



# Advancement: Policies and Methods

## Boy Scout Troop 28

# Advancement: Policies and Methods in Troop 28

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# Advancement: Policies and Methods in Troop 28

## OVERVIEW

Advancement is one of the scouting methods. A Scout learns, he is tested, he is reviewed and he is then recognized. This document clarifies troop practice and standards **without restating or modifying** the requirements. Advancement details are covered in three places:

- ✦ Requirements for each rank are listed in the Scout Handbook and [online](#).
- ✦ National Policy is in the [Guide to Advancement](#) (GTA).
- ✦ Troop practice and standards constitute the rest of this document.

The Scout should look to his handbook for answers to his advancement questions first. Ideally, the [Advancement Chair](#), would be the Scout's second resource on advancement questions.

Parents and Scouters are encouraged to coach the Scout to take on responsibility for his advancement. Advancement is one of the principal settings where Scouts meet Scouters and use the scouting method of association with adults.

A Scout's advancement is the responsibility of the Scout! Parents are encouraged to be active with the troop and to encourage their son along the advancement trail! Parents are to be discouraged from doing the work the Scout should be doing for himself. To do otherwise takes away the opportunity for the Scout to really feel great about what he has accomplished! When we do things for the Scout, we are depriving them of a life lesson and learning opportunity. Scouting is not just an opportunity for Scouts to do fun stuff; it's also an opportunity for parents to learn and grow. When Scouts get discouraged or frustrated (and they will), that's when we need a supportive, responsible parent to step up and help them overcome the discouragement or frustration and keep on trying.

As has been mentioned before, it should not be a race to get to Eagle. That is not what it is all about. We'd rather see Scouts achieve their ranks in a little longer time than the minimal time as they will enjoy the trip better (but naturally we want every Scout to reach Eagle before it is too late).

Truly, it is about the journey, not the destination!!! When the Scout is responsible for his advancement he receives the reward of the journey. "As a Scout advances, he is measured and he grows in confidence and self-reliance, and he builds upon his skills and abilities" (as stated in the Guide to Advancement).

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## The Four Steps in Scout Advancement<sup>1</sup>

- ✦ **The Scout Learns** – He learns by doing and as he learns, he grows in his ability to do his part as a member of the patrol and troop. As he develops knowledge and skill, he is asked to teach others; and in this way he learns and develops leadership.
- ✦ **The Scout is Tested** – The Scoutmaster authorizes those who may test and pass the Scout on rank requirements. They might include is patrol leader, senior patrol leader, an assistant unit leader, a troop committee member, another Scout, or the Scoutmaster himself. Merit badge counselors teach and test him on requirements for merit badges.<sup>2</sup>
- ✦ **The Scout is Reviewed** – After he has completed all requirements for a rank, the Scout meets with a board of review. For Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, and Life ranks, and Eagle Palms, members of the unit committee conduct it. The Eagle Scout board of review is held in accordance with National Council and local council procedures.
- ✦ **The Scout is Recognized** – When the board of review has approved his advancement, the Scout deserves recognition as soon as possible. This should be done at a ceremony at the next unit meeting. The certificate for his new rank may be presented later, during a formal court of honor.
- ✦ **After the Scout is Test and Recognized** - After the Scout is tested and recognized, a well-organized unit program will help him practice his skills in different settings and methods: at unit meetings; through various activities and outings; by teaching other Scouts, enjoying games, and leading projects; and so forth. These activities reinforce the learning, show how Scout skills and knowledge are applied, and build confidence. Repetition is the key; this is how retention is achieved. The Scout fulfills a requirement and then is placed in a situation where he has to put it to work. If he has forgotten what he learned, he may have to seek out a friend, leader, or other resource to help refresh his memory. As he does so, we are able to watch him grow.

