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ABSTRACT

Allegany Opportunities is a television series which is designed to assist people who may be unemployed, underemployed, or contemplating entering an occupational field by informing them of opportunities available for work, training, and education and procedures for securing work in rural Allegany County. Emphasis is on those occupations requiring less than four years of college preparation. This paper first explores the development of the idea of a T.V. series about local occupations to be shown by the community cable T.V. company and procedures for involving the local community in the production. The technical procedures used to produce a broadcast quality video program with a minimal of technical staff budget are elaborated on. The paper also describes the community survey undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of the series in providing occupational information in the community. (Author/WS)

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CABLE T.V. -- BOON TO VOCATIONAL
GUIDANCE IN RURAL AREAS

A program presented at the American Personnel and
Guidance Association Convention 1972, Chicago, Illinois

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June 1972

PREFACE

The program, "Cable T.V. -- Boon to Vocational Guidance in Rural Areas", which was presented on the 1972 American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention at Chicago, consisted of two presentations. The first presentation was a narrated slide series explaining the origin and development of the T.V. series, "Allegany Opportunities" and included a fifteen minute video tape of excerpts from the various "Allegany Opportunities" programs.

The second presentation was the report of a survey undertaken to determine the reaction of the community to the series.

Therefore, the paper you are about to read has been rewritten from the narrative to the slide series, but includes the presented report on the community survey.

J.B.

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INTRODUCTION

Realistic decision-making can best take place when adequate, accurate and relevant information is available. Particularly for adults and especially for those in rural areas, the lack of appropriate occupational information may be a crucial factor in preventing entrance to or mobility within the local labor market. The purpose of this paper is to describe one community's efforts to provide occupational information via the community cable T.V. system.

"Allegany Opportunities" was a weekly 30 minute T.V. program about occupational and educational opportunities within Allegany County, New York. Its purpose was to inform people who were unemployed, underemployed or contemplating entering an occupation field of the opportunities available for work and for training in the county. In addition, the procedures necessary to secure the training or job were explained. Essentially, each program had several people in the occupation explain what they did, what they liked and disliked about their jobs, working conditions, training required, etc. with slides depicting them in their work situation.

Influential Factors in Originating Series

We are located in Allegany County which can only be described as rural. Centered in the Southern Tier of New York State, our county includes a geographic area the size of the State of Rhode Island, but with a total population of only 45,000. Wellsville, with 7,000 people, is the largest town in the county and as one might surmise, contains the two biggest industries. There are a considerable number of small manufacturing plants and other industries located throughout the county.

The topography of the area is hilly as we are in the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains (Appalachia). This, coupled with the fact that the large metropolitan areas such as Buffalo, Rochester and Elmira-Corning having commercial TV stations are at least 75 miles away, prevents acceptable TV reception. To overcome this problem, a community cable TV company furnishes TV to approximately 3300 homes in the southern portion of Allegheny County. This company provides nine commercial channels and one locally originated channel used for time, weather and music.

Wellsville also contains the Vocational Division of Alfred Agricultural and Technical College whose Main Campus at Alfred is 14 miles to the north. Approximately 600 students at the Vocational Division are enrolled in six, two year certificate programs; Automotive and Diesel Services, Construction, Food Service, Drafting, Electrical Services and Business Office Skills. In the Electrical Services, one senior option includes working with video (TV) equipment. Essentially, the students are learning how to repair various types of electronic equipment, but they first must know how it operates before they can properly maintain or repair it.

The Vocational Division has its own counseling services. These are located in our Resource Center and include vocational, educational and personal counseling testing, financial aids, and a limited amount of admission work. In addition to the usual services, we also provide a multi-media learning laboratory to assist students in math, study skills, reading and curriculum related materials. One of the media used for information presentation is TV.

While our counseling services are in support of our own students, we do have contact with many prospective students such as those still in

High school, veterans, women wanting to enter the labor force and older persons contemplating job changes. From talking with these people, the need for a vocational information system for the community and surrounding area began to manifest itself.

