



Bulletin photo by Jennifer Buren

Ian Cohoon (left) became an Eagle Scout on Jan. 25. During the ceremony, Cohoon's mother, Kathy presents him with a pin as his father, Steve, looks on.

Cohoon joins Eagle Scout ranks

By JENNIFER BURDEN
jennifer@buffalobulletin.com

Ian Cohoon wiped his nose with the back of his hand. He pulled it away and watched the snot freeze. He looked up and saw rolling hills covered with snow. He had a ways to go on his cross-country skis, and for a moment he thought, "Why am I doing this?"

It was just one of many tests Cohoon faced on his journey to becoming an Eagle Scout, the highest advancement rank in Boy Scouting. But Cohoon's trek with Scouting began long before his ski trip in the Bighorn Mountains.

With some nudging from his family, Cohoon joined the Cub Scouts when was in kindergarten.

"I have three older brothers, all of whom were in Scouts at the time, and in a lot of ways, I wanted to be just like them,"

Cohoon said in an email. "In addition to that, both of my parents were involved in Scouting in one way or another, so Scouting has always been pretty important to my family."

From Cub Scouts, Cohoon moved on to join the Boy Scouts, earning merit badges along the way. His sash is covered with patches – art, canoeing, chess, dog care, environmental science, first aid, fishing, model design and building and much more.

To become an Eagle Scout, Cohoon had to earn a total of 21 merit badges, including first aid, citizenship in the community, citizenship in the nation, citizenship in the world, communication, cooking, personal fitness, emergency preparedness or lifesaving, environmental science or sustainability, personal management, swimming or hiking or cycling,

camping and family life.

Cohoon also had to be active in his troop for at least six months, demonstrate that he lives by the principles of the Scout Oath and Scout Law, provide leadership to others in a service project, participate in a unit leader conference and complete an Eagle Scout board of review.

Cohoon had to pick a project that would demonstrate leadership skills that he has learned in Scouting. His project was to construct two cabinets and a set of cubbies for the First United Methodist Church.

"I got a lot of help from my mentor, Mr. Chesbro, the wood-working teacher at (Buffalo High School), and I am really glad that he agreed to mentor me through my project," Cohoon said.

Cohoon said he doesn't think many people realize the effort that goes into becoming an Eagle Scout. The point of the project, he said, is to demonstrate the leadership skills obtained as a Scout.

"The important part of that statement is the 'obtained as a Scout' part," Cohoon said. "Becoming an Eagle Scout extends much further than the project and the paperwork that you have to complete at the end of your journey. It goes back to when you first started Scouting because that is when you took your first step on the long, hard road to achieving the highest

rank a Scout can receive."

It wasn't an easy road, Cohoon said. The hardest part, he said, was overcoming his early teen years. Like most adolescents, he was well aware of his peers and what was considered "cool."

"That was one of the most difficult times to find the motivation to continue on with Scouting, and it was also the time when I felt as though you have to be 'cool' and Scout wasn't 'cool' enough," Cohoon said. "I later learned that 'being cool' was one of the biggest lies that I ever told myself because Scout(ing) ... has played a huge role in defining who I am today. It has taught me a lot. In the words of my mother, 'Who cares if you are cool.'"

But the journey wasn't all uphill. Cohoon spent time in the mountains, hiking, rock climbing and fishing. He enjoyed the "adventures." He said Scouting is hard, and there were times when he thought, "I don't want to do this anymore."

But he persevered.

"What pushed me through it all was to see my other brothers finishing their Eagle awards," Cohoon said, "and the motivation I received from my parents."

Cohoon was awarded Eagle Scout status, along with Seth Ables, at a Boy Scout ceremony at the Big Horn Baptist Church on Jan. 25.