

Cablevision, a predominantly black concern which has just been issued an FCC certificate of compliance, will soon begin constructing its system in the east region. Although local cable officials estimate that about 60% of the city (excluding the downtown and industrial regions) has been wired, there are now only about 25,000 subscribers in Seattle—a penetration of about 11%.

Derek White, manager of the Teleprompter-owned Seattle system, expressed his conviction that the advisory committee's eight-district concept will be significantly revised. "Each district could be moved around to satisfy everybody," he said. But he noted a greater concern with the proposed requirement that each of the districts have their own public-access facilities. "Why does the city of Seattle want to split up, divide or segregate the whole community" when the concept of public access envisions a system whereby all citizens can be collectively enlightened? he asked.

Another problem, Mr. White asserted, involves the initial plan to interconnect the entire region. "I'm not sure it can even be done technically. What you're talking about is a regional microwave network. Who's going to pay for it? We're not. The city won't. The FCC certainly isn't going to."

Particular issue may force general policy on regional franchises in N.J.

New Jersey's Office of Cable Television is considering a case that could make it the first cable regulatory body to formulate a policy on granting regional franchises.

The case involves a petition by National Video Systems, operator of cable systems serving three New Jersey seaside communities, to take over portions of a Dover township area now franchised to another firm, Clear Television Corp.

The National Video petition underscores a common problem among the state's cable operators. National Video now serves the communities of Lavalette, Seaside Park and Seaside Heights. It is seeking to extend its service to four unincorporated areas located on islands adjacent to its existing system. Those four areas are technically part of Dover township, which is the cable domain of Clear Television. But geographically, the National Video operation is closer to the unincorporated areas. And it is possible that, because of the expense involved in bringing the Clear Television service to the island communities, cable may never be available there.

The problem, OCT officials say, is not an isolated one. As one staffer put it, "New Jersey has so many areas that may not get cable that regionalization is something we've got to consider." OCT Director John Cleary said too many franchises were granted prior to the office's establishment last year. "Now it's a matter of

a hop, skip and jump between many systems. It makes it very difficult for us to formulate policies."

The National Video case, Mr. Cleary speculated, could provide some answers. The OCT will hold hearings on the matter in September, he noted, and a decision could come soon thereafter. "It's an isolated case," Mr. Cleary said, "but it could have a bearing on the thinking of the office as far as regionalization goes."

The OCT director emphasized the importance of such a consideration. "It's a very important part of the cable industry, and one that must be addressed." Indeed, Mr. Cleary feels that a separate rulemaking proceeding should be held on the matter, but he notes some prob-

lems. "I think it's going to require a great deal of study, and I would hope for some guidelines from the FCC."

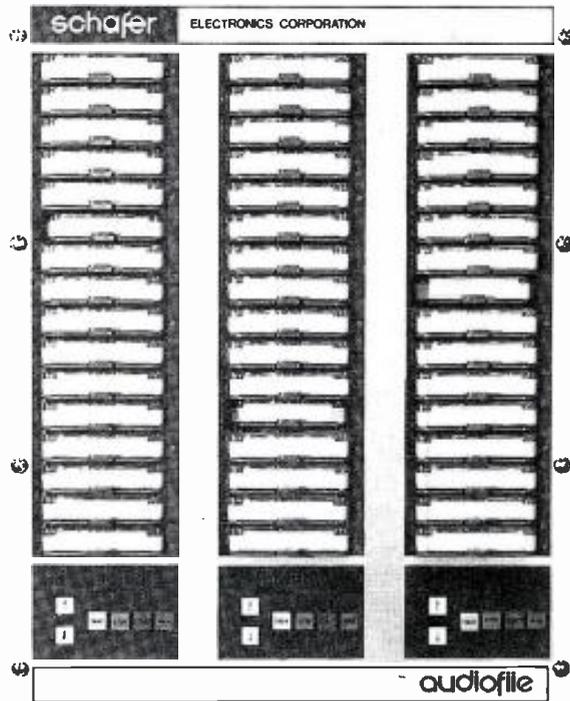
Thus far, however, the commission has been silent on the matter.

FCC to question HBO on its pay-cable of Yankees

FCC Chairman Richard E. Wiley has ordered a study to determine whether the carriage of New York Yankees baseball games on a pay cable system violates the FCC's antisiphoning rules.

The chairman said Home Box Office, the pay distributor, would be asked for its "reasons for believing that the distribution of these games is consistent with our regulations." The FCC investigation was

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