Abe Lincoln winners. John P. Criswell II, anchorman-producer for WFAA-TV Dallas, and Rick Devlin, vice president and general manager of WORAM New York, were announced Feb. 11 as television and radio winners, respectively of the top Abe Lincoln awards. Presentation ceremonies took place in Fort Worth, sponsored for the 13th year by the Southern Baptist Radio-Television Commission to encourage broadcasters to enrich their local communities through programming. The commission had earlier announced his list of honors except for the Criswell and Devlin selections (Broadcasting, Feb. 8). Left to right: Criswell, Devlin and five Merit Award winners—Eleanor Curry, public affairs director, KSOL(FM) San Mateo, Calif.; Ike Newkirk, public service/community affairs director, WOXI-AM-FM Atlanta; Ethna Elaine Odum, director of community affairs, KALB-TV Alexandria, La.; Elizabeth H. Sheahan, public affairs director, WPOAM/WWZ(AM) Atlanta, and Walter Windsor, general manager, WORV(AM) Orlando, Fla. Continuing, left to right: humorist Grady Nunn, who received the Christian Service Award; John Chancellor, NBC Nightly News anchorman and editor, recipient of the Distinguished Communications Award, highest honor of the SBRTC; and Dr. Jimmy R. Allen, president of the commission, who made the presentations.

Michael Finkelstein and others in the Washington-based law firm of Nixon, Hargrave, Devans & Doyle.

WATR-TV isn't the only station dropping out of the NBC affiliate fold in coming weeks. NBC-affiliated KCMT(TV) Alexandria and satellite KMWT(TV) Walker, both Minnesota, are set to join CBS beginning March 15.

NBC said that it did not know how much of the Alexandria market it would be covering without KCMT but it added that its affiliates in Fargo, N.D., Duluth, Minn., and Minneapolis-St. Paul can be picked up there.

NAB task force narrows list on public broadcasting funding alternatives

Forty options have been reduced to nine with further input slated.

The National Association of Broadcasters Task Force on Public Broadcasting Funding has begun narrowing its list of funding alternatives. The task force had been considering a list of about 40 options to help noncommercial broadcasters raise revenues from private sources (Broadcasting, Jan. 18). Nine options have been selected, including a checkoff of federal funds, a tax credit, a tax deduction, and a lottery. The task force is composed of eight commercial and noncommercial broadcasters, each of whom will have a stake in the decision as it moves forward.

The task force will hold community meetings this week with local commercial and noncommercial broadcasters. Those meetings are designed to provide the task force with outside input. Once the task force comes up with its recommendations it will prepare a report. The report will be sent to the Temporary Commission on Alternative Funding for Public Telecommunications. The TCAFP also is pursuing alternative funding for public broadcasting and will present a report on its findings to Congress in July. However, the task force's job may not end with that report. Thomas Bolger, task force chairman, notes that the NAB could end up lobbying for those alternatives on Capitol Hill. Bolger, president of WMTV(TV) Madison, Wis., and immediate past NAB Joint board chairman, says the report will include implementation of the selected options. He noted that it would not be unusual for the NAB to lobby for public broadcasting. In the past, he said, NAB has lobbied for restoration of federal funding for public broadcasting.

WATR-TV decides to go it alone

Connecticut station to drop NBC affiliation, become independent

Better to be a large independent than a small affiliate.

That's the decision made by Channel 20 Enterprises, the new licensee of a Waterbury, Conn., UHF TV station. On or about April 15, WATR-TV will give up NBC affiliation as it dramatically expands its coverage area.

At that time, WATR-TV (taking the new call letters WTXX-TV) will boost its power from 200 to 2,500 kw, sending a city grade signal into Hartford and New Haven, both Connecticut, and also reaching parts of Massachusetts and New York. Already providing NBC TV programming to that area is another UHF, Viacom's WVTI(TV) Hartford-New Britain.

NBC said the network and WATR-TV "mutually agreed to terminate the relationship."

Channel 20 Enterprises, a joint venture of Esen Associated IX and the Oppenheimer & Co. investment firm, received FCC approval to buy the station from Thomas Television Inc. for $4.5 million a few months ago (Broadcasting, Dec. 7, 1981). Esen Associated IX is owned by communications attorney

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