**Creating Virtual Tours/Videos  
Coffee Talk with Partner Sites- June 10, 2020**

Panel Overview:  
**Mariah Busta, Iowa’s Dairy Center:** Prior to pandemic, very few live videos. Since pandemic, worked with schools (April/May usually brings in 30 schools, 1,400 kids) that would have physically toured and turned into virtual tours via Zoom. Also creating Facebook Live videos now that school is done. All has been done with smartphone, working alone.

**Samantha McCombs, Director of Technology at Grout Museum**: Prior to pandemic, no video as all tours and museum school happened on location. Since pandemic, creating recorded videos to allow for editing. Using DSLR professional cameras as well as point & shoot cameras, some videos are worked alone while others have a small team for shooting/editing. So far, no live videos have been utilized but looking into that route for small events and museum school.

**Heidi Reams, Fossil Prairie Center:** Since pandemic, creating Facebook live to connect with kids while school was in session. Also created YouTube videos specific to school programs, able to send a link to teachers for online learning. (Teachers informed YouTube videos were easier to share for remote learning). Using smartphone and iPad, working alone; utilizing backdrops from the visitor center as well as outside scenery during tours.

**Q. What are you using to edit, create your videos?** **Any tips while shooting?**  
A. Connie Svoboda, Hartman Reserve Nature Center-- We use **WeVideo** with good results - free!

A. Abbey Harkrader, Motor Mill Historic Site-- We find just posting the videos directly to FB is easiest preferring not to do live videos. We Like **iMovie** the best. **Shotcut** is another free one for PC. For a very basic program most PC's come with Photos in Windows that has a video editor. **Videopad** is similar to iMovie but takes a small subscription. (You guys gave me a good idea for bloopers!)

A. Diane Schupbach, CF Historical Society Ice house-- if you are new to video like I am, remember not to switch your device between horizontal and vertical while filming. It is difficult (but not impossible) to fix.

A. Mariah Busta, Iowa's Dairy Center—Helps to know what platform will be posting on before you start shooting for direction of camera. Horizontal: fills the screen for YouTube. Vertical: viewing on phone, as well as Instagram and TikTok. Invest in a microphone, it clips to shirt and plugs into your audio port on device. Also a phone ring light clip helps drastically for indoor/outdoor lighting.

A. Samantha McCombs, Grout Museum—recommends using a tri-pod for staged videos. Site is recording with HD High Res 1920x1080. This allows highest quality, but the option for viewers to scale down if don’t have fast internet or connection.

A. Heidi Reams, Fossil Prairie Center—hasn’t invested in a microphone yet, but does recommend a selfie stick while on walking tours.

**Product links:   
Microphone:** [**https://www.amazon.com/PoP-voice-Professional-Microphone-Omnidirectional/dp/B016C4ZG74**](https://www.amazon.com/PoP-voice-Professional-Microphone-Omnidirectional/dp/B016C4ZG74)

**Ringlight for phones:** [**https://www.amazon.com/QIAYA-Selfie-Photography-Lighting-Rechargeable/dp/B01HXTHPXU/ref=sr\_1\_4?dchild=1&keywords=ring+light+for+phone&qid=1591799802&sr=8-4**](https://www.amazon.com/QIAYA-Selfie-Photography-Lighting-Rechargeable/dp/B01HXTHPXU/ref=sr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=ring+light+for+phone&qid=1591799802&sr=8-4)

**Q. Candy Welch-Streed, Director of Partnerships SSNHA--What is the best time to go live? Typical length of videos?**A. Victoria Cote, Mathias Ham Historic Site-- We recently looked into the best time on Facebook for our marketing policy and it is Wed from 11 - 1pm.

A. Heidi Reams, Fossil Prairie Center—Videos are 2-5 minutes. Classroom tours are 8-10 mins. The shorter/teaser videos get more views.

A. Samantha McCombs, Grout Museum—Long videos are under 10 minutes. Short videos are under 1 minute. Using quick videos for Instagram and TikTok.

A. Mariah Busta, Iowa's Dairy Center—Facebook Live are 15-20 minutes and virtual tours w/classrooms are closer to 30 minutes.

**Q. Jim Dietz-Kilen, Living History Farms--Are you able to charge anything for the virtual school tours? Do you see that as a sustainable model to offer as an option in the future?**

A. Mariah Busta, Iowa's Dairy Center—Not charging for school tours. Haven’t started charging for family tours, haven’t found a proper way to start that process. Right now, the videos are building excitement to come see in person.

