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Scouts post signs as census reminders

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BURLINGTON - Putting signs on the side of the road in the rain isn't how most teenage boys would like to spend a Saturday morning, but these are Boy Scouts.

Nine scouts and their leaders spread out across Boone County Saturday to post signs reminding residents to fill out their census forms which should arrive in the mail this week.

Michael Wermuth and Shane Higgins' first stop was the Burlington Post Office where they tacked a black and white poster reading "Census 2010: It's easy, it's important is confidential," on the bulletin board.

"I think it's an opportunity to help the whole nation," said 13-year-old Shane. "It's a rare opportunity, not many Boy Scouts get to do this."

Before heading out to post the signs at 35 businesses and 25 intersections, the scouts met at the County Administration Building where Boone County Judge-executive Gary Moore thanked them for their help.

Boone County's population is now about 115,000 and could top 120,000 in the new count, Moore said. The county now has two state representative districts.

"If we have 120,000, that means we're going to get another district, so instead of two state reps going to Frankfort to stand up for our principles and our values in Boone County and our citizens, we could have three," Moore said.

In the 2000 Census, Boone County had the highest response percentage in Northern Kentucky, said Kevin Costello, chairman of the Boone County Complete Count Committee.

Costello gave the scouts detailed maps complete with GPS coordinates to show them where to put the signs. The locations included street corners, gas stations and grocery stores.

The project fulfilled community-service hours for Troop 805 of Union, said Mark Jensen, scout master.

"It's good for the kids to see us working not just to help people but to help the government," he said.

Scout Riley Kneale, 13, said he didn't know much about the census before the project. "It's a learning opportunity," said Riley, of Florence. "It's good for the community."

Michael, 14, of Florence, said he'd rather be watching television than driving around with his mom and fellow scouts, but he needed the community service hours to reach the rank of Life Scout, which is the final step before Eagle Scout.

"I just got up like an hour ago," he said.

His friend Shane was more enthusiastic. When Michael's mother, Michelle Wermuth, told the boys they were going to nine locations, Shane exclaimed, "sweet."

He was disappointed that he needed two more community-service hours.

"Otherwise I could do this all day long," he said.
