

Technically, it's all just lighting!

Here is an outdoor lighting trick I came up with today. I was going to go with the weekend shooting group tomorrow to the Spencerville covered bridge. I looked outside this afternoon and saw the rare northeast Indiana sun out there. So I decided to strike while the iron was hot. I hopped on to Google Earth to look at the orientation of the bridge from the satellite view. There is a "ruler" icon at the top of the workspace. What is cool about the ruler is, that it is also a compass. Click on one side of the bridge (or any object anywhere in the world!) and drag the line to the other side of the bridge. You will get a reading of approximately .3 miles and approximately 84 degrees if you started on the western (left) side of the bridge. So as I expected, that the bridge located off of County Road 68 is basically oriented East and West. Why do I care?

What I really want to know is where the sun will be in relation to my intended viewpoint. Hmmm, how do I go about that? Here's another slick spot to bookmark in your computer browser.

<http://www.srrb.noaa.gov/highlights/sunrise/azel.html>

That's long enough that you will only want to type it once. So, what is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have to do with my shot? A calculator that pops up looks like this:

*** [Click here to try NOAA's New Solar Calculator](#) ***

City:	Lat:	Deg:	Min:	Sec:	Time Zone
Enter Lat/Long -->	North--+	41	16	53	Offset to UTC (MST=+7):
Click here for help finding your lat/long coordinates	South--				Daylight Saving Time:
	Long:	East--	84	54	51
	West--+				5
					No

Note: To manually enter latitude/longitude, select **Enter Lat/Long** -> from the City pulldown box, and enter the values in the text boxes to the right.

Month:	Day:	Year (e.g. 2000):	Time: (hh:mm:ss)		
January	30	2010	17	: 35	: 22
					<input type="radio"/> AM <input type="radio"/> PM <input checked="" type="radio"/> 24hr

Calculate Solar Position

Equation of Time (minutes):	Solar Declination (degrees):	Solar Azimuth:	Solar Elevation:	cosine of solar zenith angle
-13.38	-17.49	244.19	2.55	0.0446

Azimuth is measured in degrees clockwise from north.
Elevation is measured in degrees up from the horizon.
Az & El both report dark after astronomical twilight.

The longitude and latitude were presented by Google Earth. The 5 hour offset is our difference from GMT/UTC/Zulu time. On January 30th 2010 at 17:35:22 (5:35:22 pm) the sun was exactly at 244.19 degrees (Southwest is of course 235 degrees) and 2.55 degrees above the horizon. I simply added 180 to the 84 degrees and it came up to 264 degrees. That would put the sun just over my right shoulder as I faced easterly. So if you are looking for those "lucky" lighting effects on your outdoor shots, here is a way to get an idea where that sun is really at. Now whether there is a heavy cloud cover, well that's

beyond the scope of this tip. I'll see you on the bridge March 25th at 18:00. Plug that date and time into the calculator. I'll shoot the sunset at 9.98 degrees above the horizon and at 264 degrees. The sun should be framed by the tunnel that is the bridge. Have fun.

Jim Macino