

## Quarter million pledged by NCTA in fight with NAB over pay cable

At same time NAB special committee sharpens up its antisiphoning plans

The National Cable Television Association will spend up to \$250,000 to counter the campaign of the National Association of Broadcasters against pay cablecasting.

That figure was authorized "in principle" by the NCTA board of directors, which met for two days in Washington last week. Though the association was keeping silent as to how that sum would be spent, it was evident that a major public-relations countercampaign is in the offing. Asked whether NCTA plans to purchase newspaper space to take its position to the public—as had the NAB last month in Washington's two dailies, the *Post* and the *Star-News*, an association spokesman was noncommittal. "I won't say that we won't," he stated.

The NCTA board authorized the association's public relations department to spend as much as \$30,000 in an anti-NAB drive between now and the time the board meets in Las Vegas next month. At that time, it was reported, a detailed budget for the countercampaign will be acted upon. The association would not say where the \$250,000 would come from, but the spokesman asserted that "adequate resources are already on hand." Funds and other support will also be solicited from allied industries, educators and certain public-interest groups, he said.

In addition to an anticipated newspaper campaign, the NCTA staff was also authorized to prepare a "good strong brochure" on its stand on the pay issue.

Beyond the emerging PR campaign, the board was also reported to have discussed several types of litigation to bring against the NAB. Included was the filing of an antitrust complaint with the Justice Department, based on the contention that the NAB campaign is an attempt to thwart competition from the pay-cable industry, and a pleading with the Federal Trade Commission charging NAB with fraudulent and misleading advertising in its print activity. NCTA staffers were instructed by the board to keep silent on those issues, and refused to comment.

It was also apparent that the request by NCTA President David Foster two weeks ago that association members monitor neighboring television stations for pro-NAB on-air proclamations that would invoke fairness obligations (BROADCASTING, Oct. 1) is being taken to heart. The monitoring program discussed by the board last week, according to staff sources, was "extensive and sophisticated." Said the spokesman: "We're going to watch them [the broadcasters] like a hawk."

NAB was also active on the pay issue last week. Its special pay TV committee discussed four basic issues:

- The funding subcommittee presented

a formula through which NAB hopes to finance the antipay campaign, which has been ticketed to run up to as much as \$600,000. Specifics were not disclosed, but it was reported that market size would be a principal criterion. And although most of the contributions would be solicited from television interests, the spokesman said, "radio will not be totally excluded."

▪ The research subcommittee reported "some progress" in its efforts to find an executive director to head the campaign. The subcommittee, and principally NAB Vice President for Public Relations James Hulbert, have "talked to a couple of people and they'll talk to some more." No public-relations firm has been approached as yet, this spokesman added, although the committee hopes to locate one to take the burden of the antipay campaign away from NAB's in-house staff "as soon as possible." No timetable was declared, however.

▪ Mr. Hulbert reported that another newspaper ad, again to be placed in the two Washington dailies, was in preparation and will probably appear this week. In addition, the possibility of utilizing the transcript of a radio debate two weeks ago between NAB President Vincent Wasilewski and Mr. Foster is now being contemplated. The program was broadcast on WHN(AM) New York (BROADCASTING, Oct. 1).

▪ The possibility of dissension over the antipay campaign from radio interests within NAB was downplayed by members who had attended several state broadcast association meetings at which the cam-

paign was discussed. According to the spokesman, those members reported "quite a considerable interest and not much dissent" from the radio representatives attending those gatherings.

## 35 cable systems now carry pay TV

That's latest count by theaters; subscriber potential is big

It cannot be said that pay cable in its short existence has grown by leaps and bounds. It can be said that the new medium has the potential to do so.

