responsibilities will entail
- The adult interaction, mentorship and guidelines
- Benefit of feedback to the youth
- The ultimate outcome befitting the youth and the impact on the group where performed leadership.

The next issue of *Advancement News* will begin this exploration with Cub Scouting positions of responsibility.

## From the *Guide to Advancement*

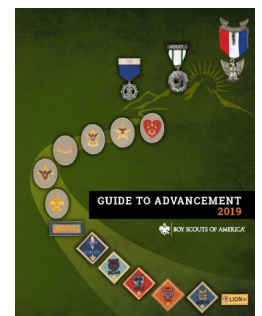
### Keeping Council & District Advancement Committees

#### “Currently Informed”

##### Overview

The November-December 2019 issue of *Advancement News* discussed how strong council and district advancement committees can produce strong advancement programs, with particular focus on building these committees with solid and varied volunteers, which is the first of a series of 20 (Council Committee) and 14 (District Committee) expectations, respectively, for these two committees.

For both committees (see *Guide to Advancement* topics 3.0.0.1 and 3.0.0.2), the second most important expectation is training. However, “training” itself is not the goal: the real goal is to develop highly and currently informed committee members. In other words, training is a means to an end: making committee members “...aware of updated procedures, best practices, and details related to all programs of the BSA—Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts.”



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## Opportunities for Getting and Staying Current

BSA advancement is fluid. For example, as the needs and interests of Scouts BSA-served youth members shift, the BSA adds, updates, and sometimes even removes merit badges. As Cub Scouting becomes more family-friendly, the role of “Akela” shifts. As Venturing and Sea Scouts have become increasingly inclusive, those programs’ awards and ranks are being modified to appeal to – and provide challenges to – young men and women.

No longer is training limited to a classic “annual course,” but can be made an integral part of every advancement committee meeting. Methods range from including an “update” segmented not necessarily by the chair but by a member who has volunteered to research and present the topic-of-the-month. Examples of topics covered might include: how advancement is managed at summer camp, advancement for special needs youth, awards and recognitions for adult volunteers, the P.R.A.Y. religious emblem, JTE record-keeping, recruiting counselors for newly-minted merit badges, “unit” vs. “council/district” merit badge counselors, and Eagle rank board of review management.

With at least one member of the committee whose responsibilities include one of the BSA programs, each of these members can provide new information about their own “specialty.”

Because advancement crosses over into other program areas, advancement committees should consider inviting chairs of the camping, special events, camporee, pinewood derby (if any), or Venturing/Sea Scouting committees to provide updates on plans and tie-ins for the coming year. Another option might be to include the Chief and Advisor of your Order of the Arrow lodge or chapter to bring updates on local and regional events that might involve an advancement element.

Committees should also consider periodically holding open meetings of unit-level advancement coordinators to learn first-hand of their expectations, needs, unit-level problems, and difficulties, if any, in working with the district or council advancement committee.

Finally, councils should gather all council and district advancement committee members annually for a weekend morning of meet-and-greet, fellowship, aims and goals review, problem identification and solution brainstorming, and updates on the most recent changes from the BSA National Council.

## Resources for Staying Current

The [Guide to Advancement](#) and *Scouts BSA Requirements* are updated regularly. Updated less frequently but a good resource for awards and recognitions is the [Guide to Awards and Insignia](#). The two-volume Troop Leader Guidebook as well as its counterparts for the other BSA youth programs are worthwhile tools. Online BSA resources for downloading are at [www.scouting.org/advancement](http://www.scouting.org/advancement). And, for any specific question, you can email it to this address: [advancement.team@scouting.org](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org).

## 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](mailto: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.

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# Cub Scouts BSA

## Den Leader Experience Tool



The Den Leader Experience tool now allows for meetings to be scheduled for required and elective Adventures! Den leaders have the ability to create a calendar for the entire program year that includes both required and elective adventures. In addition, this tool will allow den leaders to quickly complete logging advancement, receive updates on adventures that were completed at home and easily communicate with parents when someone is falling behind.

