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Photo by Mark Kitchin

Robert Moorhead, left, is honored by Troop 236 Scoutmaster Jim Maguire during Eagle Scout ceremonies on Sunday.

NEWEST EAGLE SCOUT IS FIREFIGHTER'S FRIEND

By **MARK KITCHIN**
STAFF WRITER

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WASHINGTON TWP. - Long Valley's Robert Moorehead knew that his Eagle Scout project, a roof prop for a township fire company, was a success almost as soon as he finished building it.

"I had it up for five minutes and they were already up there using it," Moorehead said. "My brother Nick sent me pictures. I just got home and I live 10 minutes away. They told

me it was working great." Moorehead is one of many area Scouts finishing up their requirements to earn the highest honor in Scouting. The town-

ship has a strong history in Scouting. The various troops are closing in on the milestone 300th Eagle Scout which should happen some time next month.

Moorehead was honored on Sunday by the Tri-County Fire Department where he and his

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brother are members. About 50 people attended the event at the fire house on Route 57 in Mansfield including Washington Township Mayor Matt Murello and representatives of state government and service organizations.

It was the second Eagle Scout event held for members of Troop 236 over the weekend. Hudson McFarland was given a dinner and attained Eagle Scout status on Saturday.

"I've been a Scout since Cub Scouts," said Moorehead, a West Morris Central High School senior. "I started when I was 7. I've done it all the way through. It's the best thing I've done in my life. I've learned so many important skills.

"In this project, it was really tough but all the networking skills and public speaking and leadership things I learned I will carry with me for the rest of my life. They are so important to have. A lot of people don't have those skills, so I'm glad I did this."

Moorehead comes from a Scouting family. His older brother, Nick, was a Boy Scout and sister, Sarah, was Girl Scout and Gold Award winner. His parents, Robert and Jamie Moorehead, proudly looked on as officials praised their son's work and talked about the

project which is practical and functional.

The roof prop, a slanted structure used by firefighters to simulate ventilating a roof, took two years to design and fund and two months to build. It was constructed on a hill behind the fire house and many visitors walked on it after the ceremony to check out the Scout's handiwork and test its sturdiness.

"It is 12 feet by 16 feet in size," Moorehead said. "The top is plywood. The sides are made of 2 by 12's and the ramps are made of 2 by 10's."

The plywood top is replaceable. Firefighters currently practice how to cut holes in a roof without cutting the beam or doing anything that might compromise the structure. They cut the plywood for the proper ventilation needed for extractions. When practice is finished they replace the plywood sections that were used.

Moorehead enlisted the help of Philip Garcia, a friend of a friend, to help him design it and make sure it was structurally sound. As a result, Moorehead gave Garcia the "Mentor Award," which all Eagle Scouts bestow on the person who helped them the most in achieving the ultimate goal.

"Mr. Garcia had to make sure the weight was right and determined what the

proper design was going to be," Moorehead said. "I have a little experience in architecture but he has built one of these before. He helped me design this and determined what supplies I was going to need and then me and the guys built it."

Many speakers talked about Moorehead as being a shy, reserved individual. So it was no little task to muster the energy, enthusiasm and attitude needed to raise \$1,200 to get the project built.

"I learned that you have to go out of your comfort zone," Moorehead said. "I really didn't like talking to people. I didn't like networking and fund raising but when I did this I had to get out of the comfort zone. I had to go out and be an extrovert and do what I had to do to get this done. That is such an important skill. That's the most important thing that I learned from this project."

The project has some financial benefits for the fire company as well. Although Tri-County does not have a hook and ladder truck its members have to learn how to cut roofs in assisting other fire companies in Hackensack. Until Moorehead built his project, the firefighters would have had to go to the Morris County Public Safety Training Academy in Morris Township.