

Advancement News

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

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

Philmont Training Center—Discovering the Keys to Excellence

New Conference: “Increasing Advancement by Delivering Excellence”

June 15-21, 2014

Ever wish you could unlock the secrets to increasing advancement in your units, district, or council? Come to Philmont this summer and find the keys!

The National Advancement Committee will explore ways to increase advancement in a new, innovative conference entitled “Increasing Advancement by Delivering Excellence,” to be held June 15-21, 2014. Expect fun with a purpose through interaction with program and advancement volunteers from across the country, presentations from National Council guest speakers, and high-level energy-packed activities.

Members of the National Advancement Committee and National Advancement Advisory Panel will guide the conference, during which we will explore the relationship of advancement to



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the quality of various program elements. Topics to be discussed, explored, and even debated, include roundtables and training, using commissioners, integrating STEM, working with adults and youth, and increasing the number of volunteers in districts and councils.

Advancement volunteers, council and district Key 3 members, and other council and district program volunteers will find ideas, tools and techniques for increasing the quality of programs and increasing the rate of advancement.

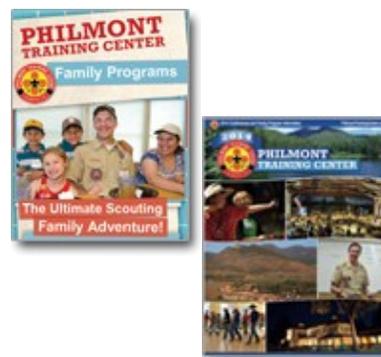
This is your opportunity to kick advancement up a notch, while improving unit, district, and council programs. More than a basic guide-to-advancement course, the conference will take advancement to a whole new level. Gather a team of volunteers from your council and make plans to attend!

Advancement Issues and Solutions Conference Encore

August 10- 16, 2014

Volunteers or executives with experience in administering the advancement program in a unit, district, council, area, or region will find it helpful to attend the Advancement Issues and Solutions conference this August. Back for the second year, this encore session is case study-based, and features the analysis of scenarios similar to those submitted to the National Advancement Committee's Eagle Issues Task Force and to advancement.team@scouting.org. Conference participants will develop a better understanding of the effective use of the *Guide to Advancement* and also the confidence to handle difficult or unusual issues in your unit, district, or council.

Visit www.philmontscoutranch.org/PTC/ConferencesE.aspx to learn more about what the Philmont Training Center has to offer during 2014.



On Increasing Advancement

Advancement Education Tools You Can Use Today

Are you planning to present a council or district session on proper procedures in advancement? The task has never been easier! Take a look at the advancement educational tools that the National Advancement Committee's Webinar and Education Task Force has produced.

The tools are in PowerPoint and video formats that can be used in a variety of ways. All can be accessed by visiting www.scouting.org/advancement. Under the section headed "General Resources" click on "Advancement Educational Presentations." There you will find the list of current programs that can be used to educate yourself and others about specific parts of the advancement program and related issues.

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For example, under “On Increasing Advancement,” you will find an informative presentation from the May 2013 BSA National Annual Meeting. It is divided into several short segments that focus on various parts of the “big picture” that need to be managed in councils and districts. The essential message is that effectively promoting and reporting advancement are important to success in the Journey to Excellence. These segments can work well to generate discussion and reflection in district and council advancement committee planning and goal setting.

Another useful tool can be found under “The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling.” As a PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes, available in both English and Spanish, it is intended as a 60-90 minute instructor-led tutorial for merit badge counselors. It covers the BSA’s aims, methods, and mission, as well as how Scouts learn and grow through the merit badge process. Feedback from councils tells us the session provides an excellent method for orienting new counselors as well as updating those with experience.

A third set of helpful presentations are grouped in the “*Guide to Advancement and Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook Overview*” section. There you will find seven PowerPoint-based videocasts with voice-over, each of which can be opened and played on a computer or downloaded for later viewing. These, too, are excellent for use at roundtables, Universities of Scouting, advancement committee meetings, and so forth.

Two new presentations were added in mid-January: “Effective Troop Advancement” and “The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach.” And stay tuned! There are more in production.

From the *Guide to Advancement*

After the Scout is Tested and Recognized (Topic 4.2.1.5)

Tens of thousands of us who were in Scouting as boys remember how to tie the square knot and the bowline. We were probably taught these knots by our patrol leader or another older Scout, who also made us memorize ways to remember what we had just learned. Remember “left over right, right over left,” or “the rabbit comes out of his hole, goes around the tree, then goes back down the hole?” Shortly after we learned how to tie these knots we showed our new skill to someone else, who then grabbed our *Boy Scout Handbook* and checked these requirements off our list. This was what we called “advancement.”

