

**Square Dance Video**  
Minnesota Central Est Region, MN  
(February 2004)

Minnesota Central East Region

The desire for a tape to show at square dance demo's, showing the fun and excitement of Square Dancing, has developed into a 15 minute Square Dancing Infomercial in Minnesota's Central East Region.

In previous years one of the local clubs recorded a tape each year in the studios of a local public access cable TV station. It was shot in a studio with 2 or 3 squares and no scenery. It did net a few couples each year but wasn't really that exciting.

Knowing that a professionally done film, produced by a recording studio would be cost prohibitive they approached the regional cable access company about taping some scenes at local square dances. The company was very receptive and offered to produce a 15-minute infomercial about square dancing for a maximum of \$1500.00. The final cost was \$1300.00.

They filmed footage at several local dances and the Minnesota State Convention. They interviewed callers and dancers at every taping asking dancers why they started, how long they had danced and what they get out of Square Dancing. They ended up with a lot of scenes of dancers in the background with snippets of interviews supporting the physical fitness, mental fitness and friendship aspects of dancing. The dancers ranged in age from 30 to 70. Most of the dancers were in formal Square Dance attire but one of the dances taped was casual with Dee Dee Dougherty calling. The cable TV station had their female news anchor dress in Square Dance attire to conduct the interviews at the state convention. Among those interviewed were Dee Dee Dougherty, Mike Hogan and Lanny Weakland.

As a result of the infomercial a group of square dancers have gone to the effort of volunteering at the local public access station, training to be producers, cameramen and sound people. They are now allowed to produce their own programs. They are producing a one-hour tape every two weeks spotlighting a different club in the Central Eastern Region, which has 22 clubs. At this writing they have 4 tapes done. Up to this point all the programs have been done in the studio. The dancers are training on the mobile production facilities so they can begin to film at club dances. Dancers in each city of the region have been enlisted to take a copy of the tape to their local public access station. When all 22 clubs in the Central Eastern Region have been spotlighted, they are going to invite clubs from other parts of the state to participate.

They have found if you have enough material in the can the stations will play them on a regular basis. Also, once regional cable TV sees that the dancers and clubs are serious about continuing the production of tapes, they will take over the distribution. The Central Eastern Region is providing financial support for the callers and cuers and duplication of the tapes.

This is another example of dancers coming up with an idea, carrying forward and donating their time. A big Thank You goes to Al Jenkins from the Westonka Whirlers who spearheaded the infomercial project and to Ken & Dee Scott for organizing the cable TV programs.

Although it is still too early to see how many new dancers will be recruited, they are hearing from non-dancers about seeing the TV shows.

Information provided by Mike & Edie Kirsch