

Our Town



Production Manual

Being a part of *Our Town*

PBS39 features the heritage and spirit of local communities from the perspective of the residents in the *Our Town* series.

Grab your camera and take to the streets as you document the people, places, and happenings that make your area special.

This is your opportunity to share the unique features of your town with eastern Pennsylvania and western New Jersey. Profiles of organizations, arts, schools, attractions, and local folklore make great stories and give viewers a sense of your area.

No experience is required, just enthusiasm.

Meet the PBS39 *Our Town* Production Team

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How it works...

1. PBS39 will ask you to pick one topic for a story featured in the show. Start thinking about what story you want to tell about your town. Events, people, places, happenings...all great stories to share!

2. Every story needs photos & video, which you'll need to collect. Make sure the video & photos correspond to everything you want to tell in your feature. In addition to spending the next week collecting new video/photos to support your story, feel free to hunt down archival photos or videos.

3. Each story feature needs one spokesperson to appear on camera for a PBS39 interview with our producers. On the production day, we'll talk to you about the footage you gathered in a casual, on-camera interview. The interview will tie the story together & add the personality that makes this show special.

Don't worry – we'll make you look and sound like a pro!

4. Next, we'll take your video and interview back to the TV station and edit it all together.

What happens next...

Once we've edited your pieces, we'll invite you to an exclusive premiere screening of the show.

We'll return your tapes and invite you to the PBS39 studios for the night of the live premier broadcast.

You won't want to miss this – you'll see how your community responds to the show as they phone in their support.

Want to know more...

You'll find recent episodes of *Our Town*, helpful hints on creating your story, updates on the project, and contact information on our website:

Ourtown.wlvt.org

You can also call anytime or send an email to the production team.

Sharing local stories is part of the spirit of public television. Through viewership support, we're able to bring you all your favorite programs that you find on PBS39. And the *Our Town* series truly makes this your local station as you help create material to broadcast! Spread the word to neighbors. Everyone is invited to participate! Thanks for joining the team and have fun!

Tips for Shooting Video

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 by telling others why it's so special?

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 PBS39 to share some of their secrets and strategies for successful videotaping.

Video Tips

- If possible, change the aspect ratio setting on your video camera to Widescreen (16:9) instead of Full screen (4:3).
Please DO NOT select “letterbox” or “pan-scan”
- 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. The more you can shoot 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 together a 2 minute video story.
- Use a tripod when possible because few people like to watch rocky, unstable images. 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.
- Avoid shooting a person with bright light (such as a window) in the background. 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 PBS39, 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.

- Finally, give some thought to 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 directly 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 would like.

- 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.

We hope you are as excited about making this program as we are!

Please feel free to contact Brandon (contact information above) if you have any questions on any of the tips mentioned here.

Log Sheets

Important: Make sure to fill out and hand in a log sheet with your tape. Please list the sequence of shots and accurately describe any locations or persons that need to be identified.

Here's a sample of the video log sheet we'll need you to complete as you gather footage for your story...

Subject	Content Description	Length
History of winery	Photo of 1 st 1967 bottle	20 seconds
History of winery	Photo of construction phase 1, 2, 3, family group photo of founders	
Winery today	Exterior shot of winery wide shot, looking at entrance	15 seconds
	Exterior wide shot of gazebo overlooking grape vineyard	15 seconds
	Exterior wide shot of grape crop from gazebo	15 seconds
	Shot looking down between row of grapes in vineyard	20 seconds
Tasting room	Shot of wine display on shelf of wine assortment	12 seconds
	Printed sample of wine list distributed to tourists	

Mark your calendars...

Volunteer Meeting

Date:

Time:

Location:

Volunteer Meeting

Date:

Interview Time:

Location:

Preview

Date:

Time:

Location:

Live Television Premiere

Date:

Time:

Location:

