

City to honor Eagle Scout at council meeting

The Department of Public Safety will be honoring a local teenager during this week's Jacksonville City Council meeting for his work at the local Jacksonville Police Training Facility in August.

Richlands High School student Ben Hall, 17, directed a project to build a fence around the firing range at the Jacksonville Police Training Facility on Stillwood Road. The 430-foot fence was constructed in one day by 15 volunteers in the community, and planned and orchestrated by Hall.

Hall, an active Boy Scout who completed the project as his Eagle Scout Project, is part of the Order of the Arrow.

Hall said he learned about the need for the fence through his mom who works for the City of Jacksonville. Hall met with JPD Chief Mike Yaniero and got the project going.

He said the most difficult part of the project was dealing with the rain on the actual work day. He said keeping everyone focused and on-task was a challenge, but seeing the finished project was the most rewarding part.

"It looks good out there," he said.

For the project, Hall not only put up the fence but designed it, priced the materials, worked with local vendors to get donations for the supplies, organized delivery of materials and delegated volunteer workers. Hall also was the project manager the day of the work.

"I gained valuable leadership experience," he said. "[It] was a good bonding experience with my friends and family that helped on the work day."

Hall's mom, Jeanette, said the entire experience has been one of "growing up" for Ben and she is very proud. Her other sons are also involved in scouting: middle son, Dakota, 16, who is also in Troop 790, plans to make an obstacle course for the K-9s out at the training facility for his Eagle Project. Her 14-year-old, Luke, has some time before he begins thinking about his project, according to Hall.

JPD officials said the fencing helps maintain control of areas when there are different groups training, and also helps maintain the landscaping to enhance the appearance of the facility.

Hall added that "making the police officers happy is important to the community."

Yaniero noted that the JPD operates by a principle from Sir Robert Peel, which states "Police are the public and the public are the police," in terms of community interaction and help.

To begin his project, Hall had to receive prior approval from the Eagle Project Review Board, but now that the task is complete, he has to finish paperwork on the full Eagle Rank application and go back in front of the district board for a final review. He said he hopes to do that in October.

Each Eagle ceremony is specifically tailored to the scout's individuality. Hall said his ceremony will most likely take place at the Lighthouse Baptist Church or his home and it will be presented to him by his Scoutmaster Scott Segabarth.

"What a great way for young people to become involved in their community," said JPD Chief Mike Yaniero, director of the Jacksonville Department of Public Safety. "We were very pleased that Ben selected JPD for his project."

After the presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation to Ben for the project, City Council also will discuss a joint project with the N.C. Department of Transportation to improve pedestrian traffic near Jacksonville High School on Henderson Drive. The estimated \$58,242 project, which would consist of advanced lighted school crossing warning signs with advance stop bars at the existing mid-block crossing, would be funded by the N.C. DOT and constructed by the City of Jacksonville.

In addition, the board will appoint a resident to the Jacksonville Tourism Development Authority.

And the board will discuss designating voting and alternative voting delegates for the 2013 N.C. League of Municipalities annual business meeting.

The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Jacksonville City Hall, located at 815 New Bridge Street.