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<sup>1</sup> GTA 4.2.1.0

<sup>2</sup> *Once a Scout has been tested and signed off by someone approved to do so, the requirement has been met. The unit leader is accountable for ensuring proper advancement procedures are followed. A part of this responsibility includes the careful selection and training of those who approve advancement. If a unit leader believes a boy has not learned the subject matter for a requirement, he or she should see that opportunities are made available for the Scout to practice or teach the requirement, so in this way he may complete his learning and further develop his skills.*

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## SIGN OFF POLICY

The requirements for each rank are listed in the Scout Handbook. The Scout documents his progress by securing in his handbook the proper approvals, hereafter “sign offs,” by approaching Scouters who sign once a requirement is satisfied. Requirements vary; the Scout normally demonstrates a skill or provides a record of an achievement or attendance, etc., and the Scouter then signs and dates his handbook. Parents are strongly discouraged from providing sign offs for their own sons as this interferes with the Scouts’ association with adults. The Scoutmaster is responsible for deciding who will sign off on rank advancements and at what level. See the following matrix for authorizations to sign off various requirements.

Responsibilities	Scoutmaster (SM)	Assistant Scoutmaster (ASM)	Junior Leadership (JL)	Patrol Coach Counselor (PCC)	Merit Badge Counselor	Advancement Chairman (AC)	Leadership Coach (LC)	Star/Life Coach Counselor (SLCC)	Eagle Coach Counselor (ECC)	Eagle Board of Review
Scoutmaster Conference	Primary									
Scout Spirit	Primary									
Rank Requirements: † Scout † Tenderfoot † Second Class † First Class * Except SM conference, Scout Spirit, or Board of Review	Backup	Backup	Primary	Backup						
Merit Badge	Initiate				Primary	Recognition				
Leadership Position: † Star † Life	Backup						Primary			
Rank Requirements: † Star † Life	Backup							Primary		
Rank Requirements: † Eagle * Except Eagle Board of Review	Backup								Primary	
Board of Review * Except Eagle Board of Review						Primary				
Eagle Board of Review										Primary

Note:

The Scoutmaster is the only one who can sign for Scoutmaster Conference and Scout Spirit. Eagle requirements still require Scoutmaster Conference and Scout Spirit. It is expected that the Leadership Coaches will sign off leadership positions in concurrence with the Scoutmaster. Junior Leadership refers to the Senior Patrol Leader and his assistants.

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## TRAIL TO FIRST CLASS

New Scouts generally work on the requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class. Their New Scout Patrol will have a Coach Counselor or dedicated Assistant Scoutmaster (ASM) who helps stage and coordinate opportunities to earn those sign offs. The Junior Leadership (JL) should manage the teaching of skills, and will sign off all skills up to First Class.

## SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCES<sup>3</sup>

The Scout requests a Conference with the Scoutmaster. The Scout should ensure all his other rank requirements (except Scout Spirit) are complete and signed off before approaching the Scoutmaster.

## SCOUT SPIRIT<sup>4</sup>

The Scoutmaster signs off that the Scout lives the Oath, Law, Motto, and Slogan. The sign off may be delegated by the Scoutmaster to the Senior Patrol Leader to help Scouts show better respect to their Senior Patrol Leader (SPL). The Scout's behavior in the Troop, his school, his church, and the general community all matter.

Scout spirit applies to how you live and how you conduct your daily life – that is, your life both in and out of scouting activities.

You show Scout Spirit by being a role model, living by the Scout Oath and Law. Scout spirit is not based on how many Scouting events or outings a Scout attends but rather by how he helps bring out the best in others as a reflection of his own character and attitude.

Some ways to do this are:

- Participation
- Telling the truth
- Sticking up for the kid being picked on
- Handing out papers for the teacher
- Letting everyone play a game
- Saying thank you to the clerk at a store
- Helping a kid that dropped his books instead of laughing at him
- Playing fair to have fun rather than to win no matter what
- Looking for a little fun in every job you have to do
- Using your boring old cellphone for another year because it still works
- Asking your buddies to not use bad language around you
- Listening to music that doesn't promote hate or violence
- Reflecting by taking 5 minutes once in a while to just quietly sit outside and think about where you're heading in life

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<sup>3</sup> GTA, 4.2.3.5

<sup>4</sup> GTA, 4.2.3.2

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### LEADERSHIP POSITIONS<sup>5</sup>

The Scout is expected to complete [Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops](#) for each term in a leadership position. The Troop tries to hold this training within the 30 days after an election and provide both the position and *Trained* patches to each Scout attending.

