

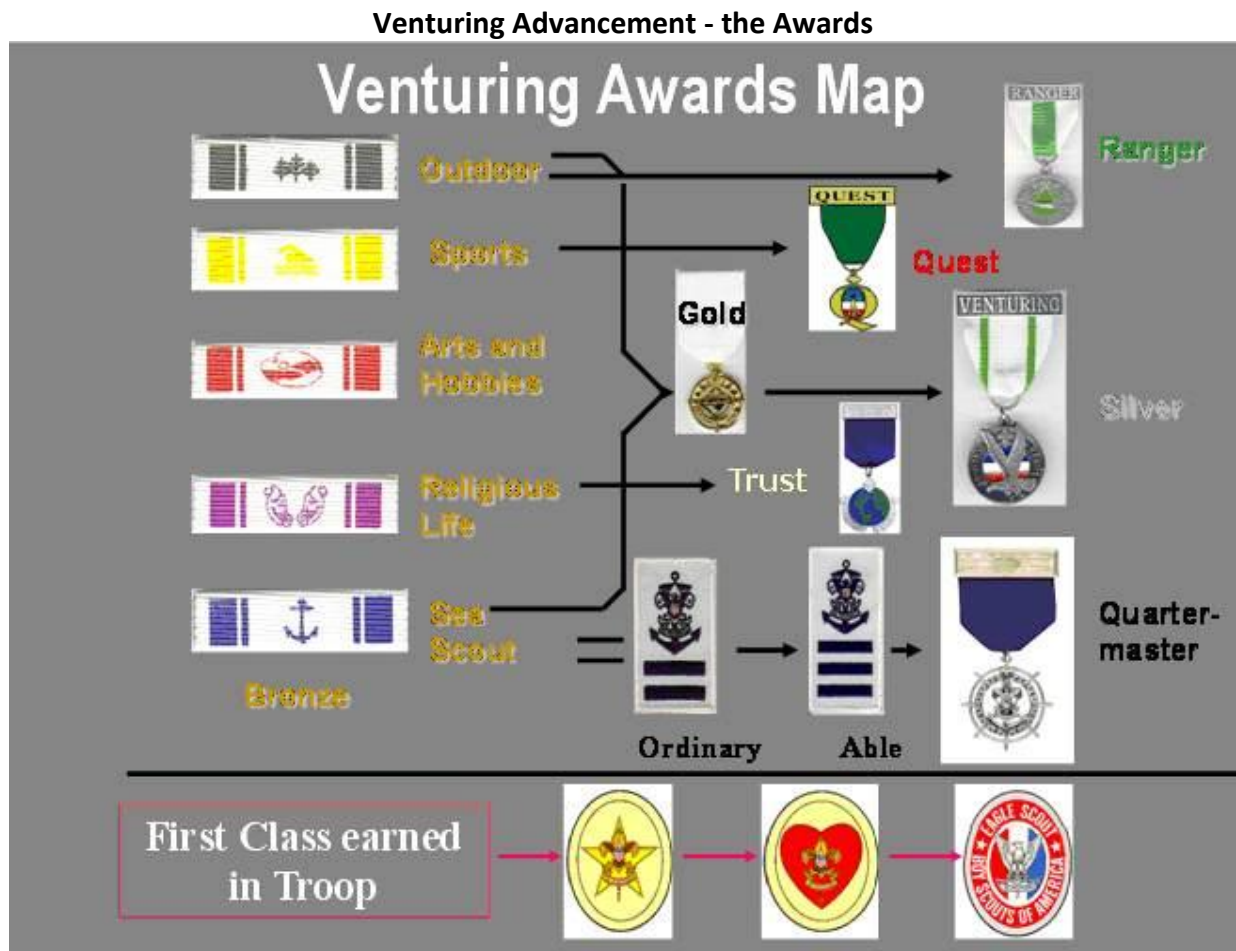
How To Promote and Support Crew Advancement

Sometimes there is a misconception that advancement isn't important in Venturing. Not true. When we talk with experienced Venturers and ask them about their experience in Venturing earning advancement is usually one of the first things they talk about. Advancement, the earning of the Bronze awards, the Gold award, the Silver Award, the Ranger Award, the Quest Award, the Trust award, or the Quartermaster award according to them is where they learn and master skills and then learn even more when they have to teach that skill to others. They say learning those skills and teaching changed their lives. One young lady said that when her advisor brought up the subject of doing advancement, she said "I don't want to have to work, I just want to have fun." She also then went on to say, she appreciated her advisor's determination to get her and her fellow Venturers on the advancement trail. After four years at it, she had earned all five Bronze awards, the Gold award, the Silver award, and the Ranger Award and was working on the Quest award. She said that the real value of Venturing was in what she had learned while earning all those awards. It had opened doors and interests she would never have opened on her own, it had given her self-confidence, and prepared her for the life ahead.