Topics 4.2.1.1 through 4.2.1.4 lay out the familiar advancement process that has guided many a Scout over the years: A Scout learns, is tested, is reviewed, and is recognized. But topic 4.2.1.5 reminds us that the real learning takes place later as part of a well-organized unit program where what was learned is *used*. Through these activities a Scout gains confidence, and none of what he does seems like learning because it is all part of the fun. This is the magic of Scouting. This is what builds retention.

We know this to be true because, after all these years, we still remember many of the Scouting skills we learned—like tying the square knot or building a fire or cooking a meal. But we remember because of



what happened next, *after* we were recognized for the advancement. We went on campouts or to summer camp, or even to one of Scouting's high adventure camps, where we used these knots and all the other skills we had learned. We played games that required our knowledge. We taught younger Scouts. In short, we were part of an active Scouting program. Because we had learned and used so many skills, these activities were more fun. Because we had more fun, we stayed in Scouting. Because we stayed in Scouting, we remember the other things we learned, such as the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. Because we stayed, Scouting influenced our character. It made us the people we are today.

Advancement is not an end in itself. It is an important part of a strong, active Scouting program. Advancement is part of the glue that holds a boy in Scouting so we may have a chance to influence his character, but the real testing of his character may not take place until years or even decades later. And isn't that what

Advancement and Camping Committees in Partnership

To achieve success, the advancement committee and the camping committee must work together. To do this they should form a partnership with strong communications. This may seem so obvious that it need not be stated, but feedback suggests that many councils would benefit from this team-oriented approach.

Take the selection of merit badges for a long-term summer camp program, for example. All too often the role of one or both of the committees is either ill-defined or not defined at all. When this is the case, well-intentioned and long serving camp staffers may believe they have the right and duty to make the selections. Often, however, the camp staff will lack the information it needs to make wise choices, and at the same time, members of the council advancement committee will complain that they have no say. Sound familiar?

A model for avoiding any resulting "turf wars" is to have a senior member of the camp staff serve on the council camping committee; and to have a member of the camping committee attend advancement meetings and vice-versa. By "exchanging" members this way, each group knows what the other is doing. The camp staff and the camping committee normally *do* have a good grasp of which merit badges can or should be taught in a summer camp environment. If they do not, the advancement committee can provide counsel. The advancement committee, however, should focus primarily on the quality of the camp merit badge program. When both of these constituent groups work in *partnership* as a team, the entire program should benefit.

Furthermore, as the two committees and the camp staff work together, they should be able to free up additional time to consult others who may have important contributions. A survey of unit leaders asking which merit badges should be offered is an excellent idea. The results can be studied by the committees in cooperation with other stakeholders, such as a facilities committee. Many times it is not just instructors or subject matter knowledge that may be needed, but a investment in physical resources that must be budgeted.

Many camps teach merit badges that on first blush do not seem to make sense, such as the citizenship series. If, however, both committees agree there is a local need—or other compelling reasons exist to offer particular badges—the Scouts may benefit.

Again the key to success is partnership and communications. Only then can meaningful discussions take place and purposeful standard practices made a part of the council's operational plans.

Advancement Issues: Appeals

In units, it is a rare occurrence when a board of review rejects a candidate for advancement. Unfortunately, however, it does happen.

Current policies in the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 8.0.4.0, state that adverse decisions for Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, and Eagle Palms are *not* appealable; that is, there is no official appeal process for Scouts rejected at a board of review. Nevertheless, the policy does not prohibit a Scout or his parent or guardian from questioning unit, district, or council leadership about a decision. Although the district and council advancement committees do not have the authority to provide reversals, local councils should encourage an “open door policy” and welcome concerns that may point to a need for more training.

In the case of Star or Life ranks, a negative decision may be formally appealed to the council advancement committee, which has the authority to overturn the decision of the board of review. Most councils, however, properly direct these appeals along with those for the Eagle Scout rank, to their districts first. Adverse decisions for the rank of Eagle work the same way at the local level, but they may be appealed to the National Advancement Team if rejected by a council.

Several documents must be prepared for an appeal to be processed, but the most critical is the communication a Scout should receive at the time advancement is declined. This statement advises him of the actions necessary that could lead to advancement, and explains the appeal procedures found in the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 8.0.4.1, #1. The statement should provide the basis for denial, identifying each deficiency the Scout must overcome. For example, it would be unfair to allow a Scout to believe his advancement was declined due to one missing requirement, when in fact, multiple issues exist. As an appeal review board investigates the case and makes its decision, much of it is based on the content of this statement.

