

According to figures released by FCC last Friday (May 15), eight national radio networks (CBS, NBC, four ABC and two Mutual Broadcasting System networks) and 35 network owned-and-operated stations yielded \$292.8 million in net revenues in 1980, up 16.1% from 1979 when revenues were \$252 million. Profits (before federal taxes) were down dramatically, however, to \$27.5 million, 26% decrease from \$37.2 million reported for 1979. Net revenues for O&O's were \$184.7 million, up 18.7%, while profits for that group totalled \$23 million, up 8% from 1979 when profits were \$21.3 million. Eight networks yielded \$108 million in revenues, up 11.9%, while 1980 profits totalled \$4.6 million, down 71.3% from 1979 when profits were \$15.9 million. Network expenses for 1980 were \$103 million, up 28.3% from previous year. O&O expenses totalled \$161.8 million, up 20.5% from 1979.

Gene Autry and Gulf United Corp., which is buying his 48.11% interest in KOOL-FM-TV Phoenix for \$35 million (BROADCASTING, May 4), filed suit last week charging remaining owners with mismanagement of stations' assets. Suit was filed in federal district court in Phoenix against Tom Chauncey, chairman of KOOL and 49.89% owner; his son, Tom Chauncey II, and Homer Lane, executive vice president and general manager, who owns 2%. It claims they attempted to "systematically and unlawfully" divert "millions of dollars in assets and earnings of KOOL for their personal hobbies, gratification and comfort," using company funds "to acquire extraordinarily expensive artwork, horses, farms, cars, airplanes" and other things for own use. Suit asks for full accounting of stations' assets and unspecified compensatory and punitive damages. No defendants could be reached Friday for comment.

One potential problem for NBC-TV was solved Thursday with announcement that Abell Communications' WMAR-TV Baltimore would become NBC affiliate next fall. There had been speculation WMAR-TV would go independent after losing its CBS-TV affiliation to Hearst Corp's WBAL-TV in that three-V market (BROADCASTING, March 9). Stephen D. Seymour, Abell Communications president, said in announcing affiliation that "we couldn't be happier," and called NBC "the network to watch in the '80's." NBC-TV President Robert E. Mulholland hailed



Celebrants. A happy occasion for Broad Street Communications coincided with good news for Mark Fowler last Thursday (May 14), and this picture resulted. It was taken at Washington's Capitol Hill Club shortly after the Senate confirmed Fowler to be a member of the FCC; he was a guest of Broad Street that evening at a dinner celebrating the radio group's 10th anniversary. Among the principals that evening (l to r): Richard L. Geismar, chairman of Broad Street; Sol Taishoff, editor of BROADCASTING, who was honored on the magazine's 50th anniversary; Fred E. Walker, Broad Street president; Robert E. Lee, outgoing chairman of the FCC, and Fowler.

WMAR-TV as "one of the oldest stations in the country as well as a proved winner in the Baltimore market." Similar problem remained unresolved: At WAST(TV) Albany, N.Y., which is losing CBS affiliation to WRGB(TV) and has said it may go independent (BROADCASTING, March 30), management representative said Thursday no decision had been reached.

A.C. Nielsen has released cable penetration estimates for all Nielsen Station Index DMA's (designated market areas). Estimates, effective with February 1981 survey period, and based on "improved procedure" for calculation, show following at top of penetration list: Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-San Luis Obispo, Calif. (80% penetration); Parkersburg, W. Va. (75.1%); Laredo, Tex. (74.8%); Biloxi-Gulfport, Miss. (74.2%), and Yuma, Ariz.-El Centro, Calif. (72.7%). Least penetrated is Las Vegas (1.7%).

"United front" on "issue of money from pay-cable and videodisks" is shaping up among union members, according to Rona Barrett, NBC's *Today* show regular. In early-morning segment last Friday (May 15), Barrett reported that multiguild strike possibilities are great and that Writers Guild of America, already striking, has been asked by Directors Guild of America to stay out until DGA contract expires June 30 so as not to "splinter on the issue of money" from software. Day before, Barrett said, members of Screen Actors Guild and DGA joined picketing writers with 4,000 people walking line: "the largest turnout in the history of Hollywood labor disputes." Barrett said result might be TV schedule "filled with reruns."

At end of last Friday's closed FCC agenda meeting—last commission meeting that Robert E. Lee will preside over as chairman now that Mark Fowler has been confirmed by Senate (see page 27)—other four commissioners took turns paying tribute to outgoing commission leader who has been with FCC since 1953. Commissioner Abbott Washburn led things off, saying, "Your reign has been short but it has been historic and memorable. We've had some real biggies... like cellular radio and Bell rate of return and you bit the DBS bullet. So we salute you as chairman and it's good that we'll have your grace and humor and wisdom for a little while longer. I'm going to find it impossible to get used to the idea of a commission without R.E.L. after July 1 because you've really become synonymous with the commission. ... I'm glad and I'm honored to have shared seven of those 27 years with you." Commissioner Joseph Fogarty then took his turn: "Of all the chairmen, ... you probably accomplished more in a shorter period of time than any of the other great chairmen that we've had." Flattered by remarks, Lee modestly replied, "You're only saying that because it's true." Commissioner James Quello then chimed in: "Well I have to say I was very glad to see a return of the collegial approach to commission deliberation. You get to the bottom line fast, and you're able to get everyone working with you and I thought we got a lot done in the time you were here." Commissioner Anne Jones added, jocularly, "You're clearly one of the two best chairmen I've served." In a more serious vein she said, "It has been a pleasure ... The collegiality has returned, I hope it's here to stay."

In spite of Reagan administration request for budget cut, Senate Appropriations Committee declined to cut back Corporation for Public Broadcasting's budget for fiscal 1982 and '83. Administration had wanted \$43 million and \$52 million cut from the current \$172 million budgets for each of those two years. Committee also refused to eliminate totally 1981 appropriation of \$25.7 million for National Telecommunications and Information Administration program which provides grants to public broadcasters. Instead, it cut only \$4 million.

First low-power TV application has been granted to John W. Boler of Bemidji, Minn., 48-year veteran of broadcasting and founder of KXMC-TV Minot, N.D., first TV station in state. He