

## PBS's public-affairs hopes get \$1-million Ford boost

The Ford Foundation has set aside \$1 million of its total \$40 million phase-out support for public television (begun in 1974 and expected to run out in 1977) to Public Broadcasting Service for "unrestricted" use in public affairs programming. The special grant, which comes from money that would have probably been parceled out to PBS anyway but in a different fashion, was provided by Ford to assist PBS in carrying out its proposed plan for beefing-up its news and public affairs programming (BROADCASTING, May 31).

The \$1 million grant package is separate from a \$500,000 public TV fund being set up jointly by Ford and the National Endowment for the Arts to enable public television to bring in independent documentaries and more film makers to the programming pool.

Once the \$40 million phase-out fund is depleted, said a Ford spokesman, the foundation's continuing role in assisting public television will be "extremely modest." Ford has contributed more than \$275 million to noncommercial TV since its beginning.

## N.Y. state radio service to start with 10 clients

The New York Network, an interconnected statewide radio news service that has been in development for two years, began on-air operation June 10 with 11 stations signed and five more expected to join in coming weeks. The initial broadcasts were carried only by WABY(AM) Albany. The other stations are expected to be hooked up by July 1.

The network is a division of New York Report, an Albany-based tape service that has been covering the state legislature since 1970. Within the 18 five-minute news summaries each day, one 60- and one 30-second commercial spot are allowed. Eight are to be network-sold and 10 are to be local availabilities. Stations are also offered 10 15-minute drive-time news roundups weekly, 42 sports broadcasts, 40 business reports (including hourly reports from the New York and American Stock Exchanges), and 27 news features.

The network shares distribution facilities, microwave and leased lines, with the New York Farm Network. There is no conflict in affiliation with national networks or audio news services, according to Robert Sandler, vice president-news operations for the New York Network. Other officials of the network are John Nelson, vice president-general manager, and George Flowers, vice president-sales.

Stations signed are WLFH(AM) Little Falls; WDOE(AM) Dunkirk; WAUS(AM) Auburn; WCKL(AM) Catskill; WKOL(AM) Amsterdam; WCGH(AM) Canadaigua; WVIN-AM-FM Bath; WYBG(AM) Massena and WLEA(AM) Hornell and WABY.

directed by Martin Scorsese), "Robin and Marian" (with Sean Connery and Audrey Hepburn in the title roles) and "The Black Bird" (featuring George Segal), the deal includes a number of films now in production, like "Fun With Dick and Jane" (starring George Segal and Jane Fonda), "Nickelodeon" (with Ryan O'Neal and Burt Reynolds, directed by Peter Bogdanovich), "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" (a science-fiction movie to be directed by Steven Spielberg, who did "Jaws"), "Bobby Deerfield" (starring Al Pacino) and "The Deep" (based on Peter Benchley's new novel).

In addition, sources at Time-Life Television say that it would be "only natural" for Time-Life to end up using Columbia's Burbank Studios in Hollywood if it sold one of its prime-time series ideas to a network for development as a pilot.

Meanwhile, HBO will use TPS's expertise in packaging pay-cable attractions system-by-system. Robert Weisberg, its president, will remain as head of the TPS division within the HBO organization. HBO sends out one basic schedule of programs (made up mainly of new movies and various sports events) to its 450,000 pay-cable subscribers in 32 states. TPS brings an additional 180,000 subscribers divided among 40 pay-TV systems. Formerly, HBO had to bypass a system owner who refused, for example, to play R-rated movies. But now TPS will be able to accommodate such a system for HBO.

## Standardized rates sought for Mass. cable

The Massachusetts Community Antenna Television Commission is looking into regulating cable TV rates on a "common tariff basis." The concept involves setting maximum rates for various classifications of cable systems, such as urban or rural and 20-channel or 12-channel facilities.

The commission hopes a classification system will cut down on the delays and expense associated with the present municipal rate approach. Commission Chairman Anthony G. Oettinger admitted that one uniform rate for all systems in the state would be "unworkable," but hoped that the classification approach would be useful in consolidating rate proceedings.

A notice of rulemaking and inquiry on the rate issue is expected in a couple of weeks.

## MDS to extend HBO's pay service in S.F. area

Home Box Office Inc. will lease time on multipoint distribution service facilities in the San Francisco and Palo Alto, Calif., area from Microband National Systems to transmit pay television programming.

MDS transmission will give HBO access to both noncabled apartment buildings as well as cable systems not presently co-located with satellite receive earth terminals. All homes within a 35-mile radius of the

MDS facilities will be potential HBO subscribers. MDS will also serve to connect existing cable system head-ends together with those systems that are receiving HBO programming via satellite. Both arrangements will open up a great percentage of homes in the country's sixth largest television market to the HBO pay TV network.

HBO first leased MDS facilities for pay TV transmission in the Queens and Brooklyn boroughs of New York in the summer of 1974.

## Storer rapidly adding pay to cable systems

**Florida operations are being offered HBO; California hook-ups are getting Telemation package**

Storer Broadcasting has accelerated its move into pay cable, kicking off new programming in Florida and California with showings of "Gone with the Wind."

On June 6, Storer began offering via-satellite Home Box Office movies and sporting events to 4,000 pay subscribers on its 32,000-subscriber Sarasota-Venice-Englewood, Fla., system. Pay penetration is now about 15%. Pay had been offered on the system for the past three years, but on a channel leased first by Theatervision Inc. and then by Motorola. Storer took over the channel from Motorola last November when it had 1,500 pay subscribers.

Storer began pay programming on its 16,000 subscriber system in Thousand Oaks, Calif., June 18 as a "stand-alone" movie channel with bookings from Telemation. It had a pay penetration of 20% before the service began operating and currently reports heavy sales.

Later this year, Storer plans pay expansion to three other of its California systems in Ventura and Orange counties. The three systems have 16,000 basic subscribers.

By 1977 Storer plans to offer pay to a number of its northern California and southern Georgia cable systems.

Over-all, Storer has 160,000 subscribers for its systems in California, Georgia, Florida and Alabama.

## Cable Briefs

**Affirmed.** Federal appeals court for 10th circuit has upheld \$2 million judgment awarded to United Telecommunications Inc. in claim against American Television & Communications Inc. No decision has been made on further appeal. Suit grew out of alleged "breach of promise" on stock involved in cable system acquisition (BROADCASTING, June 16, 1975).

**New chairman.** Marvin Dilbeck, vice president, Time Mirror Communications, has been appointed chairman of National Cable Television Association's Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) committee. Committee functions to inform CATV operators how to comply with OSHA laws.