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## Ardmore Eagle Scout earns all 121 merit badges

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ARDMORE, Okla. — The Boy Scouts of America is one of the largest value-based organizations for young men in our country. But only a handful of those are as decorated as one Ardmore Boy Scout. Shelby Levins has more.

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There are 121 merit badges a Boy Scout can earn. A scout only need to earn 21 of those to become an Eagle Scout, the organization's highest rank, but an Ardmore scout has now earned every single badge available— and more.

Trish Weaver has plenty of reasons to be proud of her son, Wes. □

“Wes is probably the kid that every parent would want,” she says.

Last week, Wes Weaver earned his last merit badge. The Plainview High School senior is only 17 years old, but it's hard to tell judging by his Boy Scout career.

“In 2008, there were 20 scouts across the county who had gotten all 121 merit badges. I'm adding my name to that list,” Wes says.

But Weaver's accomplishments don't end with badges. The teen also earned his Eagle Scout award by building a 112-foot bridge over a creek bed in Lake Murray State Park. It was no easy task with the rugged terrain

“Just digging the holes I was thinking I'm never going to be done. All my weekends are going to be spent out here digging holes,” Wes says.

“It was scheduled to take between two to three months. It ended up taking a year and 6 months,” says Wes's father, Rusty Weaver.

Rusty helped his son plan out the bridge and construct it, along with the rest of Troop 112. Now all kinds of area bicyclists, hikers and outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy the state park a little more.

“A lot of times people would stop at this point on the trail because they didn't want to go over the

creek when the weather was bad. This allowed them to be able to go further,” Rusty says.

Wes says the love for the outdoors and adventure was part of the motivation behind this project. Trish Weavers, say it is Wes’s drive to help other people and determination to accomplish goals that will keep him going.

“Wes wants to make a difference in the world, and he's definitely started off on the right track.”

Wes is set to graduate from high school this spring. He says he plans to study engineering in college and hopes to say active in Boy Scouts when he's older.

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## Eagle Scout Soars

Weaver earns 121 badges, leads bridge-building project

By Keith Howard, Staff Writer

The Daily Ardmoreite

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Ardmore, OK — It was learning to play taps that was the hardest part for the 17-year-old senior at Plainview.

"The mouth piece and I don't get along," said Donald Weston Weaver, nicknamed Wes, "Because it's so tiring. Plus the bugle was very difficult for me."

But completing the bugling merit badge requirements on Feb. 15 earned Weaver his final Eagle Scout merit badge — No. 121.

Weaver set a goal to earn all of the merit badges at age 13. And he wasn't going to let a mouthpiece stand in his way.

"It was really just kind of the challenge of doing it. Of setting a goal and doing some thing that very few people have accomplished," he said.

In addition to earning all of the merit badges, the aspiring engineer has been taking classes at the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics, Regional Center. Weaver has already been accepted into engineering programs at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute, Ind., and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Although his acceptance to MIT and OU are still pending, Weaver isn't too worried.

"I'm kind of a space cadet kind of kid," he said over the phone on Saturday, adding that "Star Trek" is one of his favorite sci-fi shows. "I'd like to be able to further the (scientific) research to get us to that point. I'd like to help us get to that, so I guess I'm a dreamer."

But he remains well grounded with his community service work.

In October 2007, Weaver completed a bridge building project in Lake Murray State Park with help from about 20 other Scouts and about 10 adults working for a total of about 550 hours. Weaver recruited his helpers from Troop 112, his same local unit. It took the team about 13 months to complete the 112-foot walking bridge, which stands about 16 feet off the ground.

There are sharp rocks and jagged terrain hidden at the bottom of the creek by a small body of water, and bikers and hikers have suffered broken legs and bad falls, he said.

"It was kind of to help people and help the community," said Weaver. "We kind of got rid of a danger there in the creek. They could slip on the rocks and fall into the creek if you're not used to riding it a whole lot it is kind of dangerous."

And Weaver's dad couldn't be prouder of all his son's hard work, he said.

"It's been a struggle to get everything done before he's 18," said Rusty Weaver, who is also a Scoutmaster. "He came up with the idea to do the bridge and I was kind of interested and excited about it. It's a huge job. Some things probably wouldn't have gotten done if people had known what all was involved."

The elder Weaver originally estimated the project was only going to take two to three months. But hand-carrying all the materials and drilling holes in sandstone made the project more time consuming than expected, he said.

"The great thing about a project like that, at first it looks like a path that's insurmountable, but they see it coming together and it gives them confidence," he said.

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