

# HOW TO REQUEST CONGRATULATORY LETTERS FOR YOUR EAGLE SCOUT

2 MAY 2012

---

THIS ARTICLE CAN BE FOUND AT:

[HTTP://BLOG.ScoutingMagazine.org/2012/05/02/how-to-request-congratulatory-letters-for-your-eagle-scout/](http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2012/05/02/how-to-request-congratulatory-letters-for-your-eagle-scout/)

---

(Updated Feb. 19, 2013) Earning the Eagle Scout Award is something to write home about — literally.

Politicians, astronauts, celebrities, and other recognizable figures have been sending hand-signed letters to new Eagle Scouts for, well, 100 years.

The very first congratulatory letter was sent in 1912 when the first Eagle Scout, Arthur R. Eldred, received a note from James E. West, the first Chief Scout Executive.

Today, parents and Scout leaders can request these scrapbook-worthy keepsakes from pretty much anyone with a mailbox.

But who is known to respond, and how do you contact them? And when do you send off these requests anyway?

To help, I searched the Internet and consulted a source closer to home — my dad, who sent away for the letters included in this post when I received my Eagle.

## When to request Eagle Scout letters

The basic rule is ASAP, my dad says.

After a boy completes his board of review, he's officially an Eagle Scout. But most boys don't have their Eagle court of honor until weeks or months later, so that's your window for requesting and receiving letters.

My board of review was in March, but my court of honor wasn't until late April, so my parents had time to collect letters to include in the scrapbook displayed at my ceremony.

Of course, any letters you don't get by the ceremony date can still be added to the boy's Eagle Scout scrapbook later.

## **Whom to ask for letters**

- **City and county officials:** Your mayor, city council officials, school board president, superintendent, parks and recreation director
- **Religious leaders**
- **State officials:** The governor, your area's state legislators
- **Business leaders:** CEOs and executives at major corporations based in your city
- **U.S. officials:** The president, cabinet members, senators, representatives, military leaders, department heads
- **Past presidents or elected officials no longer in office**
- **Prominent national people:** astronauts, athletes, filmmakers, actors, and famous Eagle Scouts like Mike Rowe or Steven Spielberg
- **Anyone who means something to your Eagle Scout:** Get creative! Does he have a favorite author, athlete, musician, or actor? Try to track down that person's contact information. The letter may go unanswered, but it only costs you 45 cents to try.

## **Where to find addresses**

Rather than reinventing the wheel and posting addresses here, I'll just link to **this excellent resource** from the U.S. Scouting Service Project. <http://usscouts.org/eagle/eaglecongrats.asp>

For addresses not listed there, find the appropriate Web site and look for the "Contact Us" link — usually at the top of the page or at the very bottom.

Some entities, such as NASA or the U.S. Army, allow you to submit request online. Many of those links are at the U.S. Scouting Service Project, as well.

## **Try local first**

**NEW:** In mid-February 2013, I received this note from Todd Reid, state director for the office of Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida. Reid saw my blog and had this to say:

*Just a note on how it works best for our office, which may be representative of most members of Congress.*

*Requests are best sent to local in-state offices, not the Washington office. Mail sent to the US Capitol undergoes a lengthy security screening that can take up to three weeks from the time the letter arrives in DC until it is delivered to our office. Letters sent directly to our in-state offices go thru their own security screening process, but because the volume of mail is much less, the process moves much faster.*

*Senator Rubio is always glad to acknowledge the Scout's achievement, and we are honored that their friends, leaders and loved ones invite us to participate in a small way in the Scout's Eagle Court of Honor.*

Thanks for the insight, Mr. Reid.

## **What to include**

The U.S. Scouting Service Project recommends including the Scout's full name, troop number, council, and a short description of his Eagle Scout service project. For best results, address it to a specific person, not an organization.

Including a self-addressed stamped envelope makes it that much easier to get a response.

## **Final thoughts**

Go for quality over quantity. Think about it: Would your Eagle Scout prefer four or five letters from people that are important to him or three dozen mainly from people he's never heard of?

Plus, as the U.S. Scouting Service Project notes, keeping the total number of requests from new Eagles to a manageable size may prevent someone from refusing to accept requests altogether.