According to data compiled by the National Association of Theater Owners (an arch foe of pay cable) and buttressed by BROADCASTING's own research, there are now 35 operational pay-cable systems. The majority are on cable channels leased from independent systems by private entrepreneurs. The exception is Gridtronics, a subsidiary of Warner Cable, which has 10 pay operations on Warner-owned systems. The largest pay entity in terms of total operational systems is New York-based Home Box Office, a subsidiary of Time Inc.'s Sterling Communications, which with the addition of three more pay systems last week—in Ithaca, Mount Vernon and Babylon, all New York—has enlarged its portfolio to 13 (BROADCASTING, Oct. 1).

Other firms making inroads in the new industry are Optical Systems Corp., which is now in operation on four systems with

## Pay cable on stage and in the wings

Company	City	Operational(X) Proposed(O)	No. of Cable Subscribers	Company	City	Operational(X) Proposed(O)	No. of Cable Subscribers
Xtra-Vision Trans-World Communications	Carrolltown, Pa.	O	5,078	Optical Systems	Glendale-Burbank, Calif.	O	6,746
	Smithtown, N.Y.	X	7,000		Manhattan Beach, Calif.	O	1,600
American TV and Com- munications Teleprompter	Long Island, N.Y.	X	35,000		Hermosa Beach, Calif.	O	3,333
	Orlando, Fla.	O	500		Toledo, Ohio	X	18,800
Warner Cable	San Bernardino, Calif.	O	16,975		Harrisburg, Pa.	X	32,000
	Olean, N.Y.	X	7,100		Easton, Pa.	X	20,000
	Pottsville, Pa.	X	11,500		Wayne, N.J.	X	8,000
	Clearfield, Pa.	X	4,700		Yuma, Ariz.	O	9,203
	Warren, Pa.	X	8,000		Santa Barbara, Calif.	O	32,500
	Reston, Va.	X	2,450		Bakersfield, Calif.	O	12,796
	Winter Haven, Fla.	X	5,000	Vancouver, B.C.	O	NA	
	Coos Bay, Ore.	X	9,000	San Diego	X	65,000	
	Bradford, Pa.	X	5,000	Long Beach, Calif.	X	30,000	
	Fayetteville, Ark.	X	8,600	Cinci Com- munications	San Clemente, Calif.	X	5,400
Pittsfield, Mass.	X	9,000	Escondido, Calif.		X	15,951	
Kingston Cablevision	Kingston, N.Y.	O	10,000	Theatrevision	Sarasota, Fla.	X	19,957
Pensacola Cablevision	Pensacola, Fla.	X	4,000		New Kensington, Pa.	O	9,702
Clearview Cable Home Box Office	Richmond, Ind.	O	8,000		Westmoreland, Pa.	O	20,000
	Wilkes-Barre, Pa.	X	8,150		Williamsport, Pa.	O	20,000
	Allentown, Pa.	X	42,500		Greenville, Pa.	O	8,551
	Bethlehem, Pa.	X	1,000		Austin, Tex.	O	20,197
	Hazleton, Pa.	X	12,310		Paris, Tex.	O	4,556
	Stroudsburg, Pa.	O	3,900		Bryan, Tex.	O	6,750
	Palmerton- Lehigh, Pa.	X	8,900		Victoria, Tex.	O	6,300
	Lansford, Pa.	O	4,000		Dexter, Mo.	O	180
	Nazareth, Pa.	X	1,735	Poplar Bluff, Mo.	O	2,200	
	Mahanoy City, Pa.	X	21,300	Clovis, N.M.	O	4,900	
New York City	O	57,280	Monroe, Mich.	O	2,000		
St. Clair, Pa.	X	2,000					
Tamaqua, Pa.	X	3,200					
Coplay, Pa.	X	1,000					
Ithaca, N.Y.	X	6,500					
Mt. Vernon, N.Y.	X	1,000					
Babylon, N.Y.	X	500					
Redondo Beach, Calif.	O	2,543					
Home Theatre Network							

Total companies, 13; total cities where pay cable is operational, 35; total cities where pay cable is proposed, 28; total subscribers on systems already offering pay service, 437,553; total subscribers on systems where pay cable is proposed, 279,790.