These were the four main factors which influenced the origination of this TV series:

1. A community cable TV system.
2. Technical capability of senior electronic students and faculty.
3. A need for information as expressed by potential students.
4. People interested in providing occupational information.

Development Series

It was through a discussion about the future of TV in education between the counselor and senior electronics instructor that the idea for a weekly TV series about local occupations and taped by the senior electronic students was conceived. This was in June.

Nothing more developed until the middle of August when the counselor and instructor secured a commitment from the local cable TV company for 20 weekly, half hour spots on Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. starting October 4, 1971. "Allegany Opportunities" was off and running.

The counselor turned to the community for assistance in providing the type of information needed about local occupations and by the end of August had secured the Wellsville Chamber of Commerce, the local office of the New York State Employment Service and the area high school Occupational Center as co-sponsors.

Our project then became a cooperative venture of the community.

The first meeting of the sponsoring group took place right after Labor Day. At this meeting, we: (1) Limited occupations to be included to

those requiring less than a four year degree; (2) Developed the type of information we wanted to show about an occupation, primarily the human aspects utilizing the NVGA Guidelines for films as far as possible; (3) Decided to secure a responsible individual in the occupation being featured to assume responsibility for collecting and organizing information and people for the program. Forms developed to facilitate programming are in Appendix "A"; (4) Selected the first five programs to be taped. Due to the shortness of time, the first two were chosen for their ease of production.

The first program of our series was a panel discussion by the representatives of the sponsoring groups. During the program, we explained what we hoped to accomplish with "Allegany Opportunities", how it got started and why each organization became involved in the project.

The second program was "Registered Nurses" with the Chairman of the Nursing Department of Alfred Agricultural and Technical College narrating a video tape previously made by his department, at the local hospitals.

From that point on, we became much more involved in preparing new material and produced one new program a week for the next two months. The cooperation from the community was outstanding. The program on "Licensed Practical Nurse" featured a nursing instructor and several practical nurses from the area hospitals.

"Retailing" was made by store sales personnel, a store owner and a high school business teacher. We were fortunate to be able to have the New York State Director of Apprenticeship Programs and one of his supervisors from Buffalo come to Wellsville to make our program on "Apprenticeship Road to a Career." We also had area people who were in an apprenticeship

program or recently completed one on the panel. For "Women at Preheater" we had a local guidance director, who was a woman, go through the administration and engineering department of a local industry, interviewing various ladies at their work stations, these interviews and slides provided information on a good cross section of jobs available to women locally.

One of our programs revolved around how a video tape is made and showed how our limited special effects techniques were achieved. "Drafting" rounded out our efforts up to Christmas vacation.

The format which evolved for most of the programs consisted of narrated slides of work situations and a panel discussion by people in the occupation, covering types of work performed, training required, advantages and disadvantages of the job, advancement, and where possible salaries, employment opportunities and most importantly, what personal satisfactions the people gained at the job.

We had considerable momentum generated during the fall, but after Christmas we ran into problems. Some of the equipment we had anticipated using failed to arrive and the other equipment began to break down. As a result, we did not produce another video tape until March.

We managed to keep the series on the air though, following the lead of commercial TV companies, by judicious use of reruns. Our one achievement during this time was a live evening program in which we solicited telephone calls from the viewers. We received some response and in turn, used this as a kick-off for our telephone survey which is discussed in another portion of this paper.

