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66,000th Scout signs up

Council spanning from N. Arizona to Vernal is the largest

By Jessie Elder

Deseret Morning News

PROVO — When 7-year-old Aaron Peterson went in to join the Boy Scouts last week, he had no idea he would cause such an uproar.

The Utah National Parks Council showered the Orem boy with gifts because the new Tiger Cub was the 66,000th boy currently registered in the council, the largest in the United States.

The numbers have continued to rise. By Thursday, there were 66,350 registered Scouts in uniform running around the Utah National Parks Council, an area that spans from northern Arizona to Vernal, excluding Salt Lake County, which has its own council.

The Boy Scouts of America held a ceremony for Peterson and presented him with several Scouting items, including his bright orange uniform.

The free stuff, Peterson said, was his favorite part. Several Scouting leaders and Peterson's family attended the ceremony.

"He's been looking forward to Scouts for a long time," said Peterson's 11-year-old brother Ryan, also a Boy Scout.

Peterson's 8-year-old brother Christopher is also no stranger to the Scouting program, a Cub Scout who just earned the rank of Wolf. Christopher's favorite part of the ceremony was the balloons dumped on the ground for him and his brothers to pop.

The mother of the three boys, Susan Peterson, said she loves the Scouting program.

"It teaches them to be people of good moral character," she said.

The Tiger Cub program was formally introduced in the fall of 1982, but it wasn't until 2001 that the Tiger Cub den became a Cub Scout rank. The idea of starting a group for younger boys was conceived by Robert Untch, who is now known as the Father of Tiger Cubs. As one of about 30 Tiger Cubs in the Utah National Parks Council, Peterson's Scouting requirements include 15 indoor and outdoor activities geared toward first-grade boys.

Shay Lelegren will be Peterson's Cubmaster. Lelegren said he is excited to have Peterson in his troop and hopes the attention will bring more recruits.

