



"Our Town"

Tips for Video Shooting

It's wonderful to be part of an energetic and committed team, especially when it involves your neighbors and friends. What better way to nurture a sense of belonging and pride in your community than telling others why it's such a special place? This project capitalizes on both your enthusiasm and knowledge of your town.

To help you tell the story more effectively we've asked our videographers at WPSU to share some of their secrets and strategies for successful videotaping. Here are their tips:

- If possible, change the setting on your video camera to Widescreen (16:9) instead of Full screen (4:3). Some cameras offer "letterbox" or "pan-scan" as a third option, but please don't select them as your camera's aspect ratio.
- Scope out a scene before starting to record it. Then develop a plan and see which vantage points provide the best views. All shots should be **10 seconds long** or more. And the more shots from different angles (and focal lengths – i.e., close up, medium wide and really wide), the better. We need at least **20 different shots** of a variety of people, places, items, etc. to piece a 2 minute story together.
- Use a tripod when possible because few people like to watch rocky, unstable images. Unless you're highly-skilled and using a balanced, professional camera, your images may turn out that way. When a tripod isn't available, use other solid objects to stabilize the shot – e.g., lean against trees, set your camera on a table top, or even sit in a chair and use the armrest to help make the picture steadier.
- Resist the temptation to do a lot of "panning" and "zooming" with your camera. It's best to physically move your camera from one place to another in order get an angle that shows additional items you want to include. If action is included in your shot, let things move inside the picture instead of moving the camera or zooming.
- Make sure that your camera is level and the scene looks straight in the view finder.
- If you plan to interview someone, do so in a quiet setting and make sure that the camera is within 3-4 feet of your person. Use an external microphone when available
- Shoot a sequence of shots rather than long shots that depend on camera movement like zooms and pans. To create more visual excitement for your shots, try shooting from a variety of angles or perspectives. Remember, these tapes will be edited. Separate still shots from various angles can be linked together.

- When shooting inside, try to use areas that are well lit. Don't be afraid to bring additional lighting into a dark room. If it's hard to see detail in the viewfinder, extra light will help reveal it. Also, avoid shooting a person that has bright light in the background, such as a window. The camera will adjust for the bright light and make your subject darker.
- Detail shots are especially powerful when edited into a series, they provide the viewer with unique visual information and they can have high emotional impact. Don 't be afraid to get close.
- Faces. People make the greatest subjects. No matter what you're shooting, don't forget to shoot people as well. To the extent possible, try to get people in your shots "acting naturally". Hamming it up for the camera, while quite natural for some people, will not usually make the final cut.
- Many cameras include a feature that imprints the date and time of a recording on the video. Please turn this feature off.
- If you're shooting with a DVD camera or are delivering video from a past event or program, please make sure that the DVD has been "finalized". This allows DVD's to be played in machines other than the one it was created on. If we can't play it at WPSU, we can't use it.
- Though **we would prefer that you shoot video**, please don't hesitate to use a still camera or give us photos that you already have about a subject. We can add motion to stills in order to lend them a level of dynamism they don't ordinarily have. Ideally, we'd love to have your photos delivered to us on a CD, but we can still work with photo prints. Important: Make sure to fill out and hand in a log sheet with your tape. They should list the sequence of shots and accurately describe any locations or persons that need to be identified.

Finally, give some thought about the significance of your topic and why you chose it. We will tape a short interview with you and ask you to provide general details about your subject. You may bring notes, but we will ask you to not read from them. We will piece your answers together later, taking out many of the "ahs" and "ums", plus any mistakes or false-starts you may make. We want you to sound as good as possible, so relax and feel free to make multiple attempts to say things the way you'd like. We hope you are as excited about making this program as we are! Please feel free to contact WPSU videographer Dick Knupp at 814-863-9817 if you have any questions on anything mentioned here.

Fun and hard work are not mutually exclusive. Your energy and creativity will create a testimony not only of your town, but also of yourselves.

Good luck and thanks for joining us!