FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Abingdon, Virginia Teen Named The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year

INDIANAPOLIS (May 9, 2012) – An Abingdon, Va., student has been named The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year for 2012.

Jason E. Dreyzehner, 18, a senior at Abingdon High School, earned the award and a college scholarship worth $10,000. The award was announced during The American Legion's board of directors meeting here.

The award recognizes Dreyzehner’s practical citizenship at school, scouting, and his passion and commitment to community service. Dreyzehner’s Eagle Scout project consisted of researching the location, planning, and building a commemorative marker bed identifying the site of a fort built in Abingdon by Revolutionary War Patriot Captain Joseph Black. Working with the town council, the Historical Society, the town planner and a geologist, he pinpointed the location and then designed and built a raised triangular bed made of railroad ties to closely match a current bed nearby with a steam locomotive engine at the head of the Virginia Creeper Trail. Using funds supplied by Black’s descendent, David Black of Maryville, Tenn., the completed project was unveiled by Mr. Black during the Virginia Highland’s Festival with dignitaries from the Town of Abingdon, members of DAR and SAR chapters in period dress, and a 21 gun salute firing a volley in memory of those men who fought for freedom in the Revolutionary War. Dreyzehner periodically maintains the landscaping with his Venture Crew which meets nearby. Dreyzehner’s commitment to community service has been recognized with the President’s “Call to Service” Lifetime Award for over 4,000 hours of community service, the President’s Volunteer Service Gold Award, and the Congressional Award Gold Medal which was presented to him in 2010 on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C.

In 2007, he was awarded Scouting’s National Heroism Award for rescuing a 10-year-old child in the Atlantic Ocean off of Fort Fisher Beach, N.C., who had been pulled out by a strong riptide during high waves associated with Hurricane Dennis.

Fascinated with science, technology and mathematics from an early age, he attended Space Camp at NASA in elementary school. In high school, he joined and became deeply involved with the Technology Student Association and Relay for Life, a national service project, exposing him to cancer’s devastating impact on people. As a Relay for Life team captain, he learned about the disease and research efforts which led him to seek the field of cancer research as a career goal.

As an “All A Honor Roll” student, Dreyzehner placed 1st overall at the 2011 International Space Olympics in Korolev, Russia with his research project on a genetically engineered cure for cavities for use in space exploration; the competition included tests in
Dreyzehner plans to major in nanomedicine and conduct undergraduate research at the University of Virginia and to eventually become an entrepreneur, developing solutions to complex medical problems.

The American Legion also awarded a $2,500 scholarship to Jonathan Z. Chapman, III of Germantown, Tenn.; Robert J. Kawecki of Charlotte, NC; and Sean R. Chmielewski of Salem, Conn.

The American Legion has supported scouting since its first national convention in 1919. Legion posts sponsor more than 2,500 scouting units, serving more than 68,000 young people, at a cost of more than $1.7 million.

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