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Rose Hill Boy Scout first Kansan to earn all 134 merit badges

By Shelby Reynolds
The Wichita Eagle

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Two percent of all Boy Scouts will ever become an Eagle Scout, the organization's highest rank, and only half a percent of them will earn all 134 merit badges.

Jeremy Ebert of Rose Hill has achieved both. He is the 180th person nationally to earn all 134 merit badges, and the first from Kansas, according to his scoutmaster, Mark Esslinger.

"It was never truly about being that half a percent," said Ebert, 18. "It was all about the knowledge ... The whole world is open to you with the merit badges."

Darla Ebert is thrilled her son completed such a rare feat.

"It's proved to me that when he's got something he really wants, he can push and push and manage to achieve it," she said.

Just two years ago, with only about 30 merit badges to his credit, Jeremy Ebert didn't think he would finish the archery merit badge. The first four requirements for the badge were easy enough, but the fifth and final one was trouble.

"My left hand has palsy, so I can't use it like anyone else can," he said.

He worked with the archery merit counselor to learn a new method for shooting an arrow at the right proficiency from about 100 feet away.

"He taught me a method that eventually proved to be effective," Ebert said. "... I was ecstatic because I didn't think I could earn it.

"That's the time I said, 'Let's get them all,'" he said.

Scuba-diving and water skiing were among his favorite badges. The scuba-diving merit badge included six requirements, among them an open-water certificate. But water skiing was just as fun, Ebert said.

"I drank about a gallon of water, and not on my own accord," he said. "But there's no feeling like standing up on water and just gliding."

Because not all the merit badges could be completed within the city limits of Rose Hill, some traveling was in order.

Photos

1 of 3



Jaime Green/The Wichita Eagle | Buy this photo
Boy Scout Jeremy Ebert from Rose Hill has earned 134 merit badges, all that is available for Boy Scouts to earn. He's the first in Kansas to do this and only the 180th person ever to get that many. (December 31, 2012)

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"His mother and father would go to every length possible to facilitate his merit badge," said Esslinger, Ebert's scoutmaster for Troop 0626. "They've gone so far as Nebraska and Dallas, Texas, to get merit badges."

While Ebert's merit badge journey has ended, that of his 14-year-old brother, Jared, is still under way.

"I'm hoping he'll follow in my footsteps," Ebert said of his little brother. "It would make me very proud if he did."

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Dad

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