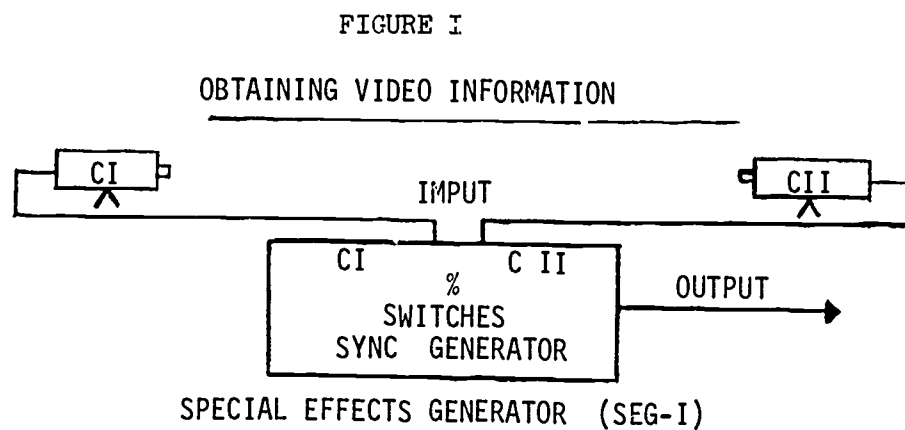
In March, we made two more programs, "The Food Service Industry" and "The Electrical Field" using the new TV studio (actually the first studio).

Both of these programs used our own faculty and former students. An interesting phenomena occurred with the food program. Upon viewing the results they got excited about what was going on, came back the next day and made an excellent tape. This was the only time we retaped a program.

Our total output of tapes turned out to be ten, but these ten provided programming for twenty-five weeks of occupational information presentation to the community.

Technical Aspects of Production of Series

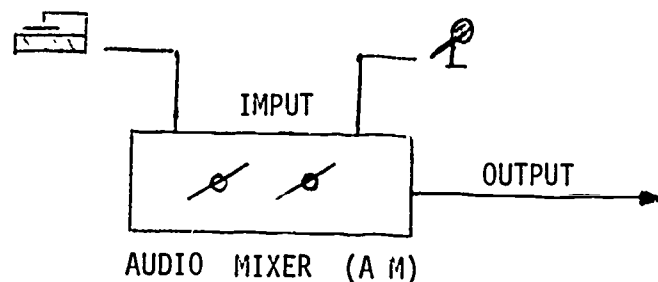
The proceeding section gives you an idea of what we accomplished. Now, we would like to go into the technical aspects of our venture. First, a short description of how a video (TV) system works might clarify some of the things we will discuss later.



In Figure I, the video (TV) cameras CI & CII pick up the image or picture we want to televise and translate this into an electronic signal. These signals (INPUT) are fed simultaneously into the SPECIAL EFFECTS GENERATOR - SEG-I. This generator (SEG-I) has two functions.

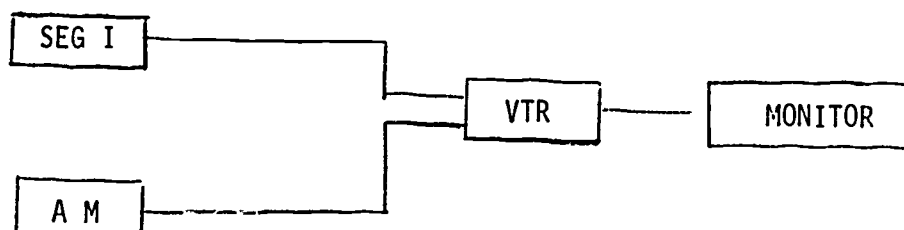
(1) Permits the operator to select which camera signal (picture or combination of pictures) he wants put on the video tape. The SWITCHES are for this purpose. (2) The SYNC GENERATOR PORTION of the SEG-I pulses the video OUTPUT so that it is compatible with the commercial broadcasting signals. If the video output was not compatible, the viewers at home would have to keep readjusting their sets.

FIGURE II
OBTAINING AUDIO INFORMATION



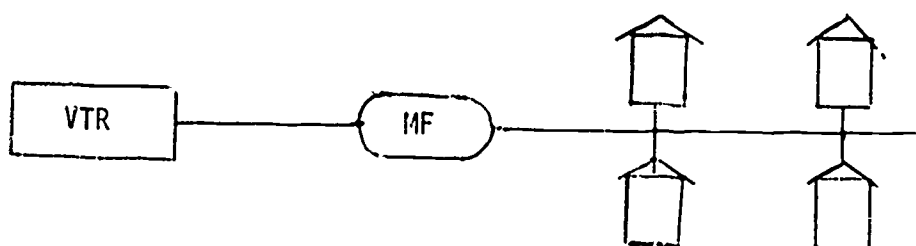
In Figure II, audio information from MICROPHONE or RECORDER is translated into electronic signals INPUT. These signals are fed into the AUDIO MIXER where the operator selects or combines the ones he wants to go on the video tape OUTPUT.

