

## Important Information for Washington County Units About Eagle Project Proposals

The Washington County District Advancement Committee is providing this communication to hopefully clarify some confusion on the part of adult leaders about Eagle projects. Over the past six months, the Committee has seen three recurring problems that we believe adult troop leaders can address with their Scouts to expedite project approval. These are:

1. Selecting projects that meet BSA standards,
2. Demonstrating leadership in the project proposal, and
3. Providing complete information in the written project proposal.

### Selecting an Acceptable Project

The *Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project* booklet describes (on pages 2 and 3) parameters and limitations for selecting an Eagle project. Please remember that it is the Scoutmaster's and the Troop Committee's responsibility to understand these parameters and limitations and to guide the Eagle candidate to design his project accordingly.

The Advancement Committee would like to call your attention to one of the noted limitations that has recently caused several project proposals to be rejected. That limitation is "routine labor (a job or service normally rendered) should not be considered" as a potential Eagle project.

The Washington County District Advancement Committee interprets this "routine labor" exclusion to mean maintenance type work that would routinely be performed by the organization's maintenance or custodial staff (whether or not the organization employs such a staff). This includes, but is not limited to, work like cleaning, painting, weeding, replacing window panes, etc. Project proposals designed solely around such work will be returned as not meeting the BSA's criteria for an Eagle project. As you are the first level of review, please do not delay your Scouts' projects by allowing them



to submit proposals for routine maintenance work to the Advancement Committee. The Committee only meets monthly, so rejection by the Committee could cost your Scout up to two months of time in getting started on his project.

### Demonstrating Leadership

The purpose of the Eagle project is, first and foremost, for the Eagle candidate to demonstrate leadership. Therefore, the candidate must convince the Committee of how he is going to lead his helpers. The Committee reviews the candidate's written proposal for how he plans to organize the project, instruct his helpers in what they are supposed to do, train them (if necessary), supervise the various work teams, correct the helpers if they stray from the assigned plan or method, and bring all of the parts of the project to a successful conclusion, all the while providing for everyone's safety.

In other words, the level of explanation of leadership detail should be such that another person, unfamiliar with the project, could pick up the proposal and manage the project to completion. If the Scout does not present this level of documentation, it is up to the troop leaders to coach him to provide this information prior to submitting the proposal to the Advancement Committee. If a project proposal is fraught with references such as "I will do this . . ." and "I will do that . . .", it probably does not demonstrate the leadership that the Committee is looking for. If, on the other hand, it contains phrases like "I will establish work teams to . . . .", "I will train . . . .", "I will supervise . . . .", and "I will check to ensure . . . .", the project is more likely to be one that the Committee will find acceptable from a leadership standpoint.

### Writing It All Down

At this point let's talk about the importance of building a solid written project proposal. The Committee understands that youth are pulled in many directions these days and that they often "throw things together" in order to move on to another activity. However, the Committee believes that because the candidate is in pursuit of Scouting's highest rank, the Eagle project proposal deserves his

very best effort. It is extremely important that the Scout takes care to ensure that his entire leadership plan is detailed *in writing* in his project proposal. If it is not written down in the proposal, the Committee has no option but to assume it is not going to happen! On occasion, the Committee has rejected project proposals only to find that the Scout has omitted parts of his leadership plans for the project that, if provided in the original submission, would have allowed the project proposal to be approved on first reading.

### Life to Eagle Presentation

Finally, a group of Eagle Scouts presents a "Life to Eagle" program twice each year. This presentation discusses in detail all aspects of the process of advancing from Life to Eagle. It focuses on the responsibilities of the Scout, his parents, his Scoutmaster, his Troop Committee, the members of his Board of Review, and the District Advancement Committee in this process.

Since the inception of this program, Council leadership has urged Scoutmasters, Troop Committee Chairs, and Troop Advancement Chairs to attend this program, as this group is responsible for the first level of review and approval of the Eagle project. However, these folks have never attended in large numbers.

Therefore, we are enclosing a copy of the 28 slides that serve as the basis of this presentation. Hopefully this will whet your appetite for the complete information that is offered in this short seminar. The next presentation of "Life to Eagle" will be on November 12, at 7:00 PM at the Scout Service Center. We hope to see you there. To help publicize this event, please post the attached announcement on the bulletin board in your troop meeting room.

As always, we thank you for everything you do for the Scouts of the Washington County District. You DO make a difference!

Sincerely.

*The Washington County District Advancement Committee*