

Student Spotlight: RVHS student, Matthew Lindbo, has earned every single Boy Scout merit badge

By Troy Krause

Posted Jan 29, 2018 at 3:36 PM

When Matthew Lindbo was in elementary school, he met a man named Dale Neeley.

“Dale had a table at a back to school night at Reede Gray,” said Lindbo. “He was talking about the Scouts.”

What he heard piqued Lindbo’s interest, and so he joined the local Cub Scout pack.

Later he joined Boy Scout Troop 97 and spent 11 years as a member of the Boy Scouts.

Like many other Boy Scouts, Lindbo gained a variety of experiences and learned many skills he knows will serve him well for the rest of his life. Lindbo accomplished many of the benchmarks of the Boy Scouts, including consistent awards for salesmanship and earning the Eagle Scout award, the Scout’s highest honor.



Yet, Lindbo was not done. He had another goal he wanted to accomplish.

As of Jan. 2, Lindbo achieved something very few in the Boy Scouts have ever done. He earned every single merit badge offered through the program.

“There are 137 merit badges,” said Lindbo.

Some of them are easier than others, Lindbo admitted, while others proved to be more of a challenge. In the end, Lindbo said he learned something from the experience of earning every single one of them.

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His first merit badge was for citizenship and community. Lindbo earned that badge by helping clean up a shop in the City of Belview. His final badge was woodworking.

“I made five bat houses,” said Lindbo, adding those houses will be put up this spring.

When Lindbo originally joined the Scouts, he had said he wanted to earn all of the merit badges, but, as is the case with many Scouts, life got in the way. Yet, Lindbo, kept earning more and more of the badges, and toward the end of his time in the Scouts he was convinced that the goal was still within reach.

Lindbo said over the years he worked on them he would start with more of the challenging ones as well as those that were required, and along the way he would incorporate more of the elective badges.

“I call those the fun ones,” he said with a smile.

During summer camp, Lindbo would earn as many badges as he was able, adding this past summer he spent all of his time earning badges.

Yet, he added, there was never a time when he was working on a badge merely to just earn it.

“I wanted to learn something that I might be able to use later in life,” he said.

For example, Lindbo said to earn his SCUBA diving badge he had to make four trips to Fargo for classes. His dedication paid off, and Lindbo said as a result he has gained a new hobby and made a few new friends.

“One of the best parts of earning each badge is the people,” Lindbo said. “There are so many people who are so willing to help and offer their support. I have met a lot of good people along the way.”

Lindbo said during the process he has also started a video blog online, adding he plans to continue doing that, too.

For Lindbo, the most challenging merit badge was bugling.

“It’s hard to admit that, because I play the trumpet in the school band,” said Lindbo, “but I have braces, and they really made it hard to hit those high notes.”

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The badges related to hunting, including rifle and archery, were some of the easier ones, because he had experience in those areas already.

“I like to hunt,” said Lindbo, adding he is also a member of the school’s trap team.

Just performing the task is not all that goes into earning a merit badge, said Lindbo. There are other lessons, such as understanding the safety requirements and how things work, that are part of earning each badge.

“You have to show the council that you can do it,” said Lindbo, adding Scouts are presented badges during honor courts held twice each year.

There is currently no award for earning every single merit badge, but Lindbo is hoping to change that. His latest mission is to convince those at the national level to create some sort of recognition a Scout can include on the uniform that indicates they have met that goal.

Lindbo said he is one of just over 330 people in the entire history of the Boy Scouts who have met the goal of earning all 137 merit badges.

Having now turned 18, Lindbo’s time as a member of the Boy Scouts has come to an end, but his involvement with the organization will continue.

“I plan on becoming an adult leader and staying involved with the Boy Scouts for the rest of my life,” said Lindbo. “For me it is about paying back all that was given to me. The Scouts have taught me so much, and I want to help others have that same experience.”

According to Lindbo, on his way to get his photo taken for this article Jan.23 he saw an eagle flying overhead and considered it a sign that someone, somewhere thinks pretty highly of his efforts, too.