FIGURE III
AUDIO VIDEO RECORDING



The OUTPUTS from the SEG-I & AUDIO MIXER are fed into the VIDEO TAPE RECORDER (VTR) which records them on magnetic (video) tape. This video tape is then ready to be played on a VTR for showing on a single monitor as in a study carroll, close circuit TV system such as in a school or a commercial cable TV system.

FIGURE IV
BROADCASTING ON CABLE



There is one additional step necessary if the video tape is to be shown over a commercial cable system. At the cable system station, the OUTPUT from the VTR must go through a MODULATOR FILTER before going out over the cable to the viewers in the community. The MODULATOR FILTER sets the frequency of the OUTPUT signal to that of the channel on which it is to be shown. Generally for local programming this is Channel 6.

Our main purpose for this whole project was to provide occupational information which could be shown over the local community cable system. Therefore, we had to have equipment to produce tapes which were compatible with a commercial TV broadcasting facility.

The equipment we had available made $\frac{1}{2}$ " video tapes and consisted of three video cameras, only two of which had view finders, one special effects generator, one audio mixer, microphones, record player, one video tape recorder and five monitors (TV receivers). A monitor was connected

to each camera so the operator could tell what each camera was televising. The remaining two monitors were set up to show what was being put on the video tape itself. One monitor was located by the operator, the other in the studio so the talent (people being televised) could also see what was being taped. A slide projector was used for graphics. Information about model numbers and cost of equipment can be found in Appendix B.

The TV crew consisted of a minimum of five students, although most of the time we had triple that number, with one or two instructors. Three students handled the cameras, one operated the control panel with the special effects generator and audio mixer and the fifth handled sound effects and controlled the VTR.

Our first "studio" was a 11' x 19' group work room in our Resource or Counseling Center. Four days a week it was used for group work, seminars, etc. but on the fifth day, it was transformed into a TV studio. This was accomplished by moving in furniture and rugs from the Activities Center, and portable TV equipment from the Main Campus at Alfred. The size of the room limited considerably what we could do, in fact, we had little choice in format other than a panel discussion. We used it though, as it was the only available facility on campus. We used most of the Resource Center for our taping. While the talent and two cameras were in the group room, the control panel (containing of VTR 4 monitors SEG-I and Audio Mixer) and sound effects were located in the adjoining lounge area and a third camera used for slides and graphics was placed in another room (reading lab).

The graphics (titles and other printed information) for the first few shows were printed with white ink on black paper and picked up by one of the cameras in our "studio". The third camera picked up the slides which were projected on a regular movie screen. The next step in sophistication occurred when we were able to put our printed graphics on 35mm slides and combined with the other slides. A further development came when we started using a homemade "light box" which, by using a series of mirrors, enabled a slide to be projected directly into the TV camera. This proved to be most satisfactory. A sample of our graphics can be found in Appendix C.

An exciting event took place near the end of the winter quarter, the electrical department moved to a new facility and were able to install a permanent TV studio. This studio provided a glass enclosed control room, improved lighting, a greater variety of camera angles and distances and a 5' x 5' rear projection screen. This screen which replaced the "light box" enabled the talent standing in front of it to point out features in the slides or movies which they were describing. Outside of the rear projection screen, we used the same equipment as before. It was now possible to have more than five people on a program. In the old "studio" five was the limit.

This new studio was designed as a teaching station and to produce instructional tapes for the various programs on campus, but we broke it in with "Allegany Opportunities".