A very informative 4-minute video entitled “Boards of Review Appeals,” is among the several advancement education presentations available at www.scouting.org/advancement.

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 eight or nine 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.

The Cub Scout Angle



After the Blue and Gold Banquet—Continuing the Journey

After the blue and gold banquet, many units face the challenge of keeping Cub Scout families interested and engaged, particularly as spring sports begin. The pack and den focus has been on rank advancement up to that point, but once badges are earned and presented, some leaders wonder what to do next. There will always be a few boys who still need to complete requirements after the blue and gold, but for those who have finished their rank, there are many options that can lead to further recognitions and fun.

In the fall, have your Cub Scouts begin working on some awards at the pack level that you do not plan to complete until after the blue and gold banquet. If your families know about the plans, the award programs can provide the “hook” that will keep Scouts and parents involved through the spring and summer. Because these programs will be in addition to rank advancement, scheduling can be more flexible, and you can avoid conflicts with baseball and other spring sports. Furthermore, you will have some meaningful awards to hand out at the end of summer, just in time for fall recruiting.

Councils and districts can also run events that help units deliver awards throughout the spring; such as bowl-a-thons, clean-up days, belt loop midways, religious emblem workshops, and Cub Scout family camping adventures. They can also make it easy for units and families to participate by showcasing Cub Scout opportunities on the council website, making sure that unit leaders know that this “one-stop shopping” site for Cub Scout programming exists—and is regularly updated:

Here’s a list of some of the most prominent Cub Scout award programs:

- National Summertime Pack Award
- Cub Scout Outdoor Activity Award
- Fun for the Family Awards
- Electives (Arrow Points and Tiger Track beads)
- Academic and Sports Program (belt loops and pins)
- Religious Emblems
- STEM/NOVA Awards
- World Conservation Award
- Conservation Good Turn Award
- Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award
- CyberChip Award
- Emergency Preparedness Award
- Interpreter Strip
- Recruiter Strip
- SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge



World Conservation Award

The Cub Scout World Conservation Award may be earned by any Wolf, Bear, or Webelos Scout. It provides an opportunity for individual Cub Scouts to “think globally” and “act locally” to preserve and improve our environment, and is designed to make youth members aware that all nations are closely related through natural resources.

Outdoor Activity Award



The Outdoor Activity Award can be earned by all Cub Scouts and may be earned each program year. The award recognizes a boy’s participation in camping, outdoor recreation, and conservation projects.

Merit Badges—Enhancing Our Youth's Competitive Edge

Mining in Society Merit Badge Released

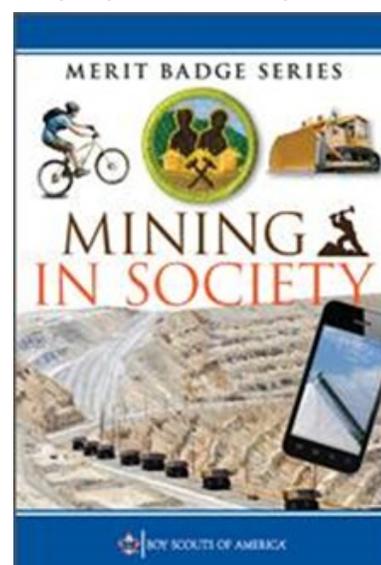


The Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration, Inc., will help the BSA launch the newest merit badge, Mining in Society, at its annual meeting in Salt Lake City, Feb. 23-26. More than 30,000 people are expected. BSA will use the opportunity to create awareness and recruit merit badge counselors. Those interested in serving as counselors will be referred to their local councils.



How important is mining to society? A well-recognized statement is: "If it can't be grown, it has to be mined." From communications, transportation, and medicine, to education, entertainment, and recreation, every aspect of society relies on mining. Whether it's a car, computer, surgeon's scalpel, smart phone, TV, or almost any other object you can name, the materials for making it—or for making the machines that produce it—must come from a mine.

By drawing on society member expertise, the merit badge development team worked diligently to create a compelling pamphlet that touches on mining's key components of exploration, permitting, excavation, processing, production, safety, and reclamation. The Mining in Society merit badge ensures that for years to come, Scouts will be introduced to the importance of mining and minerals in their lives, and have the opportunity to learn about careers in the industry," said John Murphy, past society president and chair of the society's Merit Badge Advisory Panel.



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.

Six Eagle-required Merit Badge Pamphlets Now Available in Spanish

Councils serving significant populations of Spanish-speaking families will be pleased to know that six of the Eagle-required merit badge pamphlets are now available in Spanish.

Campamento (Camping) (#619133)

Civismo Comunitario (Citizenship in the Community) (#619134)

Comunicación (Communication) (#619137)

Vida en Familia (Family Life) (#619142)

Excursionismo (Hiking) (#619144)

Bienestar Personal (Personal Fitness) (#619146).

Scout Shops in 50 communities with large concentrations of Spanish-speaking families are carrying the pamphlets, which will be sold at the same price as their English counterparts. The pamphlets may also be purchased through www.scoutstuff.org, or by calling the National Distribution Center at 1-888-323-0732.

The remaining Eagle-required merit badge pamphlets are next in line for translation.



Did You Receive these Tweets?

January 13: Go to scouting.org/programupdates to get 411 on new Cub Scout Adventure Program (2015), and changes in Venturing (2014) & Boy Scouting (2016).

January 13: Spanish language version of "The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling" will soon be posted at scouting.org/advancement.

January 13: Another new PowerPoint: Effective Troop Advancement, just posted at scouting.org/advancement. Click on Advancement Educational Presentations

January 13: New PowerPoint posted: The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach. Go to scouting.org/advancement, click on Advancement Educational Presentations

January 28: Calling all Eagle Scouts and Life Scouts! Enter [@BRISStudents](https://twitter.com/BRISStudents)'s Eagle Scout Competition to win up to \$1,000! <http://bit.ly/1dKwsxE>

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 don't 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.

Eagle Issues

Eagle Projects—Anything but “Routine”

One of the primary differences between the Eagle Scout rank and the others, is the service project requirement. For the earlier ranks, service hours play a relatively small part, while for Eagle the service project requires planning, developing, and leading others in a project helpful to a beneficiary. Policies and procedures for the requirement are detailed in the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 9.0.2.0, and in the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*. It is important that Scouts and their parents or guardians, and their leaders, study and understand the information provided there.

One phrase that tends to create some confusion is “routine labor” or “a routine maintenance job.” Too frequently, acceptable Eagle Scout service projects are turned down, or modifications are called for due to a misinterpretation of *Guide To Advancement* topic 9.0.2.11. The second sentence of the topic is particularly important. Here “routine labor” is defined as “a job or service that a Scout may provide as part of his daily life.” This could include activities such mowing a lawn, volunteering to pick up trash, or similar services a Scout might do routinely. However, some seemingly “routine” projects might well qualify due to their size or scope. For example, changing light bulbs in a church sanctuary might be considered routine, but converting an entire cathedral to low energy bulbs might be all right. Similarly, simply cutting a lawn or picking trash up on a trail may not sound like significant leadership opportunities, but if either is overgrown, full of trash, or covers a large area, the scope of planning and conducting the project could possibly qualify.

Another word in topic 9.0.2.11 that creates confusion is “maintenance”—specifically, “...a routine maintenance job normally done by the beneficiary.” The word “maintenance” alone, should not deter district advancement committees from approving proposals. The key words are “normally done.” If maintenance is not “normally done” by the beneficiary, for whatever reason, then perhaps the project could be acceptable. With this in mind, maintaining existing structures, playgrounds, cemeteries, campgrounds, church grounds, or anything else, might qualify as an Eagle Scout service project. Ultimately, the scope of the work and its impact should be the prime considerations for determining whether or not a proposal should be approved, just as they should be in determining if a completed project has fulfilled the requirement.

The Venturing Perspective

Recruitment Toolbox—The First Step to Advancement

Peer-to-peer contact is the most effective method for recruiting new Scouts at any level. Ideally, this is as simple as one youth member talking with a friend about the fun and excitement of Scouting and inviting the friend to experience it.

The process for recruiting new Venturers should be no different. After describing what Venturing offers, crew members should invite their friends to the next crew meeting or outing for a first-hand look. There, prospects can meet other youth, who can also influence the decision to join.

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What about tips for recruiting new members from outside your crew's circle of friends? Try looking in the Venturing Recruitment Toolbox. There you will find a collection of fliers, documents, and other information to help in the effort. Many of the items can be customized to fit your crew's interests and activities. The Toolbox can be found at www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Marketing/Recruiting2/VenturingToolBox.aspx.

The materials can be ordered at no cost, separately or in a packet, by following the link at the top of the website. Just complete the form and send it to the national office.

What does recruiting have to do with advancement? Everything! The Venturing advancement program is often undersold and under-promoted in the recruitment process. A strong advancement program leads crews into activities they may not otherwise experience. If potential Venturers learn about advancement from the beginning they will begin to understand more of the possibilities that Venturing has to offer. Venturing advancement offers so many different areas that everyone should be able to find one that interests them or piques their interest in the program!