The Troop also encourages Scouts to take [Twin Arrows](#), Longhorn Council's version of [National Youth Leadership Training](#), as soon as they are eligible.

The [leadership positions](#) are listed in the Scout handbook. Notably, an assistant patrol leader is not a qualifying position. The adult mentor (in agreement with the Scoutmaster) for the leadership position should sign off on this requirement. Each of the troop leadership positions has a mentor, which is made known to the Scout when he acquires a new leadership position. When there is no active adult mentor for the position, then the Scoutmaster signs off. In general, the Scout needs to attend leadership training for that position and be active in the role while he is at the previous rank. Leadership at a lower rank does not count. A Scout may have been a patrol leader for 5 months as Second Class and one month as First Class. To meet the Star rank requirement, they would need to take on another leadership role for the remaining three months. The four months (six for Life or Eagle) do not need to be contiguous nor for the same position. Again, the clock starts at the Board of Review date for the previous rank. Leadership positions generally change every 6 months (in coincidence with the Senior Patrol Leader election process). Scouts must re-sign up for their positions or sign up for a different position every 6 months. Again, it is expected that the Scout attend Troop Junior Leader Training each time he signs up for a leadership position! Announcements are made well in advance of this training being held, but expect this training to occur within 30 days of new leadership position sign-ups and selections.

Being active in a position follows similar guidelines as the first requirement. For many of the leadership positions, the leadership is demonstrated in a campout setting. For the following positions, the Scout must have participated in 60% of the campouts in which he was in the position: Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Senior Patrol Leader, Troop Guide, Quartermaster, Bugler, or Chaplain's Aide. If a Scout with one of these leadership positions is not attending outings, he cannot be fulfilling the responsibilities of that leadership position. Those responsibilities are lined out for the Scout on [paper](#), which he receives shortly after being selected to fill the position. For the other leadership positions, the adult mentor will work with the Scout to determine what "active" means.

The Scoutmaster instead of having a particular troop position may also assign a leadership project. The project will help the Troop and be of sufficient nature that it takes the place of a four or six month term of office.

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<sup>5</sup> GTA, 4.2.3.4

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### BOARDS OF REVIEW<sup>6</sup>

The Scout secures a Board of Review from the Advancement Chairman after the Scoutmaster Conference. Eagle Boards are part of the Eagle process at District (see Trail to Eagle section).

A board of review focuses on a Scout's accomplishments and progress. The board of review is a chance for the troop committee to get a sense of how the troop is doing and to permit them to offer support where needed. It gives three to six sets of ears to hear how a Scout is doing, how he feels about the troop and his role in it, how he is advancing, and whether he is striving to live up to the Scouting ideals. The board of review is not an interrogation, and not a retesting of a Scout's competence. It is not an examination; rather, it attempts to see that the examinations that went into getting the Scout signed off were up to standard. It is a checkup to see that what should have been done actually was done. A board of review should take approximately 15 minutes, though an Eagle Scout board of review may take up to a half an hour.

Also, the Committee may invite a Scout to a board if his attendance or advancement or Program experience needs discussing even before he is up for a rank advancement. It is expected that a Scout should sit for a board of review every six months, whether he is advancing or not.

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<sup>6</sup> GTA, Section 8

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## TROOP EXPECTATIONS FOR ACTIVITY<sup>7</sup>

For the purpose of Star, Life and Eagle Scout requirements calling for Scouts to be active for a period of months involves impact. The Scout is considered “active” when his level of activity in scouting, whether high or minimal, had had a sufficiently positive influence toward this end.