Again, we'd like to point out that our electronic students operated all the equipment, under the supervision of their instructors. This not only provided us with manpower, but they gained valuable experience in operating the equipment.

Perhaps here we should mention budgets. Usually when people start talking about TV studios they think in terms of tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars. We worked on a shoe string and estimate that our total studio including all the equipment cost less than five thousand dollars. In fact to produce a video program such as ours, you can get by with about \$3500.00 worth of equipment using two instead of three cameras. Our initial studio cost us nothing to build as we borrowed what furnishings (1 rug, 1 coffee table & chairs) we needed, when we needed them. Materials such as slides and the video tape itself ran approximately \$30 per program. All in all, a good worthwhile TV program can be produced at a minimum cost, but not with a minimum of effort.

Observations

The greatest problem we encountered with "Allegany Opportunities" was its publicity or rather lack of it. We thought that simply having it advertised (by a sign) on the time and weather channel was enough. It wasn't. Allegany Video Inc. purchased a small ad in the local newspaper, which helped some. We managed to get a full page picture story in the newspaper near the end of the series, but that was a little late. All during this time we were in touch with the local guidance counselors both to publicize our series among their students and for suggestions for improvement. It was at their recommendation that we changed the time from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. beginning the first of the year. Later we found our (from our survey) that 4 p.m. was the best time and 1 p.m. was the worst.

A second problem involved the quality of the programs. Technically we steadily improved and in content we fluctuated. It was felt that under the circumstances, with no special funding or staff availability, we would

do the best we could and depend upon the fact that the people, places and information in the tapes were from the community to overcome our lack of sophistication. Our community survey appeared to support this contention.

We reaped some benefits which we hadn't anticipated. One of the greatest was the chance to meet such a variety of people from the community. Trips to industrial plants developed contacts for placement. Some of the guidance counselors in the county became more familiar with the occupational structure of the county by participating in this series. We personally picked up considerable knowledge about using video equipment and to see its application in some counseling situations. Watching our electronic students develop their competencies in using video equipment with several of them deciding to enter this field for a career gave us all a thrill. That was really career development.

Evaluation - Community Survey
"Allegany Opportunities" Preliminary Inquiry

INTRODUCTION

It should be stated at the onset of this presentation that in no way was the intent to carry out an in-depth analysis of the effect of the video programs "Allegany Opportunities." Rather, the evaluation reported at this time is tentative and superficial at best. The audience is reminded also that these programs have only been available to viewers since last fall.

Furthermore, the programs' participants had originally intended that an entirely different approach to the evaluation process would be carried out; namely, a community door-to-door survey. However, extenuating scheduling and planning difficulties prevented the original evaluation techniques to be utilized in time for the convention program.

The programs were presented on television to a potential customer population of 2,849 of the Allegany Video Incorporated. These thirty minute TV programs, as indicated previously, were shown weekly over the Allegany Video Incorporated's Channel 6.

METHOD

The primary method of inquiry used was a telephone interview conducted by 11 students in Alfred's Vocational Division, Machine Clerical Program under the direction of Professors Ann Wenslow and Ann Thomas. Student interviewers were trained by Professor Ray Hannon, A Marketing Specialist from the College's Business Division.

A random sample was drawn from the customer files of Allegany Video Incorporated of Wellsville, New York. The total population consisted of a file of 2,849 customers, from which a sample of 215 names were drawn. These 215 names were then divided among the eleven college students who were to make the customer calls. Of the original sample drawn, 161 people were contacted. This constituted a 75% response (No phone, 14% (N 31); No longer on cable, 2% (N 4); No response, 9% (N 19).

The students who were to make the calls were given a two hour training session in proper telephone interview techniques, including instructions to speak clearly, and not rapidly, to allow two or three minutes for purposes of identification, etc. Two days were devoted to the process of calling each of the customers and initial calls were made between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Each girl went through her list of names twice, alternating the time of day when calls were made. Follow-up calls were made to customers missed from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. on the call days.

