

Video Corp., Los Angeles, as VP, affiliate and consumer marketing.

Chris Strong, field engineer, Bexel Corp., Dallas and Los Angeles, joins Telecast Fiber Systems Inc., Worcester, Mass., as sales/support engineer.

Mark Howorth, partner, Brain & Co., Los Angeles, joins National Mobile Television, Los Angeles, as CEO.

INTERNET

Appointments at Zap2it.com, Los Angeles: **Clark Bender**, Web site producer, Tribune Media Services, Chicago, joins as executive producer, movie section; **Mike Szymanski**, free-lance writer and author, joins as managing editor, movie section.

OBITUARIES

Don Weis, award-winning television and film director, died on Friday, July 28, in Santa Fe, N.M. He was 78.

He directed episodes of *The Twilight Zone*, *The Love Boat* and *M*A*S*H*. He was awarded six Directors Guild of America awards.

He is survived by his wife, actress Rebecca Welles, daughters Deborah and Pamela, a stepdaughter and two grandchildren.

Max Showalter, stage, television and film character actor sometimes credited as Casey Adams, died Sunday, July 30, in Middletown, Conn. He was 83. A seasoned Broadway actor and composer, Showalter acted in more than 1,000 television shows, including *The Swift Show*.

Robert MOUNTY, who was an executive vice president at both NBC and Metromedia, died Sunday, Aug. 6, in Manhattan. He was 71.

In 1971, he was named vice president and general manager of WNEW(FM) New York and later became executive vice president and director of sales for Metromedia Radio.

During his 13-year career with NBC beginning in 1975, Mr. Mounty served as vice president for sales and marketing and executive vice president of the NBC Radio Division.

Mr. Mounty is survived by four children, Judith, Ann, Ian and Jennifer; three grandchildren; and brothers Seymour and Bernard.

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OPEN MIKE

Northpoint counterpoint

EDITOR: After reading the Aug. 7, 2000, issue, I felt it necessary to air a few thoughts and clarify a few points made in your story entitled "The Next Big Thing?"

The bottom line is this: In spite of demonstrated (and admitted) interference, Northpoint is nonetheless asking the FCC to, by Federal government decree, increase the frequency and length-of-service interruptions suffered by satellite-television customers. It would be interesting to see what BROADCASTING & CABLE's position would be if, and probably when, someone devises a spectrum-sharing plan for digital-terrestrial broadcasting. There is no such thing as minimal digital interference, you either have a top-quality picture or you have a blank screen. Would broadcasters stand idly by if someone declared that increased signal outage wasn't meaningful?

DirecTV and EchoStar, under a special temporary license from the FCC, jointly conducted tests that prove that allowing Northpoint to introduce a terrestrial "wireless cable" service into the DBS spectrum band would create harmful interference to DBS customers. In addition, Northpoint has already admitted that it will cause interference to consumers living within a one-square-mile area around each of the 14,000 to 15,000 microwave towers it proposes to build—areas that will include millions of current and future DBS consumers.

In the article, you wrote, "Dismissing Northpoint would be much easier if so many giant companies weren't trying to keep the fledgling company out of business." This is simply not true. The DBS industry's interest in this matter is to protect current and future subscribers from interference from Northpoint or anyone else. An overlooked point is that Northpoint can enter the multichannel video market today simply by utilizing the spectrum that the FCC has already set aside for use by "wireless cable" systems exactly like Northpoint's. If Northpoint were to operate in that "wireless cable" spectrum, we would welcome the challenge of new competition.

We have been arguing that the best way to resolve this issue is with independent testing, under the FCC's supervision, to verify Northpoint interference with DBS signal reception. To protect taxpayers, the DBS industry has agreed to bear its fair share of the costs. Tellingly, Northpoint has fought the idea of independent testing every step of the way and continues to refuse to cooperate. Makes you wonder what they are afraid of.

In the article, you mention that FCC insiders feel Northpoint has a fair shot at approval, and if so, it would be a product of their "surprising political clout." We as an industry will continue to fight for the sake of competition and the millions of consumers who have switched to DBS. The FCC should not compromise its responsibility to consumers in the name of wink-and-nod politics. —*Chuck Hewitt, president, Satellite Broadcasting and Communications Association*

PBS was at convention, too

EDITOR: I was surprised that PBS was left out of your [Aug. 7] article about the television coverage of the Republican National Convention.

PBS devoted far more hours to the GOP convention than any other broadcast network. Anchored by Jim Lehrer, our coverage ran more than three live prime time hours during each of the four days of the convention. PBS stations were the only place where the one-third of American households without cable could find complete convention coverage.

And while ratings are not PBS' driving motivation, we were gratified that more viewers tuned in to PBS than any cable network. Our coverage drew a cumulative audience of nearly seven million viewers each night.

As the Democratic Convention convenes this week in Los Angeles, PBS will be there every night. We look forward to a week of important political programming, and we invite you to tune in. —*Pat Mitchell, president, Public Broadcasting Service*