

Southwest Iowa



**Merit Badge College 2008
Program Information**

www.meritbadge.info

Iowa Western Community College
Saturday, October 25, 2008
Council Bluffs, IA

Updated August 22, 2008



Welcome to the 1ST Annual Southwest Iowa Merit Badge College,

For many years Scouts have had the opportunity to work on skills training and merit badges to further their advancement goals. We are pleased to provide Scout advancement in an environment where everyone can enjoy the fellowship and get exposure to what Boy Scouting is all about. We have put together a wide ranging program so that every Scout and adult can participate. The staff and I hope that both you and your Scouts will have an enjoyable and educational experience.

The cost for the college is \$10 per registered Scout, \$12 for adults taking training, and \$7 for leaders. The cost includes lunch. Eligibility prerequisites are listed on the webpage for some classes. Please make sure your Scouts meet these guidelines. Please note that some merit badges have additional fees, such as greens fees. Possession of the current merit badge booklet and Blue Card filled out and signed by the Scoutmaster is required for entry to class. Blue Cards will be returned to the college by the counselor and we will return them to you. Partial awards may also be retained by the counselor.

We are also offering Scoutmaster Fundamentals for adults desiring to share in the education with their Scouts. This class is not just for Scoutmasters and is appropriate for anybody that wants to enhance the troop program for their boys. Webelos leaders are encouraged to take this class to prepare for their transition to the troop. For those adults not assisting in teaching Scouts on Saturday we encourage you to sign up. We also have a limited offering of Webelos activity badge classes to allow Webelos to participate with their Boy Scout troops.

The college is a resource-intensive program and we ask that you provide one adult for every four boys from your registered unit to serve as coaches and mentors. This will allow you to supplement the counselor for boys that require additional help that may be difficult for the counselor to provide in a group setting. Please evaluate the number of adults from your unit that will be working with the boys to ensure that each Scout is offered the program that he deserves. Please remember to register all adults, even if they are not involved in training.

This is a reminder that the "Uniform of the Day" for all class sessions will be the Field Uniform (Class 'A' dress uniform). Some activity intensive sessions dictate the Activity uniform (Class 'B'), so I suggest you have your Scouts wear an appropriate T-Shirt under their Scout shirt so they can quickly change, if required. The attire for adults is also Class 'A' Scout dress uniform.

Yours in Scouting,

Jim Bunch, Dean of College
2008 Merit Badge College

FEES

Regardless of the number of classes taken, the fees for youth will be \$10. For adults attending training the cost will be \$12. The registration fee for leaders and other adults not taking training will be \$7. All fees include lunch.

IMPORTANT DATES

Web site opens for registration	August 23, 2008
Unit registration cutoff.....	October 15, 2008
Scout & Adult registration cutoff.....	October 15, 2008
Scout schedule revisions cutoff.....	Upon Payment Received
Payments deadline	Within 10 Days of Registration but no later than October 20, 2008
Online web site closed	October 15, 2008
Merit Badge College	October 25, 2008

GENERAL SCHEDULE

The following times are subject to change. Please consult the latest schedule posted on the College web site.

Unit Check-In.....	Saturday 7 AM – 8 AM
Merit Badge Counselor Check-In	Saturday 7 AM – 8 PM
Classes	Saturday 8:30 AM–10:15 AM; 10:30 AM–12 PM;
.....	1:15 PM–2:45 PM; 3 PM–4:30 PM

This is the first time that an undertaking of this size and scope has been conducted in our area for an event of this type. Attendance is expected to be high and includes Scouts, Scouters, counselors, and other staff. Ample lead time is necessary to properly plan for all events. Scouts also need time to prepare for classes by becoming familiar with the material in the merit badge booklets prior to the day of the College. In order to minimize the processes in place event deadlines set by staff are firm. If you have special needs or requests these **MUST BE** directed to the Dean of College. All classes are by registration at www.meritbadge.info. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THESE DEADLINES.**

Unit Registration: Units must register by 5PM on October 15, 2008. Registration is accomplished by unit at the college website www.meritbadge.info.

Scout & Adult Registration: All registrations must be entered prior to 5PM on October 15, 2008. Every Scout attending Merit Badge College must be currently registered with the Boy Scouts of America. Mid-America Council has a blanket liability policy for the protection of BSA registered leaders and Scouts. It is important, therefore, that adult Scouters and Scouts be properly registered in the Boy Scouts of America. Please remember to file a tour permit for group travel to this event.