Finally, as a crew grows through recruitment, it also grows in strength and leadership with sufficient numbers to establish a well-balanced program. And a well-balanced program then leads to even more advancement.

The Survey Says

Merit Badge Fairs and Midways

More than 900 Scouters responded to the fall 2013 survey on merit badge fairs and midways, setting a new *Advancement News* record. Respondents were experienced Scouters, with almost 47% having served more than 20 years and 92% with at least five years. Troop volunteer positions comprised 55% of respondents, 30% were commissioners or district committee members, and the balance were in a variety of other roles. The survey polled a number of factors related to merit badge events and also those affecting instructional quality.

Results of the survey included:

For class size, 45% of respondents preferred eight or fewer Scouts per merit badge counselor, and 73% suggested no more than 10.

48% of respondents believed the quality of skills and knowledge learned were comparable to non-group settings. 44% believed the skills and knowledge were of lower quality.

79% agreed to some extent with the statement "All those providing instruction should be registered merit badge counselors." However, in a later question, 76% agreed that it was acceptable to have BSA-registered subject matter experts provide instructional resources at merit badge fairs.

96% disagreed with any alteration of merit badge requirements when fair or midway facilities do not support merit badge requirements.

79% disagreed with Scoutmasters signing off on requirements without being registered merit badge counselors for that badge, and 78% did not support granting subject matter experts, who are not merit badge counselors, special authority to sign off on blue cards.

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In terms of participation, 65% of respondents disagreed with granting Scoutmasters the authority to prohibit Scouts from attending merit badge fair events.

When asked about oversight, 91% supported council or district on-site monitoring of merit badge fair events, and 82% opposed retesting of the Scouts in their home units.

Complete results of the survey have been provided to a volunteer task force that has accepted the responsibility of evaluating best practices and guidelines for merit badge fair and midway events.

From the Field

Eagles to the Front of the Line

Adopted from an article appearing in the Blackhawk Courier, Blackhawk Area Council

I had the opportunity to work with a fellow pilot on a trip over the holidays. During the experience he shared his son's incredible story with me. His son was a senior in high school, and active in his local troop as a Life Scout. The only requirement left for his Eagle Scout rank was the service project, but like many, he was dragging his feet. His dad constantly encouraged him, but the motivation was just not there.

The one dream his son had was to attend the Air Force Academy and become a pilot. As we know, getting into the Academy is no easy feat: you must have good grades, go through a series of interviews, do well on your ACT, and a senator or congressman must recommend you. There may be other requirements, but these were the ones he emphasized. He told me his son was an average student, completed the interviews, received a recommendation, and did OK on the ACT. When his letter finally came it was bad news. He had been placed him on a long standby list and did not have much hope of attending. The dream had been crushed. His dad encouraged him not to give up, and suggested he should finish his Eagle service project, as that could have benefits for his future. His son was a little depressed, though, and could not focus on much of anything, let alone his Eagle project. But one day dad's persistence paid off and the project got finished. And shortly thereafter his son was awarded Scouting's highest honor. His parents were proud, not just because he finished, but because they truly felt he would reap the rewards in the future.

Then, as an Eagle Scout, his son updated his Air Force Academy application, and this is when the magic happened. He was notified he was being reconsidered! He only had to complete some pre-requisites. The Eagle rank had boosted him to the front of the line. All they asked was that he attend a prep school for six months to help them evaluate how well he would do as a student. He would participate in military drills and other activities until he attended the Academy. The best part was that the government was to foot the bill. This all came about because he finished his Eagle rank. His dad could have just dropped the subject and let his son remain a Life Scout, but he kept the faith and provided the encouragement.

Thank you B.C. for sharing another example that boys benefit from continuing on their trail to Eagle.

Have you seen an impact on a young person resulting from an experience in the advancement program? Please send your story to advancement.team@scouting.org. Provide your name, email, and general location so we may contact you if we have questions. No guarantees, but you just might see your story here.

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 March 2014

Cub Scout Angle: Webelos Compass Points

Merit Badges—Enhancing Our Youth's Competitive Edge: Sweet 16 of BSA Safety

Advancement Committee Mechanics: Using Advancement Statistics

Helpful Links

This new feature is where we will post links to the most current materials of interest for all Scouters involved in advancement. These and many more resources are available via the Advancement Resources Page (www.scouting.org/advancement). Check back to this feature to learn about availability of new resources and continued listing of existing valuable links.

[2013 Eagle Scout Rank Application](#)

[2014 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.