

The Media

Cable, Southern style

Atlanta convention will focus on programing choices, feature interview with congressmen in Washington via satellite

Organizers of the Southern Cable TV Association's annual convention, slated for the Atlanta Hilton this weekend, are changing emphasis. Instead of concentrating on hardware as has been the custom, this year's convention will focus on programing.

As the association's president, Bill Ryan, put it: The convention "has traditionally been concerned with the plumbing, but this year we're more interested in what's in the pipeline."

The programing theme will be reflected throughout the four days of the convention—from Saturday when early registrants may attend an Atlanta Braves baseball game as the guest of Ted Turner, who owns not only the Braves but also superstation WTBS(TV) Atlanta and the in-

ipient Cable News Network, to the wrap-up Tuesday morning when FCC Chairman Charles Ferris and a number of congressmen and senators will answer questions put to them by members of the trade and general press.

The heart of the convention will be Monday. Four sequential seminars will be held on advertising on cable, cable sports programing, future cable programing and finding the right programing mix. The last seminar of the day will examine new and competitive technology. The Society of Cable Television Engineers has scheduled two speeches—"Small Business Computers and CATV System Tests" and "A Common Sense Approach to Converter Repair and Maintenance"—concurrent with the morning seminars.

The day's activities will be interrupted for lunch and the presentation of the ACE Awards by Tom Wheeler, president of the National Cable Television Association, and a speech by Representative Charles Rose (D-N.C.). Comedian Rodney Dangerfield will provide the entertainment following a banquet that evening.

The first full day of the convention,



Ted's turns. Last Monday, Ted Turner's wrcg(tv) Atlanta, the satellite superstation, changed its call to wrbs and the parent company, Turner Communications Corp., has switched accordingly to Turner Broadcasting System. Turner donated \$25,000 to a Cambridge Mass., educational FM station, now wmbz, to release the call letters, and sweetened the pot with another \$25,000 when the FCC granted Turner the call ("Closed Circuit," June 11). TBS also announced last week that the Atlanta station is now carried on 1,000 cable systems.

Sunday, will be highlighted by a "Supermarket of Cable Programing." Ryan said that he hopes representatives from all program suppliers will be on hand to promote their products. An exhibit area for equipment manufacturers will also be opened.

The Tuesday press conference will be conducted via satellite. In a Washington studio will be Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), ranking Republican on the Communications Subcommittee, and Representatives Lionel Van Deerlin (D-Calif.) and James Collins (R-Tex.) chairman and ranking Republican, respectively, of the House Communications Subcommittee, and Chairman Ferris. They will answer questions posed by reporters in Atlanta.

Showtime moves out

Showtime Entertainment, the pay-cable service jointly owned by Viacom International and Teleprompter, has begun regionalizing its 800,000-subscriber operation.

Showtime this week will open a Dallas office; an Atlanta office is slated for Oct. 1, with Chicago and New York following in November. Showtime, with headquarters in New York, launched its first regional office, in San Francisco, in early July.

Supervising the offices, which are said to represent expanded affiliate marketing support as well as field sales representatives, are regional managers Carroll Wood (Dallas); Bob Mason (Atlanta); Pat Grotto (Chicago); Art Gusow (New York), and Curt Bennett (San Francisco).



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