Scout Scheduling: Scout class schedules must be finalized by receipt of payment by October 20, 2008. Any payments not received by the cutoff date will result in the registration being dropped. *Please notify the college immediately if a substitution is made so that the proper name appears on the class rosters.*

Payments: All payments must be received by close of business on October 20, 2008 to the Trailblazer District post office box. Only one check for each unit, please. No multiple checks.

Web site closed. The website will close at 5PM on October 15, 2008 and will no longer be available after that time.

HIGHLIGHTS

Here are some highlights for this year's event:

- On-line registration at www.meritbadge.info
- Streamlined unit check-in and check-out procedures
- Outstanding merit badge counselors with class information at www.meritbadge.info
- Adult Leader Training Program with on-line sign-up program

REGISTRATION & PAYMENT

UNIT REGISTRATION

Each unit must register at www.meritbadge.info which affords you the opportunity to set up a user ID and password. This allows you to register adults and Scouts and schedule classes. Only one person is to register from each unit and that person will then register the unit. Be sure to include leaders. Schedules are finalized upon payment of all applicable fees. Fees are not refundable but in the event of emergency another eligible Scout or Scouter can take the place of a previously registered participant. It is requested that one person from each unit be designated as a point of contact, along with e-mail address for sending you important updates and notices.

Please note that the Merit Badge College provides the classrooms, meals and equipment to help provide an environment conducive for learning. It is up to the leaders and adults of each unit to provide additional coaching and supervision for their Scouts.

SCOUT & ADULT REGISTRATION

A per-person participation fee provides for merit badge classes, insurance, and lunch.

Note: Additional fees for some merit badges may be required. Please check www.meritbadge.info for any fees or other pre-requisites.

It is the policy of the Boy Scouts of America that trips and outings may never be led by ONLY ONE ADULT. AT LEAST TWO ADULT LEADERS, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required for all trips and outings. It is recommended that each unit bring one adult for every four Scouts registered, especially for younger Scouts that may need assistance or additional coaching that is beyond the scope of the class or counselor. Some classes require your participation and transportation to off-site venues.

PAYMENTS

All fees must be sent via mail to the below address. Payment must be received within 10 days of registration but no later than close of business October 20, 2008. If you feel that your payment may not be received by the deadline via postal service you must contact the Dean of College to make arrangement to hand deliver your payment by the deadline. Please remember to send one check for the entire unit registration.

Checks should be made payable to **Mid-America Council, BSA** and addressed to:

Southwest Iowa Merit Badge College
Trailblazer District
PO Box 114
Council Bluffs, IA 51502

REFUNDS

Due to the nature of the online registration system once a Scout is enrolled in a class that seat is blocked off specifically for him. Therefore, refunds will not be given but another eligible Scout that is prepared to meet all pre-requisites and class requirements (such as age or rank) can be substituted for the person that will not be attending.

PROGRAM

WHICH PROGRAM IS FOR MY SCOUTS?

Merit Badge College is an opportunity for Scouts to meet with qualified counselors and earn merit badges needed for advancement toward Eagle Scout. Most Eagle-required merit badges that do not involve extensive outdoor requirements are being offered. Other merit badges are offered to round out a fun program for your Scouts. Some may require more planning and work following the college than others. Additional requirements needed after the college will be the responsibility of the Scout to coordinate with the counselor. For those merit badges having limited availability of counselors, it is a genuine opportunity that otherwise might be missed.

Merit badges of a suitable nature for younger Scouts working toward advancement to First Class are also offered. Statistics prove that Scouts who attain First Class in their first year of Scouting stay in the program. Please adhere to any age, rank, or other pre-requisite requirements needed for entry to any particular class.

Most merit badges will be two sessions in length. Whether or not the merit badge is actually completed the day of the college is dependant upon the number of requirements and the individual skills and abilities of the Scout. It is expected that most Scouts will have the ability to work on two merit badges at the college. Remember it is you, the unit leader, who has final say as to how many and which merit badges a Scout may work on at Merit Badge College. We offer a wide variety of merit badges, so take into account the merit badge counselor resources available to your troop and place the restrictions you deem appropriate for your Scouts attending Merit Badge College before approving their merit badge class schedules. Please be aware that a Scout may not fully complete the requirements for a merit badge at the college. In that event, he will complete a significant portion of the requirements. For example, Cooking merit badge requires the preparation of several meals on a troop or patrol camping trip. Obviously, that will not occur here. It is also unrealistic to expect to complete any Eagle-required merit badge in three hours.

