

PROS AND CONS OF IN-PLANT MOTION PICTURE PRODUCTION

By DAVID MURRIAN

Supervisor Audio-Visual Section

S. HILLARD BROWN, JR.

Chief Public Relations Division

Tennessee Game and Fish Commission

Many questions are asked concerning the feasibility of in-plant motion picture production compared to contracting with a commercial producer. Either method can, with the required effort, produce desirable results; however, the do-it-yourselfers can take the lead if they are properly equipped, adequately financed, and capable. If production is to be a continuous operation over a period of years making new films and updating old ones at least every 10 years, then the in-plant system would be preferable. If only a limited number of films are anticipated then perhaps it would be better to farm them out to someone else.

Did the egg precede the chicken or vice versa? In the production of films the original idea must be germinated into a shooting script that culminates the view of the cinematographer, audio engineer, and film director with that of the producer and/or biologists, engineers, or other technicians who must keep fact before fancy. A combination script-writer and biological technician is a rare bird indeed. An in-plant writer with the knowledge and experience to obtain the facts is the usual compromise. Computers will some day handle the job of the screen writer.

Meanwhile the level of language used must be divided by the type audience to be reached. The story to be told must be squared by the necessary facts and entertainment added. The resulting product is then ready for equating with available budget, equipment, personnel and time. It is no wonder that the results are often less than desired.

Let's assume you have elected to take the giant step, hire a permanent staff, buy equipment, write, shoot, and produce twelve motion pictures a year. Good luck! Sure it can be done, or even more, that is if you and your crew have nothing else to do. Chances are the in-plant crew will be called upon to extinguish numerous brush fires with an immediate TV and/or news release. You know, the "drop everything and do this now" kind! Or because some of your people have diverse talents, they are expected to present lectures to garden clubs. Even just having warm bodies on your staff sometimes attracts odd assignments too ignominious to mention. Well, don't knock it! Being capable of producing slide lectures and film strips to supplement a film program can be an asset to the overall program. Other media such as radio and newspapers cannot be ignored. Therefore the photographs and radio programs are considered important enough to require time and effort from your beleaguered staff. If your organization has an in-plant newspaper or magazine, don't forget to contribute articles and art in great profusion. Now if you can manage to sneak out a completed film with a dozen positive release prints ready for the public's eye, who is going to mail them out? The boss's secretary during her coffee break? No, guess again. You and your trained staff should see that proper distribution of your hard earned strip of acetate can be seen by the desired audience as often as possible. Hire an efficient film librarian and enough staff to insure that the films can be used to their best advantage. Otherwise, you need not bother to produce!

The efficiency of a small production staff depends on the versatility of the individuals. Staff photographers can serve as cameramen. Lab technicians sometimes make good gaffers, electricians, or whatever else is needed. It's hard to determine what the sound engineer is good for besides sound but this is a most essential part of any film so let him

concentrate on that. If dramatic acting is required by the script, hire a dramatic actor or actress. Even if you happen to have a dramatic actor on your staff as a file clerk, it would be better to assign them a bit part underwater! Your audience will soon tire of seeing the same face in all your productions.

A policy of "No-loan" to anyone is essential if you expect to have any equipment available to you in operating condition when the time to roll the camera arrives. Equipment can be rented from numerous agencies. This is satisfactory if enough advance planning can determine exactly what will be needed and when. Delivery schedules on rented equipment must coincide with your shooting dates if you do not desire to pay the actors overtime! Equipment on hand, properly maintained and familiar to the operator is preferable. However, it is often desirable to rent additional specialized equipment that may not be used very often for any other purpose.

What is it going to cost? When a computer is designed that can predict the future, it might also be used to determine the cost of a given production. Try budgeting extra for rainstorms, temperamental actors, mechanical breakdowns, etc. Even the classical commercial rate of \$1,000 a minute for screen time will not always cover the costs involved in a major production. On the other hand, a very acceptable film documenting a special event could be produced for less than a total of \$1,000. Behind every shooting script is a very important financial script which if planned as carefully as the shooting script should cover all expenses with the possible exception of aspirin for the director.

Roll 'em and good luck!

"THE IMPORTANCE OF HUNTER SAFETY EDUCATION IN STATE PROGRAMS"

By CLOYSE H. BOND

*Assistant to the Chief Law Enforcement For Hunter Safety Program
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation*

Hunter Safety Education (Outline Only).

1. Obviously there are questions implied—"Why Hunter Safety Education in State Programs?"
 - a. Oklahoma's education is on a volunteer basis—No state law requirement.
 - b. Hunter Safety Education is important.
2. Education—Webster's Dictionary—(a) "the action or process of educating or of being educated; also, a state of such a process. (b) the knowledge and development resulting from an educational process", etc.
 - a. Hunter Safety *Education* title needs deliberate considerations.
 - b. Hunter Safety Education is important to save hunter's lives.
3. How do we get the task done?
 - a. I & E, Game and Fish Divisions, *all* have been questioned initially by most states as to their importance.
 - b. Largely due to administrator's, employees, and funding problems for establishment of new programs.
 - c. Is Hunter Safety Education a Game and Fish responsibility? Why?
 - d. Is department funding adequate to support Hunter Safety Education? Why?