The following tests are used to determine whether the requirement has been met. The first and second are required, along with either the third or it’s alternative.

1. The Scout is registered. The Scout is registered in his unit for at least the time period indicated in the requirement, and he has indicated in some way, through word or action, that he considers himself a member.
2. The Scout is in good standing. The Scout is considered in “good standing” with his unit as long as he has not been dismissed for disciplinary reasons.
3. The Scout meets the unit’s reasonable expectations: or, if not, a lesser level of activity is explained. If, for the time period required, the Scout meets those aspects of the unit’s pre-established expectations that refer to a level of activity, then he is considered active and the requirement is met. Time counted as “active” need not be consecutive. The Scout may piece together any times he has been active and still be active.

Alternative to the third test if expectations are not met: If the Scout has fallen below the unit’s activity expectation, then it must be due to other positive endeavors (in or out of scouting) or to noteworthy circumstances that have prevented a higher lever of participation. In this case the Scout is considered “active” if a board of review can agree that the scouting values have already taken hold and been exhibited. This might be evidenced, for example, in how he lives his life and relates to others in his community, at school, in his religious life, or in scouting. It is also acceptable to consider and “count” positive activities outside scouting when they, too contribute to his growth in character, citizenship or personal fitness. Remember, it is not so much about what the Scout has done. It is about what he is able to do and how he has grown.

Troop 28 defines being active through campout participation since we do not keep attendance records at troop meetings. Active should be defined as the Scout attending fifty percent of the campouts in a four or six month period. An example would be if a Scout became a First Class Scout in January, if he missed the February and March campouts, but was able to attend the April campout, June campout and summer camp in July, then he would qualify as active. That is because from April through July, he attended three outings within four months. One can use any four-month period to qualify as active, not just that period that falls immediately after receiving the previous rank. If going on a high adventure trip, a Scout could also include any outing intended to prepare that Scout for the trip as an activity. Unlike the requirements for lower ranks, this requirement can only be worked on as soon as the board of review for the previous rank is completed. Parents: please do not push your son to complete his rank when your son has not met the guidelines for being active in the troop. Instead, push them to be more active by going on more campouts. In order to be signed off, the Scout should present a list of the campouts they participated on within a four (or six) month contiguous period at the scoutmaster

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<sup>7</sup> 4.2.3.1 Guide to Advancement

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conference and at the board of review. The Scoutmaster also keeps a list of participants for every campout, which will be used to verify participation.

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## BLUE CARDS FOR MERIT BADGES<sup>8</sup>

Blue cards track progress on a merit badge. The [merit badge process](#) is as follows. The **Scout:**

- ✦ **Decides** the merit badge on which he is going to work.
- ✦ **Obtains** a blue card from the Scoutmaster, who will put the Scout's name on the front, the name of the merit badge on the back, and will sign and date the blue card on the front, recommend a Merit Badge Counselor, and then hand it over to the Scout. [Note: for Merit Badge College, campout merit badge programs, or summer camp, the blue cards may be obtained for the Scout by a coordinator or counselor.] The Merit Badge Coordinator (Mrs. Arpey) can also help, but the Guide to Advancement holds the Scoutmaster officially responsible.
- ✦ **Obtains and Reads** the Merit Badge book!
- ✦ **Contacts** the counselor and arranges a time to meet with the counselor to begin working on the merit badge. The counselor will sign off on the requirements on the back of the blue card as the Scout completes them. When all requirements are finished, the counselor will keep his section of the blue card marked Counselor's Record and return the rest to the Scout. There are times when a Scout gets the entire blue card back from a counselor who doesn't keep his own records: typically, Merit Badge College and Summer Camp. Keep in mind that it is not acceptable for the Scoutmaster, parent, or anyone besides the Scout to fill out his blue card. The Scout filling out the blue card is just as important as performing the skills and demonstrating the knowledge in order to complete the requirements for the merit badge. No one else should do this for the Scout.
- ✦ **Hands** in the rest of his completed blue card to the Unit's Advancement Chairman, who will sign the blue card as recorded and then return the third of the blue card marked Applicant's Record to the Scout.

Save blue cards! These are proof of completing the requirements and will be handy if there is any confusion later. The best method for storing them is in a binder containing clear plastic sleeves such as are used to store baseball cards.

The Scout is responsible for turning in blue cards to the Advancement Chairman in order to receive the merit badge. The actual merit badge will be awarded at the next Court of Honor, but, for purposes of rank, credit for the merit badge is earned as soon as the Advancement Chairman records the blue card.

Parents may not sign blue cards unless they are the approved Merit Badge counselor for the specific merit badge.

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<sup>8</sup> GTA, Section 7

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**Information for Applicant**

- A merit badge application can be approved only by a registered merit badge counselor.
- You **must** have a buddy with you (Scout buddy system) at each meeting with the merit badge counselor.
- Turn in your approved application to your unit leader. You will be awarded the merit badge emblem and certificate at a suitable occasion.

**Information for Counselor**

- Merit badge applications **must** be signed in advance by the applicant's unit leader.
- The Scout **must** have his buddy (Scout buddy system) in attendance at all instructional sessions.
- You may not change any requirement, but you may share your knowledge or experience that will make the counseling more interesting and valuable.

Requirement No. and letter	Counselor initial	Date of approval
1	SB	12/31/12
2a	SB	12/31/12
2b	SB	12/31/12
3	SB	12/31/12
4a	SB	12/31/12
5	SB	12/31/12
6	SB	12/31/12
7	SB	12/31/12
8	SB	12/31/12

**APPLICATION FOR MERIT BADGE**

Name Bob Katt  
 Address 123 Aspen Lane  
 City Beaver Creek, MN 54321

is a registered  
 Boy Scout    Varsity Scout    Venturer  
 of Troop 3042  
Troop, team, crew, ship

District Metro Lakes  
 Council Northern Star

and is qualified to begin working for merit badge noted on the reverse side.

12/12/12      Scoutmaster Bucky  
Date                      Signature of unit leader

**BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA.**

34124

Front of Blue Card

The applicant has personally appeared before me and demonstrated to my satisfaction that he has met all requirements for the (please print)

**Scouting Heritage**  
Merit badge

**Scoutmaster Bucky**  
Name of counselor

**5724 Aldrich Avenue South**  
Address of counselor

**Minneapolis, MN 55419**  
City                      Zip code

**612 - 483 - 0665**  
Telephone number of counselor

Scoutmaster Bucky      12/31/12  
Signature of counselor                      Date

Checked and recorded:  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Certificate and badge presented \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Applicant will turn in this portion to his unit leader for record posting.

**APPLICANT'S RECORD**

Name Bob Katt

has given me his completed application for the  
Scouting Heritage  
Merit badge

Completed on 12 / 31 / 12 by \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Scoutmaster Bucky  
Signature of counselor

M.R. Eagle  
Signature of unit leader

**NOTE TO BOY SCOUT, VARSITY SCOUT, OR VENTURER:** Retain this copy for your permanent records.

**COUNSELOR'S RECORD**

Applicant Bob Katt

Troop      Unit number 3042  
 Team  
 Crew

**Scouting Heritage**  
Merit badge

Date completed 12 / 31 / 12

Remarks: Very impressed with this Scout's preparation. Well organized! Scout had impressive patch collection

It is suggested that the counselor keep this record in case any question is raised later in regard to this award.

Back of Blue Card

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## TRAIL TO EAGLE<sup>9</sup>

The following steps will guide the Scout to the resources and requirements for finishing the Eagle requirements and securing the approvals of Lakeview District and Longhorn Council.

1. **Life Scoutmaster Conference:** Scoutmaster stresses to the Scout the requirement of selecting Eagle Coach.
  
