Panagos fears take-over of cable by county

The founder and owner of the first cable television franchise granted in the metropolitan area of Washington says the threat of government ownership of cable television "scared to death." John Panagos, whose Gaithersburg (Md.) CATV Inc. became operational a little more than a month ago, told the Advertising Club of Metropolitan Washington at a luncheon meeting that the franchise authority of the Montgomery county council in suburban Maryland, acting as a result of a proposal for a county-owned and operated local cable system (BROADCASTING, Oct. 9, 1972), has authorized a $200,000 feasibility study of government ownership of cable TV systems. Noting that he is currently one of 11 applicants for a cable-TV franchise in Montgomery county, Mr. Panagos made it clear that he would rather lose his franchise bid to a competitor than to see government operation of the system.

He cited the inherent danger to freedom of the press and the "staggering" financial burden to the county and its taxpayers as primary reasons for his fear of government ownership. "The county has enough to do in solving sewer problems, roads, schools," Mr. Panagos said.

Know any funny stories you can't tell on the air?

Put 'em on tape or cassette and send 'em in! Contemporary new humor service pays $25 for each joke used. Stories need not be original if you tell them great or add a fresh new twist. All risque ratings needed: "G", "PG", "R", even "X". Audience: adult men and women. Ideal length: 30 to 60 seconds. Laugh all the way to the bank. Send as many as you can think of to: "Ever hear the one about...", Box 670 44. Century City Station, Los Angeles, California 90067. All jokes acknowledged.

Equipment & Engineering

Tightening up at Collins

A new division to incorporate all aspects of its broadcast operation has been established by Collins Radio Co., Dallas. Steve Spence, who joined Collins in 1961 and most recently was director, computer services division, has been named general manager of the division that will handle marketing, engineering and manufacturing for broadcast products. John Haterle is to continue as marketing manager.

"The customer will benefit from the centralization," according to D. R. Beall, executive vice president of Collins. "And because the division will have complete responsibility for all engineering and manufacturing functions, we will be able to produce a better-than-ever product at competitive prices."

Mr. Beall also said the Collins booth at the National Association of Broadcasters convention in Washington next month will include a new-product section, and that the introduction and delivery of other new products will be accelerated by the reorganization.

Technical Briefs

Selling by tape. Simpson/Reilly & Associates, Seattle station rep, plans to use Sony Videocassette recorders to make more effective sales presentations to advertisers for its station clients. Firm says it will employ tape medium in visual depiction of client's facility, to provide spon- sors with air check of spots from distant markets and to provide advertisers with personal message from station managers. Simpson/Reilly is regional representative with station clients in Washing- ton, Idaho, Oregon and British Columbia. Put off. Launch of Intelsat IV, commercial communications satellite to be...