That is why we do advancement in Venturing. It is the primary way we get Venturers to grow. So how can we at the district or council level help crews with advancement? Here are some suggestions:

1. Believe Venturing advancement can and does have a positive effect on Venturers and is a good thing.
2. Know Venturing advancement.
3. Be able to train and motivate advisors and crew youth leaders on advancement.
4. Show crews how they can do activities and then recognize their Venturers for accomplishing parts of a particular award. This might get them started showing them that it isn't as hard as they think.
5. Help crews integrate advancement into their annual plan.
6. Help crews plan courts of honor and annual recognition dinners to properly recognize youth for their accomplishments.
7. Recognize crews who do well with advancement on your website or newsletter.
8. Ask advisors or youth leaders who have success with advancement to give a presentation as to why they are successful at a Forum.
9. Offer council or district Venturing advancement days or even a three-day advancement camp.
10. Write real life stories about why advancement works for your website or newsletter.
11. Recognize your upper level award recipients like Silver and Quartermaster at your board meetings. Show the Venturers how important you think their achievement is.
12. Make regular advancement related presentations at Forums.
13. Start off right by convincing new advisor how important advancement is why you do New Advisor Fast start and Basic Training.

14. Send letters to the Venturer's principal or dean when they earn significant awards.
15. Help Ventures arrange for their teaching responsibilities. Make it easy for them to connect to packs and troops.
16. Recruit needed consultants to help crews.
17. Get all advisors to attend Powder Horn.
18. Make sure Venturing crew commissioners know and understand Venturing advancement and are committed to it.
19. Review crew advancement progress at your monthly committee meetings.
20. Build an action plan to help crews that need help with their advancement program.



Bronze Awards

There are five introductory awards called Bronze Awards. The Bronze Awards are designed to get Venturers started on the advancement trail. They cover a wide variety of interest, outdoor, sports, arts and hobbies, religious life, and even Sea Scouting skills. A Venturer may earn just one or all five and we should encourage that by recognizing those Venturers who do earn all five.

Gold Award

If we think of Venturing advancement as a progression, the Gold Award would be next in line. The Gold Award does require the earning of one Bronze Award and is the only award that has a tenure requirement of one year. When Venturers are interviewed and especially those who are or where Boy Scouts say they are amazed at the approach to Gold Award and they say it with a smile on their face and in a positive way. They say they can't believe that they are invited basically to custom design what they will do to earn the award. Most Cub Scout and Boy Scout advancement has few options for custom design. On the other hand, the Gold Award tells a Venturer they will be working in three primary areas, personal development, service to others, and leadership development. They then have to do work in six areas under these three major categories. They can do work within Scouting or outside of Scouting. As an example under leadership, if they are the captain of the cheerleading squad, they can count that for one of the leadership requirements. The Gold Award requires a crew level review. The Gold Award is very challenging, requires many months of planning and hard work. Venturers report great pride in earning the Gold Award and should be recognized appropriately. Recognize your Gold Award recipients at your district or council Venturing committee meetings, district committee meetings, board meetings, put their picture on your website, in your newsletter, in your local newspapers, and in their school newspaper, send a letter to their principal or dean, and recognize them at other appropriate district and council events.

Silver Award

The highest award one can earn in Venturing is the Silver Award. The Silver Award has been around for almost 60 years. The Silver is the culmination of work done and knowledge acquired while working on the Bronze Award and Gold Award. It requires additional work in the areas of leadership, ethics, and emergency preparedness. There is no tenure requirement, but does require a crew-level review. As this award is defined as the highest award in Venturing, it too is worthy of recognition. When a Venturer earns this award, make a big deal out of it as it is a big deal. Help your crews learn how to do quality courts of honor and recognize your Silver Award Venturers in the same ways as suggested above in the Gold Award section.

Ranger Award

Ranger has proven itself to be one of the most popular awards Venturers earn. It is extremely challenging usually taking over a year to earn. Ranger is described as an award to recognize elite outdoorsmen. It requires a Venturer to work in multiple outdoor/high adventure related areas through the earning of eight core requirements and at least four of the eighteen electives. Ranger does not have a tenure requirement and does not require a crew review. It does however require approval by consultants and/or the crew advisor. The Ranger Award has been around for almost 70 years and is highly coveted by Venturers.

Ranger lends itself well to be integrated into crew programming if that is what that crew wants. You can assist your crews with this by showing them how they can plan programs both crews

meetings, weekend activities, and big trips. Example: The crew could invite an American Red Cross instructor to teach the crew Wilderness First Aid Basics in preparations for a summer backpacking trip and the crew could do several shake down backpacking weekend trips. Just doing these programs meets several requirements for the Ranger, as well as other awards like the Gold and Silver. A crew could plan a weekend wilderness survival weekend for a Webelos den or Boy Scout troop. On the weekend, the Venturers could teach survival skills and put on a wilderness survival demonstration. Again, all requirements for the Ranger Award. For crews interested in high adventure, planning a program around the Ranger Award is a great strategy. It also makes the crew program relevant and exciting.

Again, recognize your Venturers who earn the Ranger Award.

Quest Award

Quest is the most challenging physical fitness program ever offered by the Boy Scouts of America and sports and fitness is important to America's teens. Not only is it fun to earn and relevant, it can have a very positive impact on others. While working on Quest, Venturers will work on diverse areas of personal physical fitness taking around a year, saturate themselves in a particular sport, and learn how to help others with fitness. Then they will choose to do one of five electives. The electives are very comprehensive, hard hitting, relevant, and challenging. They range from Drug Free Sports to Sports for the Disabled. Associations with sports and fitness groups such as the US Olympic Committee, many Olympic national governing bodies, Human Kinetics, and even the US Anti-Doping Agency make this a quality award.

There is so much you can do with this award program. Like Ranger, it offers a huge opportunity of crew programming. In addition to direct benefits to crews who choose to incorporate Quest as a program, individual Venturers and crews can offer skills they learn to other groups. Here are some examples:

1. One or more Venturers are working on Quest. They all have learned how to do fitness assessments and do fitness counseling. One has chosen Disabled Sports for their elective, while another has chosen Drug Free Sports, and another has chosen Nutrition. Using these skills and the need for them to make a presentation related to their areas of work, they offer to a Cub Scout pack to run a Saturday morning Sports Clinic. The clinic could start with physical assessments for all of the Cub Scouts, their parents, brothers and sisters, and others. (By-the-way, physical fitness is one of the first things Cub Scouts work on as they start their advancement trail.) Then Venturers could offer programs on after school nutrition, Drug Free Sports, introduce the Cub Scouts and their families to a new sport like Fencing and a disabled sport like Goal Ball.
2. Venturers working on Quest or who have earned Quest could come to the opening of a Woodbadge course, a board meeting, or Forum/Roundtable to do Fitness Assessments on the attending adults.
3. A Venturer who has chosen Drug Free Sports could ask her principal if she could make a presentation on Drug Free Sports to one of the high schools sports teams. Venturers

who choose this elective are actually trained by the US Anti-Doping Agency and certified as trainers for them. What a great value our Venturers can provide to sports teams and other groups.

Quest requires the earning of the Sports Bronze Award as the first requirement, has no tenure requirement, and requires no crew review. Like Ranger, it does require approval of outside consultants and the advisor.

Trust Award

Trust is the newest Venturing award. It is a religious life-based award. It requires a Venturer to delve deeper into their own religion's beliefs, to learn about and understand other organized religions, and to understand and appreciate diversity and other points of view.

Like Ranger and Quest, it provides crew programming opportunities. If a crew is interested in working in this area, they could plan a series of programs inviting in representatives from a variety of religions, ethnic groups, or cultures to make presentations at crew meetings. A Venturer could make a presentation on one or more cultures to a den or could make a display or presentation at a roundtable or even a camporee. A Venturer or group of Venturers could even plan and run a Boy Scout camporee program based on cultures.

The Trust has no tenure requirement, but will most likely take over a year to complete, requires the earning of the Religious Life Bronze Award and the Venturer's denomination's Religious Scouting Award and has no crew review.

General

Another strange aspect of Venturing advancement is that Venturers can work on multiple awards at the same time. Even though a Venturer is required to earn one Bronze Award for the Gold Award, that doesn't mean they have to earn and be presented that Bronze Award before starting work on the Gold Award. It means that they can actually work on both at the same time and if by some coincidence they complete both at the same time, that the Bronze must be presented first. Theoretically, a Venturer can be working on multiple awards at the same time, like two Bronze Awards, the Gold Award, the Ranger, and the Quest. The Venturing advancement program is very flexible while still challenging, but it is somewhat different than Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting advancement. It was developed with the older teen in mind, with broad appeal, choice, variety, ability to customize somewhat, and of course the "teaching others" element.

Multiple credit is also approved. If a Venturer does something that is required in several awards like a life saving course, they may get credit for that course in multiple places. This

counts for young men who are working on Boy Scout advancement at the same time. If a Venturer is working on the Boy Scout Hiking Merit Badge and is required to do X number of hikes, he can count those hikes as well for his Ranger award backpacking core requirement.

Venturers in some cases can get credit for previous work. That only works for certifications that are current. Examples of this could be a scuba certification or an unexpired CPR card. A Venturer might have done three hikes while working on the Boy Scout hiking merit badge three years ago, but this wouldn't count. If the requirement isn't satisfied by an unexpired certification card, all work must be done while a registered Venturer.

