

NARB promises close watch over energy ads

Board's intent spelled out in reply to query from Senator McIntyre

National Advertising Review Board Chairman Edwin D. Etherington indicated his organization will comply with the spirit, if not the letter, of a call from Senator Thomas J. McIntyre (D-N.H.) for an advertising policy on matters related to energy.

In a letter responding to earlier correspondence from the senator, Mr. Etherington indicated that a consultative panel appointed in April to explore energy advertising and environmental matters would research the question. But Mr. Etherington also defined the boundaries of that exploration:

"It is not the purpose of our self-regulation program, any more than it appears to be the purpose of the Congress, to establish a censorship program or a blanket prohibition against advertising by type or source," Mr. Etherington explained.

"It is our purpose to foster the highest standards of truth and accuracy in national advertising and to heighten the awareness of advertisers and their agencies of practices that may be contrary to the public interest."

In his letter to the NARB, Senator McIntyre had expressed concern over cer-

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Nix on pix. Canadian Radio-Television Commission has ruled that locally originated feature-film showings on cable systems do not "give priority to local community participation." Accordingly, commission won't allow them, except in special cases (such as operation in remote areas of country; use as subscriber-gaining incentive for systems that have been precluded by CRTC from adding more U.S. signals). CRTC says film origination raises "many of the same issues" as pay TV, is demanding specific application from cable operators desiring to present such programming.

Try, try again. Less than month after Houston voters turned down city council's choice of cable franchisee, (BROADCASTING, Nov. 12), two local firms that were initial contenders have reapplied for franchises. Greater Houston CATV, which was council's choice first time around, and Gulf Coast Cable Television have formally submitted bids for non-exclusive contracts. They didn't specify areas of city they intend to serve.

Building an ideal. National Cable Co., subsidiary of LVO Cable, is constructing "model" cable system to serve East Lansing, Mich., including Michigan State University. System, which will include 86 miles of dual-trunk cable, will offer 26 channels initially, 36 eventually. Ten broadcast signals will be carried as well as 23 FM channels, planned automatic fire and burglar alarm system, several instructional and program-origination channels, advertising and leased-channel capacity. Construction is to be completed in spring.

Pay-cable additions. Home Box Office Inc. reports it is supplying motion pictures, sports and special events for pay-TV channels on systems in Endicott, Vental and three other communities in Binghamton, N.Y., area. Systems are owned by Pioneer Cablevision, Binghamton. HBO now serves 14 cable systems in Pennsylvania and New York.

Sitting up late with a distant signal

NCTA asks FCC to move on rulemaking that would allow cables to import duplicated station into market when local outlet signs off

The National Cable Television Association has urged the FCC to adopt a rule-making proposal by which cable systems would be permitted to import signals of distant TV stations which operate after the local station has signed off. Existing commission rules prohibit systems from importing into the local market the signal of a distant station which duplicates programming of a more significantly viewed local outlet.

The proposal advanced by NCTA last week would ostensibly conform to that requirement in that the additional imported signal would be carried only between the time that the local station signs off and signs on. The plan has attained

greater significance in light of recent experiments at several major market television stations with all-night operation. Several Metromedia Inc. stations now engage in this practice one or more times per week, for instance.

The original proposal was submitted to the commission late last year by Davis Communications Inc., a Decatur, Ga.-based cable operator. Davis contended that no adverse economic impact on the part of the local station could be shown if the plan were put in effect. The proposal also asserted that no FCC certificate of compliance would be necessary in order to implement late-night carriage.

NCTA maintained last week that the commission should make "every effort" to permit cable operators "to provide greater time and program diversity" when there is no prospect of economic harm to the local broadcaster. The association said the proposal would serve "as a means of providing television programming to viewers presently disenfranchised because of their living or occupational schedules."

Citizen group charges there's something rotten in Philadelphia cable

At hearing on state-regulation bill, legislators hear allegations of violations of franchise agreements

Pennsylvania state legislators are investigating citizen charges of impropriety on the part of firms holding Philadelphia's six cable franchises and claims that city government is doing nothing about the situation. Members of the Philadelphia Community Cable Coalition have told a legislative committee that the state must move to check into Philadelphia cable activity, because the city will not. A hearing, called to investigate a pending bill that would create a system of state cable regulation, was also attended by representatives of three firms holding franchises in the state—Comcast Corp., Jerrold and Triangle Publications—which decried the state plan to regulate cable.

Lois Brown, a member of the cable coalition and president of Metrotel Communications Inc. (which wants a Philadelphia franchise if one becomes available), told the legislators that the group had been "totally frustrated" in efforts to get city officials to look into the city cable situation. The group contends that trafficking of franchises has been rampant. Philadelphia granted six franchises in 1966. Only one firm, TeleSystems Inc., has been building a plant. Miss Brown cited one alleged violation of a franchise provision prohibiting ownership transfer without city approval—the sale of Jerrold interest to Sammons Communications in 1971. The coalition said at least two other franchisees have secretly followed that route. A scheduled city witness did not appear at the hearing and a spokesman for Mayor Frank Rizzo said the city would not supply data until hearings reconvene this month in Harrisburg.