

Problems?

If you have problems with the equipment or need assistance during the conference, contact Jim Hawley in the Royster Building, or call Lyn Brown at the Rocky Mount DEC at (252) 443-8858, or Ed Stroud at the Morganton DEC at (828) 438-6263.

Basic Usage Guide

1. Turn on the switch on the power bar at the right side of the cart; it is the power control for all the video devices. Be sure to remember to turn the power off when you finish your conference or finish using the equipment for the day.
2. Next, turn the notebook computer on. Its power switch is a little round button toward the upper left of the computer. This system uses the Windows 2000 operating system; it may take a few minutes to load. The system will load and go to the Windows desktop.
3. Load the ViGo software by clicking the desktop icon. The program is a bit slow to load, but you should notice the Canon camera center itself, and then the local video will appear on the screen.
4. Use either the wireless remote control or the mouse to orient the camera for local video. You can zoom in or out, move the camera up and down, and left and right. Find a camera position that projects a pleasing image. This is what you are sending out...
5. When you are ready to connect to the remote site, click on the Dialer at the top line menu. Then select Address Book. You should see a list of the currently-operating sites. Scroll down and double-click the site you want; you should connect immediately.
6. Carry on the conference.
7. When finished with the conference, right click on the remote video image, and then select Hang Up from the menu. You will be prompted to verify that choice.
8. If finished for the day, after hanging up, then right click on the gray bar at the top of the screen, and select exit. After the ViGo software exits, then go to the typical steps of shutting down Windows by clicking on the Start button, selecting shutdown, and verifying that choice. The last step is---after the notebook computer shuts down and its screen goes dark---turn off the switch on the power bar, as noted in item 1 above.

Teleconferencing Notes

Pre-Conference

1. **Please verify your attendance at a planned conference.** As we learn better ways to manage this project, we will get better at this scheduling thing. For the present, if you hear that you are scheduled to participate in a teleconference at a particular site, please e-mail the site's contact person to verify that you plan to attend, which conference it is, on what date, and your name and who you represent. Likewise, if you find that you must cancel out of a planned conference, please e-mail the site contact person that you will not be there. (This will prevent local staff from setting up equipment and holding a room that will not be used.)
2. **Advance planning can make a significant difference.** Sharing an agenda among participants beforehand helps. Issues that are important to only part of the group probably should be handled either by e-mail in advance of the meeting, or by telephone call.

Multipoint conferences:

1. Teleconferencing is not the same as being there. There is no real substitute for face-to-face conferences, where people gather around a table, interact freely, engage in side-bar conferences, etc. In the era of sharply reduced travel and limited use of telephone conference calls, however, teleconferencing is probably the next best thing to being there.
2. Teleconferencing works best and easiest in simple point-to-point mode. This is when a person or small group at one location makes a connection with another person or small group at a different location. This type conference can be extremely interactive. If people from both sides of the conference start to talk at the same time, you can make adjustments. Since both sides see each other, you can simply gesture or raise a hand when you want the floor. So, whenever possible, it would be advisable to use point-to-point teleconferences. Also, please note that only in point-to-point conferences can you share applications and/or data. That is, it is impossible to open a spreadsheet and share it among several sites across the state. That is quite easy to do in a point-to-point conference.
3. It is critical that users in a multipoint conference (defined as more than two sites) have some plan in mind for interacting during the conference. Probably the easiest way to set up multipoint conferences is for the conference facilitator or group leader to maintain an open microphone, and for all other participants to mute their local mikes. Then when a remote site wishes to address the conference, the local user should un-mute the mike, make the comments, and then re-mute.

4. Remember that the screen switching of the remote view window is sound-activated. This means that if a remote site has the mike on, and there is a squeaking chair, a cough, or some other ambient noise, the system will try to switch to that location.
5. In some cases, we have seen some rather erratic screen switches as the system jumps from remote site to remote site. Really quick switching seems to result in both video and audio degradation.
6. In meetings, of course, there is often some urgency, some feeling that one needs to respond immediately to something someone else is saying. There are ways to deal with that in person, in old-fashioned round-table conferences, but those methods do not lend themselves to teleconferencing events. When several sites talk at once during a teleconference, things tend to break down.