

ATD NORTHWEST

VIDEO INSTRUMENTATION AT WORK

PORTABLE FIELD MONITORING PACKAGE

Background:

Portable hand-held video systems are often used to observe and record various phenomena for short periods of time. They are used for environmental projects, for license plate surveys, for sporting events, and for documenting traffic or unauthorized dumping activities.

On one recent environmental project, it was necessary to place a large number of observers on a canyon rim to document the transit of river kayakers through a steep gorge. There existed a controversy between a group of recreationally oriented folks and a power company as to whether water released from the floodgates would provide a safe white-water path through a narrow, deep and dangerous canyon. It was determined to release the flow for a pre-determined time and to observe the passage of a dozen or so river kayakers to actually determine the transit time and safety of these "professionals" for the full length of the canyon.

ATD Northwest, Inc. was commissioned to provide the equipment and personnel to videotape this event. We used a number of hand-held color digital camcorders to accomplish the task. Each camera package included a color digital zoom camcorder, a special miniature tripod, several hours of videotape cassettes, two on-board camera batteries and an external extended time 24 hour battery. The equipment was housed in a lightweight heavy duty foam padded ABA case for ease of portability. Each case was identical and included a package of operating and safety instructions. The environmental case allowed the equipment to be transported successfully to each site. The cases had to be lowered by rope to some operating sites. They bounced off of the rocky cliffs, were inundated in the river and were even dropped in some instances. In each situation, the equipment operated correctly when opened for use!



Some sporting events such as marathon races, bicycle races, off-road races, cross country runs and other touring type events, require observers at various check points along the route. Video documentation at each check point confirms the time, date and location for each participant in the event. These portable environmentally protected video systems offer the capability to record the information at a considerable number of check-points with minimum down-time and with coordinated recording formats and timing.

Similarly, these units may be located along side of the road or on selected over-crossings to record the license plates of vehicles traveling on freeways, arterials or mountain roads. We can match plates between entrance & exit points, measure elapsed time for each vehicle recorded, classify the vehicles and perform other traffic related tasks.

ATD Northwest, Inc. offers these special camcorder packages to the general public for sale, lease or rent. They are available in either SVHS or Mini-DV formats. They can be operated in a fully automatic mode or modified for individual operator control. Each unit includes a time/date generator. The camera time-codes can be synchronized so that correct elapsed time can be calculated between any numbers of individual observation points.

ATD Northwest maintains over 100 video camcorder packages in their Redmond, Washington warehouse, that are available for rental purposes.

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