It is often suggested that 50% of the merit badges a Scout earns be accomplished outside of his immediate troop. The College provides that opportunity.

WEBELOS PROGRAM

In an effort to continue to provide opportunities for Webelos to participate in activities with Boy Scout troops we have scheduled a limited number of activity badge classes to help you recruit new boys and aid in the Webelos-to-Scout transition. Due to limited classrooms we are unable to offer more classes this year but will review this part of the program for possible expansion in future colleges. ***Please look carefully at the Webelos sessions. Due to limitations in the registration system we had to use merit badge titles for these classes. The session number will be preceded by 'WEB' then the number 1, 2, 3, or 4.***

RIGHT TO LIMIT OR CANCEL CLASSES

We reserve the right to limit registration for Merit Badge College or for any course. We also reserve the right to cancel courses or activities as needed. Although we do not anticipate the need to do this, there are limits on the number of participants we can accommodate. **Please note that each Scout may only register for one of the Citizenship merit badges. These are the most popular merit badges and this policy is in place to insure that a maximum number of boys will be given the opportunity to earn one of these Eagle-required merit badges.**

FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED

We have established class size limits to ensure a quality experience for your Scouts. Class attendance must be registered using our official web site. Classes are assigned using this procedure and it is important to submit payment within deadlines so that registrations are not dropped. Many classes fill up quickly, so the sooner you register and enter schedules, the better opportunity your Scouts have to register for classes they want. With that in mind, please remember to schedule wisely. A seat taken is no longer available to another Scout.

MERIT BADGE REQUIREMENTS

Merit Badge requirements are revised from time to time. Merit Badge College will use the latest requirements as specified in the official BSA publications for all merit badges. Be certain the Scouts of your unit understand their obligation to fulfill the latest requirements and are in possession of the latest edition of merit badge books. A current merit badge book is required for this event. Scouts not in possession of the merit badge book may be denied entry to the class by the counselor. A Blue Card filled out and signed by the Scoutmaster is also required.

Many merit badges may require post-college counseling. We suggest that each Scout, parent, and leader look at the link on the website for the most current merit badge requirements and pre-requisites required for entry to a particular session.

Most Merit Badge College Counselors will be available to advise Scouts needing post-college counseling. Each counselor will outline the procedures to follow to complete requirements not completed at the college. Blue Cards will be filled out by the counselors after the college. They will be returned to you by the college after receipt from the counselor. This insures that valuable class time is not sacrificed for administrative duties. Counselors may keep Blue Cards for the Scouts that will be completing additional requirements with them or returned for long-distance Scouts.

CONCERNS

In the past, Counselors have expressed concerns that:

- Scouts attending class were NOT in proper uniform
- Some Scouts failed to show up for their class
- Some Scouts lacked preparation for the merit badges they sought.
- Some Scouts never bothered to obtain a copy of the merit badge book
- Some Scouts wandered into a class for which they were not registered.

All Scouts must be enrolled for the merit badges they seek. NO Scout will be allowed to “WANDER” into a Merit Badge Class for which he has not been enrolled. If the Scouts are not properly prepared and do not complete additional requirements after the college they will not earn the merit badge.

Work with your Scouts to register and prepare them appropriately. We have a sophisticated online registration system which is critical to keeping records and planning for courses. Please work out the registration of your Scouts carefully.

It is imperative that each unit work with their Scouts in preparing for the College. A list of pre-requisites for each merit badge is listed on the website. Remember, many badges will include work on additional requirements not completed the day of the college.

MEALS

The cost of lunch is included in the registration for all Scouts, adults attending leader training, and unit leaders and other adults. Lunch tickets will be in your packet at check-in. Please be aware that food cannot be carried into the classrooms.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

Uniform for this event is the field uniform (commonly referred to as Class “A”). Bring pens, pencils, paper, loose-leaf binders, clipboards and any other school supplies needed for advancement and merit badge classes. Activity uniforms (Scouting or troop T-shirt) are approved for classes where the Scout dress shirt is not practical, such as Golf. It is recommended that the T-shirt be worn under the uniform shirt. The Class ‘A’ uniform is required for opening and closing ceremonies. Some classes are also held off-site or include visits to local businesses and the positive image of the Boy Scouts of America must be displayed at all times.

Each Scout is required to be in possession of the Merit Badge Book and Blue Card signed by the Scoutmaster for the class he is attending. **SUCCESS COMES TO THOSE BOYS WHO ARE, INDEED, PREPARED.** Scouts not in possession of the Merit Badge Book may, at the counselor’s discretion, be denied admittance to the Merit Badge Class. It is recommended, therefore, that any merit badge books, equipment, materials or supplies be purchased prior to arriving at Merit Badge College.