To schedule *elective* adventures, den leaders must first calendar *required* adventures. Scheduling required adventures can be accomplished quickly with just a few button taps. In the future, den leaders will be able to schedule:

- only required meetings OR
- only elective meetings OR
- create a calendar that includes both

Want to try the Den Leader Experience yourself? Follow this [link](#) and select one of the "test" users found in the upper left corner. You do not have to be a registered den leader when using this test site.

Protecting our youth is paramount to our program. This includes helping our children speak up when they encounter an uncomfortable situation. Cub Scouting now has two ways to accomplish this goal. In addition to completing the Parent Guide, "How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse" found in each Cub Scout handbook:

Complete the [Cyber Chip](#)

OR

Complete the [Protect Yourself Rules](#) Preview Adventure\*\*

### **\*\*Special Notation:**

If the [Protect Yourself Rules](#) is completed in lieu of [Cyber Chip](#), it may **not** be used as an elective adventure

If you choose to complete the Protect Yourself Rules Preview Adventure, we would love to hear your thoughts. Please complete this [survey](#), it takes less than three minutes.

## About *Advancement News*

*Advancement News* is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America National Advancement Program Team. 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](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org).



# Scouts BSA

## The Power of Suggestion

We've all heard of the 'power of suggestion' and how it can influence our lives and the lives of those around us. If someone or something suggests to you a specific outcome, your expectations can play an important role in achieving that outcome. The reason for this is that the way we anticipate our response to a situation influences how we will actually respond.



In Scouting the 'power of suggestion' frequently manifests itself by leaders attempting to influence a Scout's behavior, actions, advancement etc. by making a 'suggestion.' Typical examples include telling Scouts that it is 'suggested' they: (1) wear the full field uniform to a Scoutmaster conference; (2) type the Eagle Scout Rank Application; or (3) type the Scout's statement of ambition and life purpose a certain length. For Eagle Scout service projects, some leaders have 'suggested' Scouts should work toward a certain typical standard stating for example that 100 hours is typical of what is needed to show sufficient

*Guide to Advancement, Section 9.0.2.4 states "Councils, districts, and units shall not establish requirements for the number of people led, or their makeup, or for time worked on a project."*

leadership to successfully complete an Eagle Scout service project. However, Scouts will frequently interpret a 'suggestion' as an indirect instruction that they must comply with rather than just an alternative they might consider.

Leaders may defend these practices by saying that they were merely 'making a suggestion' and not establishing a minimum standard. But what was their real intent? Obviously, it was an attempt to influence the Scout's behavior and actions in a specific way. In reality the above examples are nothing more than an attempt to set additional minimum standards beyond those necessary for rank advancement. This is just an indirect way of adding to requirements, which is not allowed.

From the Scouts' perspective, the problem with such "suggestions," however well-meaning, is that Scouts will frequently interpret a suggestion from an adult as an indirect instruction that they must comply with rather than just an alternative they might consider. To better understand this let's look at the context of how a 'suggestion' is given. When someone in a position of authority, such as a parent, unit leader, employer, or other professional makes a 'suggestion' more than likely they are expressing their expectation of a certain outcome. For example,

1. If a doctor suggests that a patient stop a certain behavior, is the doctor really making a 'suggestion,' or are they telling the patient the outcome the doctor expects?
2. If a teacher suggests that students study certain topics overnight, is that a 'suggestion' or a warning about a potential pop quiz the next day?
3. If an employer suggests that you do something, is that really a 'suggestion' or an indirect way of telling you do something? If an employer suggests that an employee might want to get a report done before going home today instead of waiting until tomorrow what would the expectation of that employee?

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4. If a parent suggests that one of their children clean up their room, make their bed, take out the garbage, etc., are they really making a 'suggestion' that the child doesn't need to follow?
5. If the Scoutmaster 'suggests' that that a Scout do a certain something is that a 'suggestion' or is the Scoutmaster communicating an expected performance standard?