Review of the Venturer Handbook or Venturing Leader Manual that lays out requirements for all awards, will tell you that in the Bronze Award area, advisors are given some leeway in substituting some of the requirements. A note at the bottom of each Bronze Awards tells the advisor he or she make substitute some requirements if there are no resources available for a young person to complete that requirement. This does not give advisor wholesale authority to change the Bronze Awards. Your committee can offer assistance to advisor to make these changes if warranted.

Advancement Resources – ordering information can be found [Here](#)

Details of the Venturing awards can be found in the [Venturer Handbook](#), [Ranger Handbook](#), [Quest Handbook](#), [Trust Handbook](#), [Sea Scout Manual](#), and the [Venturing Leader Manual](#).

There is also a crew Advancement Chart. Recommend to your crews to purchase and keep one of these charts so they and you can chart advancement progress.



The [Venturing Forum guide](#), has resources as well.

Venturing Awards and Recognition Program, No. 25-884. This is a free poster with pictures of the awards and description of all advancement and recognition award, with order numbers.

Courts of Honor

Research shows that young people are like the rest of us, they like recognition. Recognition is actually one of the Venturing methods because it is so important. Throughout this guide there have been recommendations on how to recognition your Venturers' achievement like putting their pictures in newsletters or recognizing them at your board meeting. However, recognition from and by their peers and family is extremely important. That is how the Boy Scout Court of Honor was created and it works just as well for Venturers.

Help you crews learn how to plan and run high quality courts of honor that will make the Venturers glad they did all that work, make the parents proud, and motivate other Venturers to work on advancement too. Having a formal court of honor takes planning, a believe that the effort is worthwhile, and enthusiasm. There is no wrong or right way to do a court of honor. Some are long and fancy while others are short and to the point. The common element is that they are formal and provide an opportunity for center stage for those young people who have accomplished something worthwhile. Your committee can offer a short seminar to your crew advisors and crew presidents/vice presidents on how to plan and run courts of honor, a special Forum session on courts of honor, put a web-based training on your website, do one-on-one training, or whatever, just don't leave it to chance.

Here is a court of honor plan that has been around since 1950. It is called the star ceremony. Feel free to use it as is or to embellish it.

Star Theme Ceremony **From 1950 Explorer Handbook**

Since celestial navigation or orientation is an activity in Exploring, several ceremonies have been based on the theme of the North Star and the constellations of Ursa Major or Big Dipper. The stars symbolize such ideas as outdoor adventure, leadership, group traditions, loyalty to the group, and community service, with Polaris, the guiding star representing the Scout Oath and Law.

The equipment for carrying out this theme is simple. A large sheet is stretched across one end of the darkened room. On the back of it are pinned eight cutouts of stars to form the constellation and Polaris. The cutouts are cardboard about 8 inches square, each with a 5-pointed star 2 ½ inches in diameter cut out of the center.

Each man participating has a flashlight. As his turn to speak comes, he snaps on his light about two inches behind his cutout, holding it there till the end of the ceremony. If necessary, the lines he speaks may be written on the back of the cutout.

This theme has many possibilities.

Script

Since celestial navigation is an activity in Venturing and Sea Scouting, it is fitting that we will base this worthy recognition of the leadership and contributions of several fellow Venturers and Sea Scouts on celestial navigation. When we teach celestial navigation as part of Boy Scouting, Sea Scouting, or Venturing, we usually start with the North Star and the constellations of Ursa Major or the Big Dipper.

Like the stars that define these easily recognized constellations. Venturing also has "stars" or ideas that symbolize it. Those Venturing stars are outdoor adventure, leadership, group traditions, loyalty to the group, and community service, with Polaris, the guiding star representing the Venturing Oath. Venturing and Sea Scouting are more than just programs. They are navigational tools that can guide us throughout our lives.

Those constellations that have guided countless explorers throughout time are made up of individual stars. Venturing is also made up of stars that guide us.

Tonight we recognize many of those stars that that have shined so brightly guiding Venturing and those who follow the Venturing path. We will also install several new stars to that constellation we call Venturing. These new stars will shine very brightly as they takeover the leadership of the youth of the Boy Scouts of America.

First I would like to recognize _____
who has been the _____ Star (appropriate for his/her achievement)(shine star in backdrop if using). This young man/woman _____ (bio on honoree).

Describe accomplishment _____

(Honoree comes forward to receive honor.) _____, all of us in Venturing appreciate you sharing your light with us. You have shined brightly so that many may follow. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in recognizing, _____.

Applause!

We would like to continue the Court of Honor recognizing several stars from other constellations (if from other crews) or same constellation (if from same crew.).

Note: Continue on in same manner, using different stars if desired.

Closing:

Tonight we have seen the sky illuminated by the light of this/these young people. Their example and their light will guide those who follow perpetuating the movement we call Venturing.