The interview questionnaire consisted of a two-part, five and three question schedule. A copy of the interview questionnaire is in Appendix D of this report.

By way of a brief explanation concerning the two-part telephone interview schedule, all respondents were asked: "Have you ever seen the program "Allegany Opportunities" on your time and weather station -- Channel 6?" Those who responded "yes" were then asked an additional four questions, such as "Do you watch it regularly?" Those who responded "no" were then asked two different additional questions designed to determine their interest in such a program, and the time of day which might be most convenient for them provided they were interested.

RESULTS

In answer to Question #1 (Have you ever seen ... Allegany Opportunities?) 81% (N 131) of the respondents answered "no" they had not seen the programs, and 19% (N 30) had viewed at least one of the programs during the time they were presented.

Of those respondents who indicated that they had seen at least one of the programs, 27% (N 8) indicated that they had watched them regularly (Question #2 -- "yes" respondents) while 73% (N 22) did not. Of those who had not viewed any of the programs, it would appear that the time presentation (Question #3 -- "no" respondents) was not convenient and that late afternoon 4 p.m. (11%) or early evening, 6 p.m. (10%) or 7 p.m. (11%) would have been better. Furthermore, of those who had seen at least one of the programs (Question #5 -- "yes" respondents) late afternoon or evening would have been more convenient for them too (4 p.m. - 17%; 6 p.m. - 13%; 7 p.m. - 20%).

Of the respondents who had not seen the programs, 54% (N 71) indicated that programs describing the kinds of work engaged in by Allegany County residents (Question #2 -- "no" respondents) would be of interest to them, while 34% (N 44) did not. There were 12% (N 16) of the respondents who chose not to answer the question.

In terms of the "relevance" or "usefulness" of program content, of those who had seen one of the programs, 30% (N 9) found the material to be of help to them, while 50% (N 15) did not. The results indicated that 20% (N 6) of the respondent group chose not to respond to this question.

Question #4, "What is your opinion of these programs" rated on a scale of "Not Worthwhile" (NWW), "Fair" (F), "Good" (G), "Excellent" (E), or "Quality Poor, Content Good" (QC) brought response in which the programs were rated "Not Worthwhile" (10% -- N 3); "Fair" (20% -- N 6); "Good" (47% -- N 14); "Excellent" (10% - N 3); and "Quality Poor, Content Good" (10% -- N 3) respectively. One respondent (3% -- N 1) did not answer the question.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It would appear that at the time at which the programs were shown, the time was not convenient to either those respondents who had viewed the program or to those who had not. Thus, a change of time would seem appropriate based on the results of this inquiry.

While a majority (50%) of those who had seen at least one program did not find them immediately "useful" or "relevant", it would seem rational to assume that at some time in the future these respondents might benefit from the experience. On the other hand, 30% of the respondents did find it helpful. This represents nine people out of 21 which makes it significant

at least from a "guidance" point of view. In addition, 57% of the viewers considered the programs to be worthwhile viewing. All in all, given some minor technical changes; i.e., time of presentation and the superficial nature of this inquiry, the project would seem to have potential value as a useful technique through which occupational and vocational information can be presented.

Suggestions for Starting a Series

We would like to offer some suggestions for those of you who might want to try something similar.

1. Start with the local cable TV company to see if they will or are capable of putting on a series such as "Allegany Opportunities."
2. Try to get a number of organizations interested in helping you such as counselor associations, employment service, chamber of commerce, and service clubs. Make it a community venture.
3. Survey your community to find out: whether people would watch your program, the best time to show it, and to get program suggestions.

If the first three look promising, then:

4. Set yourself a fairly short deadline for the first program and get them rolling. It's better to develop your competency as you progress than wait until you have a perfect product to begin. (This would not be true of a commercial venture). Momentum builds up as your programs progress, start shifting weeks or putting off new programs, makes it hard to keep going.
5. Develop a format (see ours in Appendix A) which provides, in condensed form, all necessary information for putting a program together. Emphasis should be on people responsible for each stage and date and time when its to be done. Also important is audio-visual material needed for each program.
6. Make use of all your school and community resources. Drafting or mechanical drawing and art classes good for printed graphics. Photography clubs and or industrial photographers can be used to get your action or on-sight pictures. Typing classes can be used for communications. Your Chamber of Commerce can provide leads on who to contact in business and industry.