Scouts need to review the requirements for the merit badges they seek and bring whatever special equipment that is needed.

- Fingerprinting classes - all necessary equipment, materials and supplies will be provided.
- Golf green fees paid for with registration will be supplied with a ticket indicating payment.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ONLINE SCHEDULING

One class is actually two merit badges. Due to the nature of the requirements the morning sessions of Personal Management will also include Family Life. Your Scout does not have to do both merit badges but that is how the class is set up. Due to online system limitations we were not able to specify Webelos activity badges and Scoutmaster Fundamentals as accurately as desired. Merit badge names are used so please look closely at the descriptions before registering for a class. Adult leader training is listed as Atomic Energy and for Webelos classes we used the merit badge that most closely resembled the session being offered as long as it did not conflict with badges being offered at the college. ***Please look at the schedule closely!***

HEALTH FORMS

Please remember to have health forms with you in the event medical care is required while the Scouts are in your care.

BLUE CARDS

Please be sure that each Scout has a “Blue Card” for each merit badge and that it is filled out in ink and signed by the Scoutmaster prior to arriving at the college. The counselor will complete the appropriate portion of the card and return it to the college. Blue Cards and class reports will then be returned to the unit. Partial completion will only result in the completed portions of the card being filled out by the counselor.

CAMPUS

DIRECTIONS

Iowa Western Community College is easily accessible from I-80, exit 8 (US- 6) and heading west approximately ¾-mile. You can also approach from the west on US-6 after travel through Council Bluffs. Signs will be displayed giving on-campus directions to the Merit Badge College.

ARRIVAL and CHECK IN

Plan to arrive with no more Scouts than are registered and paid. You may arrive with fewer but don’t show up with more - NOT EVEN ONE MORE!

Out of Town Units: At press time camping arrangements were still not finalized. If you would like to camp Friday and/or Saturday night, please contact the dean. We will have final details shortly.

Unit registration will be conducted Saturday morning from 7-8 AM. Only one person from each unit is to check-in and receive your packet. To minimize congestion, please do not bring the entire troop to the registration area. Only bring the personnel required to complete check-in.

PARKING

Other groups are normally on campus and you may have to park a farther distance from our location and walk to the Merit Badge College. Please observe all traffic and parking rules and signage. Vehicles parked improperly are subject to towing at owner expense.

ALL VEHICLES MUST BE PARKED IN MBC DESIGNATED PARKING AREAS ONLY. MBC designated parking areas will have signage properly placed to assist you.

CLASS VENUES

A College Site Plan will be included in the check-in packet for each unit. They will also be posted at strategic locations throughout the campus. Most Merit Badge College classes will be conducted in a classroom atmosphere at Iowa Western Community College. Where appropriate, classes will be held outdoors.

TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN VENUES

Unit leaders and adults will be required to provide transportation for their Scouts to off-campus venues and for any visits to off-site locations that are part of the class (such as Architecture site visit).

CHECKOUT & DEPARTURE

Checkout procedures for units camping will be provided once arrangements are finalized. The closing ceremony is a vital part of the college and you will then need to pick up your final packages as our checkout procedure. Advancement records for your Scouts will be sent after the college. Counselors may retain Blue Cards for Scouts needing additional work after the college. Out-of-Council or long-distance units will receive their Blue Cards so that Scouts may complete requirements with a counselor in your home area. Since materials will be sent to the unit leader of record on the website it is important that you provide accurate contact information on the website.

CONDUCT and DISCIPLINE

COLLEGE CODE

The Scout Oath, The Scout Law and the Outdoor Code shall be the code of Merit Badge College. Scouts and adult leaders are to respect the privacy of others. We are guests of Iowa Western and other classes will be in session the day of our event. As with other Scouting events, the use of alcoholic beverages, firearms, sheath knives and fireworks is positively prohibited. Use of motors, power plants and generators by attending units is not authorized. Adults that smoke must do so only in designated Iowa Western smoking areas AND not in the view of ANY Scouts or youth.

Remember that we are guests of Iowa Western Community College. There shall be NO LITTERING and NO DEFACING or DESTRUCTION of any dwelling or structure. Adequate adult supervision must be provided by each participating unit.

Discipline is the responsibility of the Scoutmaster or other designated adult leader in charge of the unit. A Scout whose conduct is not consistent with the College Code will be referred to his Unit Leader for appropriate disciplinary action. Units unable to control the conduct of their Scouts will be directed to leave the College grounds immediately. The counselor is the final authority in the classroom. Disruptive Scouts not adhering to classroom decorum will be sent to registration by the counselor. A conference with the Scout and Scoutmaster will be held by the Dean of College for resolution.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Each unit and its Sponsoring Organization shall be liable, in the full amount, for theft and/or property damage caused by its adult leaders or Scouts. The Boy Scouts of America and Mid-America Council, BSA does not provide insurance protection to units or sponsoring organizations for theft and/or property damage.

COLLEGE DRESS

The uniform is an important part of the thrill of Scouting. It helps build spirit in the patrol and the troop and promotes the brotherhood of Scouting. Proper dress affects the appearance of Merit Badge College and encourages participants to act in a manner expected of good Scouts. Shirts are required to be buttoned and tucked in. No sandals or open-toe shoes are allowed. Pants should be neat and not have holes in them and worn on the waist. Scouting pants are encouraged as part of the uniform.

HEALTH & SAFETY

SECURITY

Because the public has access to the campus units will need to exercise their own vigilance. Secure personal effects and valuables under lock & key. Report any incidents or problems to College Security, located at College Headquarters.

FIRST AID STATION

A First Aid Station will be located on campus. Illness or injury treated at the unit level MUST also be reported and logged at the First Aid Station. Serious illness or injury will be referred for medical attention, as required.

PERSONAL INJURY

In all instances involving emergency first aid, the adult leader at the scene shall dispatch a runner to the College Safety Officer at the First Aid Station for additional assistance. The College Safety Officer will take charge upon arrival at the scene. Under no circumstances should a seriously injured person be moved without proper assistance. All accidents or injuries requiring first aid must be reported to the College Safety Officer.

SUCCESSFUL ADVANCEMENT

ABOUT MERIT BADGE COLLEGE

Advancement is the keystone of the Scouting program because it builds a boys' confidence, gives him self-esteem and motivates him to stay in Scouting for the long haul. Advancement is the engine that builds membership and participation in all other Scouting activities.

This is a new format for us and we hope that you will enjoy your attendance at the college this year. We hope to evaluate the program and make enhancements where necessary. Future events may offer expanded classes at more off-site locations taking advantage of area businesses and organizations. This is new territory for many of the volunteers involved and we ask for your patience and understanding.

Merit Badge College is not a program that guarantees advancement, nor is it a 'merit badge factory.' It is an opportunity for Scouts to meet with qualified counselors who help them earn the merit badges they need for advancement. For those merit badges with a limited availability of counselors it is a particularly important opportunity that otherwise may have been missed. MBC is an important opportunity for you, as the adult unit leader, to begin or continue a vigorous advancement program for your troop.

Merit Badge College has helped Scouts advance further, kept more boys in Scouting and, in several instances, even helped deserving boys who otherwise might have missed the opportunity, to become Eagle Scouts. We have seen the results. **THE PROGRAM WORKS!** Merit Badge College will continue to work only if you participate and help your Scouts to succeed. Start now to discuss with your Scouts what merit badges they plan to earn. Encourage them to wisely schedule classes and to use their time.

Be sure your Scouts understand their obligation to be prepared if their expectation is to complete a merit badge. If projects are required that can be done prior to the college please make sure that the Scout brings these materials to class with them. It is the discretion of the counselor to approve such work. It is suggested to allow the counselor to teach the material prior to embarking on any additional requirements that will not be done the day of the college. See the link to prerequisites on the website. It is each Scout's own responsibility to bring the "notes," "demonstrations," "showings," "completed projects" and any special equipment required for the merit badges he seeks.

Merit Badge Counselors often can determine, when counseling a boy, whether or not he has fulfilled certain requisites for a merit badge (... observe for 30 days ...). A Scoutmaster's note certifying the Scout has completed such requisite work helps, particularly with those boys who lack communication skills or confidence.

It is the Merit Badge Counselor, however, who determines, finally, whether or not the boy has satisfactorily completed the requirements for a merit badge. As stated many times here, it is unrealistic to expect your Scouts to complete any of the Eagle-required merit badges in one three-hour session and additional work on requirements after the college will be necessary for successful completion. It is our goal to provide the opportunity for Scouts to meet with experienced counselors in the subject area and provide the value of their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the classroom and for any post-college counseling.

Thank you for providing your Scouts with the tools necessary to be successful today.