The examples above should make it clear that when someone in a position of authority makes a 'suggestion' that in reality they are communicating a performance expectation. Likewise, in Scouting, when adult leaders make 'suggestions' to Scouts, they will undoubtedly interpret those 'suggestions' as instructions that they must comply with. Don't fall in the trap of creating additional requirements and expectations that are not permitted or allowed by calling them "suggestions." Praising positive actions is a much better approach and ultimately one that should be much more successful in achieving the desired outcome.



## A Peek Ahead

Here is a glimpse at 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, and especially to accommodate "late-breaking" news of immediate importance to our subscribers.

**Opportunities for Advancement Administrators:** Philmont 2020 – Family Paradise – and Training  
**Scouts BSA:** Troop Outings



# Sea Scouts BSA

## Quartermaster project: Helping birds and their habitats on the Texas Gulf Coast



According to records from the national BSA office, more than 52,000 youth earned the Eagle Scout rank in 2018. Scouts BSA youth who work on their Eagle rank have to have an Eagle Project, the main idea of which is to show leadership in a service venture that does not benefit Scouting.

Sea Scouts work on the Quartermaster rank, which is their highest rank, and have to have a similar service project. Only 40 or so Sea Scouts earn the Quartermaster award each year.

Youth in the Boy Scouts of America can work on both after achieving the proper rank advancements, but most work on Eagle. Sea Scouts have until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday to obtain Quartermaster; Scout BSA members have until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to earn Eagle.

One youth who finished his Quartermaster Project in 2019 was Sea Scout Asher Saet of Sea Scout Ship 502 of Foundry United Methodist Church in the Sam Houston Area Council. Asher, 19, graduated from Cypress Woods High School in Northwest Houston, and is a sophomore engineering major at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, GA and needs only one more activity to earn his Quartermaster award.

For this recognition, Asher worked on July 13, 2019, with members of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory and the American Bird Conservancy to clean Bryan Beach in Freeport, Texas, on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, about 100 miles southeast of Houston.

### How did you come up with the American Bird Conservancy and the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory?

"I talked to different people to get ideas. I wanted to make it worthy. I got the idea of doing a beach clean-up from the Ship 502 committee chair, who had a contact with the American Bird Conservancy; and I wanted to do something with a beach. The bird conservancy contact got back to me in a timely manner. She was very interested in me helping out. We were emailing back and forth about the schedule and what I wanted to accomplish with the Quartermaster project. She also invited another individual from the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory to participate."

### On Fundraising

- *Guide to Advancement*, Section 4.3.2.2 states: Fundraising is permitted only for securing materials and facilitating a project
- *Guide to Advancement* Section 9.0.2.10 provides detail information which includes the statement "The Scout must make it clear to all donors or event participants that the money is being raised on behalf of the project beneficiary, which will retain leftover funds."
- Further information is found in the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, No. 512-927.

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### **How did you obtain materials for the project?**

"I solicited materials from different businesses in the area. I got some supplies from a local home improvement store and a grocery store, which were all donated. From the local home improvement store I got trash bags, gloves and general supplies needed to make this clean-up a success. Then the store contributed snacks, water, and hand sanitizer. The store also gave me \$50 worth of gift cards for supplies and prizes. I had assembled an information packet, went to the stores and talked to the managers. It took them a while to decide whether they would help.

The local home improvement store gave me a shopping cart and told me to get what I needed, and they would meet me at the register where the supplies would be rung up as donated. That was really cool."

### **Who participated in your project and how did you get them interested?**

"I used social media and an online donation platform. We did a lot of advertising on Facebook. I told the Ship 502 members about it, and they told their friends. Someone from the local high school Key Club – where I went to school -- got wind of it, and they put out the information.

"I also had to get clearance from the city of Freeport to do this. I contacted the city manager and told her I was planning to clean up Bryan Beach on July 13, and she was very supportive and very grateful. She was the one who granted my dumpster access so we could take trash off the beach. The Gulf Coast Bird Observatory and the American Bird Conservancy also published the event in their newsletters. There were about 30 people at the beach clean-up."