7. Publicize your program as much as you can right from the start. People won't watch it if they don't know about it.

SUMMARY

We felt the need and had the resources to produce and broadcast over TV cable, a series of programs about occupations in Allegany County. By involving the community and utilizing many resources, we produced ten video tapes about local occupations and had these played for twenty-five weeks by the local community cable company. Community reaction by those who saw the programs was favorable. Many of those who had not seen any programs thought they would be interested in this type of program.

It would appear that cable TV can be a boon to vocational guidance in rural areas if people are willing to put the effort into making programs.

Appendix A

T.V. PROGRAM PREPARATION CHECK LIST

1. Title of program: _____
2. Program Coordinator(s)

3. Participants (with title and company)

4. Permission to enter company by whom _____ when given _____
5. Location(s) for filming Dates and time
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
6. Type of media to be used for preparation:
_____ 35mm slides
_____ Super 8 movies
_____ Video (if possible)
_____ Cassette recorder
_____ Other
7. If Mr. Wittie is not doing photography, name of person who is _____
8. Date video taping session at Vocational Division: _____
9. Projected date to be shown on cable: _____
10. Graphics needed and exact copy.

APPENDIX B

Equipment

<u>Type</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>(Approx.)</u>	<u>Unit Price*</u>
Video Camera including Viewfinder	2 or 3		\$700.00
SONY AVC 3200 DX Video Monitor	3 or 5		230.00
SONY CVM-110UA Video Tape Recorder	1		700.00
SONY AV 3600 Special Effects Generator SONY SEG-I	1		475.00

For Graphics

Slide Projector

Overhead projector

Movie projector of the variable speed type

* These are approximate unit prices as of January 1, 1972 and may not accurately reflect the current market price.

APPENDIX C

GRAPHICS

Standard for all programs:

Beginning of Program

1. ALLEGANY OPPORTUNITIES
2. PRESENTED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE
3. BY ALLEGANY VIDEO, INC.
4. AND -- VOCATIONAL DIVISION
AGRICULTURAL & TECHNICAL COLLEGE
AT ALFRED
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

5. CO-SPONSORS:

WELLSVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NEW YORK STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

ALLEGANY COUNTY OCCUPATIONAL CENTER AT BELMONT

Following Program:

THE END

1. PRODUCED BY JAMES L. BLISS, DIRECTOR OF COUNSELING SERVICES
2. DIRECTED BY HAROLD MILLER & ROBERT SELDEN - INSTRUCTORS
3. TECHNICIANS: SENIOR ELECTRONIC STUDENTS VOCATIONAL DIVISION
4. PLEASE WRITE YOUR COMMENTS TO: ALLEGANY VIDEO, INC.
JEFFERSON STREET, WELLSVILLE, NEW YORK

Different for each program:

1. TITLE
2. PROGRAM COORDINATOR
3. PARTICIPANTS

Appendix D

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Mr. and Mrs. _____, This is _____ from Alfred State College. I would like to ask you a few questions about a local T. V. program.

1. Have you ever seen the programs "Allegany Opportunities" on your time and weather station--Channel 6? Yes ___ No ___

"Yes" respondents were then asked:

2. Do you watch it regularly? Yes ___ No ___
3. Have you been able to make use of the information presented? Yes ___
No ___
4. What is your opinion of these programs? Not worthwhile ___ Fair ___
Good ___ Excellent ___ Quality Poor, Content Good ___
5. Is there a more convenient time for you to watch these Programs?

"No" respondents were then asked:

2. Would a program featuring different types of jobs people have here in Allegany County be of interest to you? Yes ___ No ___
3. What would be the most convenient time for this type of program to be shown? Time _____