2. **Life Scout:** *Trail to Eagle* Packet handed to Life candidate during Board of Review includes:
  - a. Trail to Eagle guide (these two pages)
  - b. [Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#) (ESSPW)
  - c. [Eagle Application](#)
  - d. [District Board of Review Checklist](#)
  - e. [District Project Checklist](#)
  - f. [Service Project Planning Guidelines](#)
  - g. [Age Guidelines for Tool Use](#)
  
3. **Eagle Project**
  - a. Scout verbally defines the project scope and secures Scoutmaster's verbal approval of concept.
  - b. Scout defines the project scope and secures Eagle Coach's verbal approval of concept.
  - c. Scout writes up the project proposal sections in the project workbook.
    - i. Form 1 (ESSPW, pages 7-10)
  - d. Scout secures pre-approval signatures:
    - i. Eagle Coach (verbal: this will probably take several revisions)
    - ii. Scoutmaster
    - iii. Beneficiary
    - iv. Troop Committee (Advancement Chair)
    - v. District (see [their website](#) for contacts and procedures for securing an appointment) will sign the ESSPW and provide a Routing Sheet.
  - e. Scout completes plans for his project in the Project Final Plan section of the workbook.
    - i. Form 2 (ESSPW, pages 11-16)
    - ii. The project is not started until this is complete.
  - f. Scout secures approval of Fundraising Application from Council if needed.
    - i. Form 3 (ESSPW, pages 17-18)
  - g. Scout executes his project, adds the post-project information to the Project Report section of the ESSPW, and then secures the following approvals:
    - i. Form 4 (ESSPW, pages 19-20)
    - ii. Beneficiary
    - iii. Eagle Coach Counselor (verbal)

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<sup>9</sup> GTA, Section 9

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- iv. Scoutmaster
- h. Scout secures signed Individual History Report from Unit Advancement Chair.

### 4. The Scoutmaster Conference

- a. The Scoutmaster conference is performed by the Scoutmaster except on rare occasions (e.g., vacation, illness, or Scoutmaster's son)
- b. It is the last requirement that must be performed before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- c. Before scheduling the Eagle Scoutmaster Conference, the Scout must confirm with the troop's Advancement Chair, that all requirements other than the Scoutmaster Conference and Board of Review have been successfully completed.
- d. The goals of this conference are:
  - ✦ Review your experience and knowledge gained in Scouting.
  - ✦ Review the Scout service project.
  - ✦ Discuss future expectations as an Eagle Scout.
  - ✦ Confirm all requirements for Eagle Scout are complete.
  - ✦ Scout Spirit: Explain the meaning of Scout Spirit.
  - ✦ Leadership: This review assesses what the Scout have learned from his leadership roles in Scouting and how the Scout applied these skills both in and outside of Scouting (i.e., which leadership role(s) did you complete throughout the Scouting experience, including the role for Eagle advancement)? What the Scout learned about leadership while in the position(s) of responsibility? How has the Scout applied these leadership experiences outside of Scouting?

### 5. Application to Council

- a. Scout completes Eagle Scout Application.
- b. Scout secures meeting with [Council Advancement Chair](#) to submit [required documents](#):
  - i. Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook with project signature page
  - ii. Eagle Application
  - iii. Individual History Report
- c. Council clears Scout to request Board of Review.

### 6. Board of Review

- a. Scout requests Board of Review from [District Eagle Board of Review Coordinator](#) and notifies Unit Advancement Chair of pending Board appointment.
- b. Scout presents at Board with required copies of application and project workbook.
- c. Scout's Handbook and application will be signed at a successful Board.
- d. Scout delivers signed application and routing sheet to Council.

### 7. Congratulations

- a. Scoutmaster receives notice of Council's approval of Eagle Application.
- b. Unit Advancement Chair secures medal kit, neckerchief and slide, and plaque.
- c. Scout and family plan Eagle Court of Honor.
- d. Committee updates plaque at FUMC (First United Methodist Church).