Let Your Photo Tell a Story

First, if you are including an NWS staff person in the photo, he or she cannot wear shorts, a T-shirt, jeans or other weekend clothes. They are representing NWS and should show respect for the award recipient by wearing standard business attire.

Save photos you want to put on the Web at a low resolution: 72 pixels-per-inch or 640 x 480. For print purposes, such as brochures or newsletters, take the photo at 2048 x 1536 pixels and then save at 640 x 480. The temptation is to set the camera so it will fit more photos on a storage disk, but once you have taken a photo, you cannot boost the resolution.

A nice low resolution image will look good on a computer screen at 72 pixels-per-inch, but you won't provide a crisp, detailed print much larger than 3 inches by 5 inches. If you can boost the image quality to 300 dots per-inch (or the "high resolution" setting on some cameras), you can do more things with the photos, such as crop out distracting background details or enlarge the images to print them in larger sizes such as 8 inches by 10 inches. Storage disks have gotten much less expensive over the past couple of years, so rather than cram a bunch of low resolution images onto a single storage disk, get some more disks and shoot the photos at the highest resolution.

If you are shopping for a newer digital camera, you have a lot of things to consider (differences in storage formats, lens quality, camera size, battery life, etc.), but a primary feature is to find something that will give you the versatility to do many things with your photos. A 4-megapixel camera for around $300 - $400 should suit the needs of most offices.

The "Eyes" Have It, But Don't Leave Out the Hands

Whenever you take a photo of someone who is not posing for the camera, it's called a "candid" photo. A good candid photo tells a story by conveying some kind of action or interaction if more than one person is in the picture.

Keep some things in mind when you are framing a candid photograph. Before you take the photo, try to position yourself so you can see both eyes of your primary subject or subjects. Someone looking at your photo should see the subject's eyes and facial expression. Also try to include the subject's hands.

Framing the Subject & Choosing the Perspective

One of the first steps toward getting a good photo of a person involves how you frame the photo subject. Imagine the camera's viewfinder "rectangle" as if it is divided into thirds, both horizontally and vertically.

You can vary the way you "frame" your photo in other ways too. Common snapshots can be made more interesting if you change the point of view of the photographer. Instead of taking all of your photos from an eye level of between five and six feet, try taking some photos while you have one knee on the ground. Try taking some photos from a higher perspective by standing above your subject on stairs or a ladder or similar solid surface. Be sure to follow safe practices and have someone beside you to steady you if you try shooting from a higher perspective. Varying your shooting perspective and shooting several photos increases the chances of getting at least one good image.

Instead of centering your subject in the middle of the camera's viewfinder, try to place your subject in one of the four "cross-hairs" created by the intersections of your imaginary vertical and horizontal lines. Change your angle to get rid of distracters like a pole or coat rack that could end up being behind your subject's head. If you see a

soda can or something else that's in your viewfinder, stop and move the object before you take the photo, or shift your perspective to keep it out of the photo.

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Submitting Your Photos and Captions

- Shoot photos at a high resolution (2048 x 1536 pixels)
- Save as a JPEG at a lower resolution (640 x 480 pixels)
- Save as "year/award-last name": 10-johnson.jpg, holm-johnson
- Submit caption in Word with same name: 10-johnson.doc and include:
  - Names of all persons pictured, including pets
  - Name and title of NWS staff present
  - Name of observing location: e.g., Elmo, NY
  - Name of NWS office: e.g., NWS Cheyenne, WY
  - Month and year picture was taken: e.g., 5/06
  - Name and title of photographer: e.g., Photo by OPL Cindy Kim
  - **Optional:** Personal details about pets, kids, observing site, history, etc. *We particularly would like more details for 45 years of service and over, memorable weather stories, etc.*

    Sample caption: From left, Jessica Harris, of Springfield, NH, accepts a 40 Year Length of Service Award with help from husband Jeff and dog Sandy. The award was presented by Michael NOAA, CPL, NWS Boston, MA. Jessica's family has been observing at this site since 1926. Photo by DAPM Suzanne Tran.

Submit your form here.

THANK YOU!