A. Samantha McCombs, Grout Museum—Will continue to keep all videos free; see it as a great marketing tool. Using videos to show snippets or highlighting pieces of an exhibit. Using as a teaser to bring them in to the site.

A. Heidi Reams, Fossil Prairie Center—Also not looking to charge, see as great marketing for site. Since pandemic, the visitor center has been closed but have seen an increase in foot traffic in outdoor space. Showing videos allows those to get the full package of inside space when only able to view outside space.

**Q. Felicia Carner, National Mississippi River Museum--As people are spending more time outside and as businesses are opening up, have you noticed a decline in interest in virtual engagement?**

A. Mariah Busta, Iowa's Dairy Center—Wished would have started in April for Zoom tours. Started a little later and missed more interaction with kids during school timeframe. Toward the end, some may have gotten burnt out from Zoom. Still seeing good participation on Facebook.

A. Samantha McCombs, Grout Museum—Haven’t seen a decline, feel it is because adding new material each week.

A. Heidi Reams, Fossil Prairie Center—Also seeing good interaction. To help with personal stagnation, starting to tour local areas to keep all interests up.

**Q. Joan Maxwell, Cinnamon Ridge Farms-- Is it necessary to use headphones with a microphone? I see many people that do Facebook videos, but I see them use headphones with a microphone.**

A. Mariah Busta, Iowa's Dairy Center—All preference level; have used to drown out sound while talking and recording. Prefer to use when not on the camera and showing livestock and barn views instead.

**Q. Joan Maxwell, Cinnamon Ridge Farms--How often do you recommend putting videos out** A. Heidi Reams, Fossil Prairie Center—Started doing live videos 4x/week, now at 2x/week. Need to find the happy medium with audience to keep engaged but not overload them.

A. Samantha McCombs, Grout Museum—Have been doing everyday. Looking at now, each topic recording will get 1x/week. Also looking at now that Grout is open, transitioning from recorded to live videos. Also noted—staying engaged doesn’t have to be “earth shattering” content.

A. Mariah Busta, Iowa's Dairy Center—Haven’t been able to put out as many videos as preferred, since not on the site as much with it being closed to public. Tip to those dealing with that—film high level material in one shot and then piece out sections of video as needed to post and stay relevant.

**Q. What have been the most successful virtual experiences (videos/viewers)?**

A. Heidi Reams, Fossil Prairie Center—Facebook live has been most popular and with the most discussion. During live session, maybe only 6-8 viewers, but more views and comments come later. Also, videos with walking tours have more views than inside shots. Noticed older views are enjoying the outside tours—something they may not be able to physically do anymore.

A. Samantha McCombs, Grout Museum—Voices of Iowa highlight videos have hit 12,000 views. Also, short videos (1 min or less) have 4,000 views. Noted--being able to put even $5 in advertising with Facebook helps with viewing.

A. Mariah Busta, Iowa's Dairy Center—Most successful Facebook live video was a couple years ago when tagged with a giveaway for posting where from; had 11,000 views. Noted- most views come later after the live session; nice to continue discussion and answer questions up to a week later. Mariah also will add in $5-10 in Facebook advertising to really push certain videos. (within Facebook, you click a post you want to essentially advertise with Facebook).

**Q. What is the best way to start virtual tours/videos?**

A. Samantha McCombs, Grout Museum—You don’t need high-level apps. There are many free editing apps (listed above in first question). Viewers like to see videos that show emotion and humanize the event- Grout is starting to put together bloopers from past video editing.

A. Mariah Busta, Iowa's Dairy Center—You don’t need a big budget. When in doubt, ask Google! Knowing your audience is key; have found Facebook is more middle-aged, Instagram is a younger audience, Twitter is more professional/business to business and TikTok could be a great thing for an intern to tackle and highlight your site. Next on the list is going 360views, anyone with Go-Pro experience. Joan Maxwell from Cinnamon Ridge Farms mentioned the Iowa Stem program uses this and has done a project on their farm before, they may be a good contact for insight or product. (also, see Heidi’s response below).

A. Heidi Reams, Fossil Prairie Center—Even if working by yourself, can bounce your ideas/footage off of family (ie teenagers ☺) to make sure color/lighting/etc look ok. Make sure to take advantage of SSNHA COVID-19 Resilience Awards. *Fossil Prairie is now a proud owner of a hands-free video device from these funds.* Google Maps allows you to do a 360view and tag your site on it.

**REMINDER:  
Funds are still available from SSNHA (it is a very brief application):**[**https://www.silosandsmokestacks.org/partner/funding-opportunities/**](https://www.silosandsmokestacks.org/partner/funding-opportunities/)