

Cable castings

Countdown to Western

The California Cable Television Association, which is putting the finishing touches on the 16th annual Western Cable Show, is expecting lower attendance and fewer exhibitors than were present last year. The show runs from Dec. 5 to 7 at the Anaheim (Calif.) Convention Center.

As of last week, 213 exhibitors had signed up for 137,000 square feet of exhibit space. This year's exhibit hall will be confined to the south wing of the convention center. Last year, 270 exhibitors were spread over 325,000 square feet. Convention officials expect attendance to be between 8,500 to 9,500 this year, down from last year's total of 9,800.

The theme of this year's convention is "Blueprint for Progress." The opening session, on Wednesday, Dec. 5, at 1 p.m., will be moderated by Colony Communications Chairman Jack Clifford. Panelists include Mel Harris, president of Paramount Video; Neil Austrian, chairman and chief executive officer of Showtime/The Movie Channel, and National Cable Television Association President James Mooney. Other Wednesday afternoon sessions will examine direct marketing and changing technologies affecting cable and copyright. The last session, to be moderated by Steve Effros, ex-

ecutive director of the Community Antenna Television Association, will include John Malone, president of Tele-Communications Inc., and Leonard Tow, president of Century Communications.

Later that day, James McKinney, FCC Mass Media Bureau chief, will discuss cable's relationship with the FCC and the new rules the industry will operate under with passage of the Cable Communications Policy Act. A "point-by-point" analysis of the act by NCTA executives (Brenda Fox, vice president and general counsel, and Bert Carp, executive vice president) will be part of the Tuesday morning lineup.

Another event Tuesday morning will be a panel on copyright featuring Representatives Robert Kastenmeier (D-Wis.) and California Congressmen Carlos Moorhead (R), Howard Berman (D), William Dannemeyer (R) and Daniel Lungren (R). Paul Kagan, president of Paul Kagan Associates, and Paul Bortz, managing director of Browne, Bortz & Coddington, will appear Tuesday at a 10:30 a.m. session on how cable trends will affect the investment community over the next five years.

Luncheon speaker that day will be NCTA Chairman Ed Allen of Western Communications. Afternoon sessions will examine cop media ventures, cable/telco relations and community relations.

Friday morning's Cablepac breakfast will feature Senator Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) as speaker. Session topics on Friday include the First Amendment, home video, packaging, spectrum space, pay per view and customer service.

Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, will be the luncheon speaker on Friday. "Basic Programers

and Cable Operators: How Much Is Too Much" is the theme of the convention's closing session Friday afternoon, to be moderated by Black Entertainment Television President Bob Johnson. Panelists include Marc Nathanson, president of Falcon Communications; David Horowitz, president and chief executive officer, MTV; Charles Dolan, general partner, Cablevision Systems, and Robert Wussler, executive vice president, Turner Broadcasting System.

Threading the needle

Turner Broadcasting System has acquired the rights for the U.S. debut of a two-program package focusing on the global effects of a nuclear holocaust—a two-hour dramatization, entitled *Threads*, and an accompanying documentary, *On the Eighth Day*.

The rights were acquired from Lionheart Television, which will distribute the programs to television stations nationwide after their U.S. debut on WTBS(TV) Atlanta in January. The programs premiered worldwide on England's British Broadcasting Corp. last spring.

The "basic theme" of *Threads*, said a TBS spokesman, is similar to that of ABC's *The Day After*, which depicted the horrors of nuclear war on a set of fictional characters. Astronomer Carl Sagan is the primary commentator for the one-hour documentary, which will explore the issue from scientific and historical perspectives. *Threads* will debut on the station on Jan. 13 at 8 p.m. It will be followed by a 15-minute panel discussion on the effects of a nuclear holocaust, to be hosted by CNN correspondent Sandi Freeman at 10:05 p.m. The documentary will

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Sewing it up. Turner Broadcasting System Chairman Ted Turner (seated) signs an agreement that will bring a drama about the effects of a nuclear attack on Great Britain, *Threads*, to superstation WTBS(TV) Atlanta. Standing (l-r) are Jack Petrik, WTBS executive vice president and general manager; Robert Wussler, WTBS president; Robert Greenstein, senior vice president, Lionheart Television, the program distributor, and Robert Springer, president, Western World Television, a co-producer of the film.