### **What are things you learned?**

"Balloons are a big hazard to the environment. Sea birds will, a lot of times, mistake them for food, eat them and die. The idea was to clean up the beach so that sea birds could use it as their nesting habitat and nesting grounds. People who found balloons were given extra recognition by the Conservancy.



"I learned about various bird species that make their home on Bryan Beach. I also learned about some of their nesting habits and why the beachhead was important for us to clean up. A lot of birds nest behind the dunes next to the beach; some trash would be blown over the dunes into their nests. So, we cleaned up the beachhead as well as behind

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the dunes.”

### How was leadership practiced during this project?

“I served as the primary person for planning and executing the project. I came up with the list of things needed as well as the schedule. I had to make a budget, and I had to advertise. During the event, I was in charge of making decisions on where to put people. I directed the Golf Coast Bird Observatory and American Bird Conservancy representatives where to put people in place on site. I signed people in so I could record their volunteer hours.”



### How was the Quartermaster project approved?

“After I was set on the idea, I contacted the Soaring Eagle District advancement chair. (All Eagle and Quartermaster projects have to be approved on the district level.) He met with me, and he did say he wanted to see more detail, like what parts of the beach we were to clean. He did sign off on the project in the first meeting. I put in what my goals were and what I had hoped to accomplish. I also talked to our ship’s Skipper and the committee chair. And I had to get the signature from the bird conservancy representative as the beneficiary.”

### Any surprises along the way?

“I wasn’t expecting the companies to approve funding and support my project, and they did. They had a great appreciation for Scouting. I had a plan to have a car wash and earn the funds, but I did not have to actually do that. As far as unexpected variables, this project was pretty clean. I think that was because of

### Hear It First on Twitter

If you want the news first, follow the National Advancement Program 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 don’t have an account, it is a quick and easy process to set up an account at [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com). To limit incoming emails (‘tweets’), you can select to have BSA National Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

**Note:** Advancement questions should be directed to [advancement.team@scouting.org](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org).

# Venturing

## Dual Credit for Venturing Awards



Venturers may receive multiple credit for requirements. Requirements completed toward ranks and merit badges while registered in Scouts BSA could be considered toward Venturing award requirements. For example, if the Backpacking merit badge was earned, the effort could also count toward the Ranger elective. Further, experiences such as the Red Cross Emergency Response course could be used for the Ranger first aid requirement and the first aid and lifesaving electives. Venturers may not receive multiple credit for something like a tabletop display or a presentation. These must be done separately and relate directly to each situation requiring them.

Some requirements may call for certification such as Scuba Open-Water Diver, American Red Cross Standard First Aid, or BSA Lifeguard. Current certifications such as these may be used regardless of when they were earned. For additional information see "Fulfilling More than One Requirement with a Single Activity" 4.2.3.6.

### 4.3.1.4 Scouts BSA Advancement in Venturing

All requirements through First Class must be completed while registered in a troop or as Lone Scout. Venturers who earned First Class when registered in Scouts BSA are qualified until their 18th birthday to continue with Scouts BSA advancement. If desired, they may maintain multiple (dual) registration in a troop and crew, and work on ranks in either unit.

Wherever the youth member is registered, the Scoutmaster and crew Advisor decide, with the youth, who will oversee the Scouts BSA advancement. If the Advisor does so but is unfamiliar with Scouts BSA, the district advancement committee should identify an experienced Scouter to assist. It is important for Venturing leaders to understand that Scouts BSA advancement procedures must be followed.

With the exception of the Eagle Scout rank, Quartermaster rank, and Summit Award service projects, any work done while a Venturer can count toward Scouts BSA, Sea Scout and Venturing advancement at the same time. The Eagle Scout and Quartermaster ranks, and Summit Award service projects must be separate and distinct from each other. Position of responsibility requirements for Scouts BSA ranks may be met by the Venturer serving in crew positions as outlined in the Scouts BSA Requirements book. If the crew Advisor is overseeing the Scout's advancement, then the crew committee conducts Star and Life boards of review. Otherwise the troop committee conducts those boards of review. Eagle Scout boards follow the local council's established procedure.

