

Rotary Merit Badge University  
Fort Collins, CO  
January 2024

Merit Badge University (MBU) has been a collaboration between Scouts BSA and the Rotary Club of Fort Collins for over three decades. MBU allows Scouts to earn merit badges in a classroom setting to help them advance in Rank. More importantly, it exposes them to professional skills, hobbies, life skills, and community skills from Rotarians and other professionals.

There are 138 different merit badges that Scouts can earn. 21 are required for the rank of Eagle Scout. In 2024, MBU offered 18 Merit Badges to 109 Scouts. They attended MBU classes on Saturday morning, January 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Scouts received 4 hours of instruction each day which gave them the opportunity, with homework, to earn two merit badges. More than 40 adults participated in teaching the classes and reviewing the completion of requirements for earning the badges.

Badges offered included; Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Fire Safety, Entrepreneurship, Photography, Aviation, Coin Collecting, Art, Animal Science, Communication, Digital Technology, First Aid, Space Exploration, Sustainability, Family Life, Personal Management and Weather. Eight of these are Eagle rank required merit badges.

Our Rotary Exchange Student from Finland met with Scouts earning the Citizenship in the World merit badge. She was able to discuss typical values, holidays, ethnic foods, and traditions practiced there. She also discussed some of the biggest changes she had to make, living in Colorado.

A quote from one of our “thank you’s” to a local fireman who helped teach for the first time.

*I wanted to you know how grateful we are for the experience, knowledge and energy Matt Snyder brought to teaching Fire Safety Merit Badge at Bighorn District's 2024 Merit Badge University. Matt spent time preparing for and delivering two 2-hour classes at MBU 13 and 20 January 2024. He is now helping scouts finish their Fire Safety Merit Badge by hosting visits to fire stations where they identify the different types of fire trucks and their functions.*

*Matt set a great example for the Poudre Fire Authority and I would not be surprised if one or more of his scouts became a firefighter because of Matt's involvement. Thank you for sharing Matt Snyder.*

Keys to the success of this program is communication. Communication with results from the organizing committee to Merit Badge Counselors, from Counselors to Scouts and parents, and from Counselors back to the organizing committee.

This year was very gratifying as there was a significant increase in engagement by the Scouts from the previous year. It gives me hope that the COVID hangover may be dissipating. There was a much higher rate of badge completion over last year.

In years past, finding merit badge counselors started in October. This coming year we are going to work on getting counselors to commit in August-September and we will try to have two qualified counselors per merit badge to mitigate the risks of last-minute absences.

Total Expenses for Merit Badge University were about \$1,300. Detailed expense report attached.