Review *Guide to Advancement*, Section 4.3.1.4, for further clarification on dual registration requirements and clarification on project requirements.



## Worth Repeating

### The Cub Scout Angle

#### The Inverted Percentage (October, 2011)

Many council and district advancement committees spend most of their efforts on Scouts BSA advancement and especially Eagle Scout issues. This is understandable; the processes are involved. When considering the percentage of Cub Scout membership, however, we find what some would call “the inverted percentage”: The vast majority of the advancement committee’s time is spent meeting the needs of a very small percentage of our membership.

Each year, about 5 or 6 percent of Scouts BSA [and Varsity Scout]—less than 2 percent of the total traditional membership of the BSA—earn Eagle Scout rank. However, Cub Scouts make up 60 percent of that total traditional membership. It would make sense then, that 60 percent of advancement committee efforts go to building Cub Scouting advancement—or if not that level, then at least significantly more than is now spent. This would contribute enormously to the retention of Cub Scouts, and since most Scouts BSA transition from Cub Scouting, we should see more Scouts BSA, and eventually more Eagle Scouts.

There are a number of ways to address the inverted percentage and support Cub Scout advancement to the degree it warrants. Here are just a few ideas.

- Develop a clear understanding of “Unit Advancement Responsibilities,” section 3.0.0.3 in the *Guide to Advancement*. For Cub Scouting, the most important responsibility may be No. 2, “Educate parents, guardians, unit leadership, and committee members in ways to stimulate and encourage advancement.”
- Initiate communication with Cub Scout packs and develop relationships with pack advancement coordinators. Some of them may be candidates for the council or district advancement committee and could lead the charge in helping packs fulfill their responsibilities.
- Keep Eagle issues in perspective.

#### Editor’s Note

This article, while written prior to the inclusion of girls, was from the premier edition of *Advancement News*. It went on to explain: “This will be a regular feature on improving advancement in Cub Scouting.”

Editor Note: This article was written before girls were introduced into Scouting programs. Therefore, minor modifications to the original 2011 article have been made to reflect gender references. The terminology Scouts BSA has been substituted for all references to Boy Scouts. Varsity Scouting is no longer a program of the Boy Scouts of America.



## 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** web page at [www.scouting.org/advancement](http://www.scouting.org/advancement).

### General Resources

- Guide to Advancement 2019, No. 33088
- Advancement Educational Presentations (see list below)
- Advancement News
- Abilities digest
- Advancement Report, No. 34403
- Building Effective Advancement Committees, No. 510-756
- Eagle Scout Challenge, No. 542-900
- Friendstorming on Tour, No. 510-003
- Lone Scout Friend and Counselor Guidebook, No. 511-420
- On Increasing Advancement, No. 512-047
- Recommendations for Regional and Area Volunteers Supporting the Advancement program, No. 512-048
- Troop Resource Survey, No. 512-940
- Guide to Awards and Insignia, No. 33066
- Venturing Board of Review Guide, No. 512-940

### Advancement Educational Presentations:

- Introduction to the *Guide to Advancement*
- Today's Advancement
- Cub Scout Advancement Delivering Adventure
- Developing Council and District Advancement Committees
- The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach
- The Eagle Scout Service Project
- Effective Troop Advancement
- Essentials in Serving Scouts with Disabilities
- The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling
- The Merit Badge program
- Getting the most from Internet Advancement
- Including Scouts with Disabilities

### Videos

- Guardian of the Gate



#### *Additional resources include*

##### **Rank Advancement Information**

(including the new 2019 Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, 2019 Scouts BSA Rank Requirements, and various applications)

##### **Merit Badge Counselor information**

(including A Guide for Merit Badge Counseling, Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide and Merit Badge List)