Six of seven Storer television stations—all but KCST-TV San Diego—have decided to withdraw from National Association of Broadcasters. Under new management edict (Storer was bought last year by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts), decisions concerning trade association membership are to be left up to individual station manager. As cost-cutting measure, new management has also eliminated job of vice president, government affairs, in Washington. It was held by Walter Threadgill.

Syndicast Services, New York-based enter program distributor, has been sold to Network Film Corp., Ltd. for undisclosed amount. NFC Ltd. is Sydney, Australia-based 25-year-old animation house that went public last year on Sydney Stock Exchange. It is headed by Michael Milne. NFC formed U.S. subsidiary called NFC Entertainment 90% owned by NFC Ltd. and 10% owned by Rothschild Australia Ltd. to buy Syndicast from Adnetrex International Inc. Len Koch will remain as president of Syndicast.

Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission has proposed major overhaul of its cable television regulations. But while changes, CRTC says, will make it easier to introduce new services, existing regulations that are designed to ensure predominance of Canadian television and audio services on cable will be maintained. Systems must devote more channels to Canadian than to foreign services. In other matters, commission proposed new approach to cable rates it says will reduce regulatory burden on systems while allowing it and public to maintain changes in rates. And CRTC’s proposal would generally bar advertising on programming channels. Some limited types of advertising would be permitted on channels devoted to nonprogramming (e.g., alphanumer) services. Proposal would also allow greater opportunities for substitution of broadcasters’ over-air signals.

Stricter radiation emissions may be on the way

A tightening of federal restrictions on human exposure to radio and TV broadcast tower radiofrequency radiation emissions may be in the works—a move which could increase costs of compliance for broadcasters to as much as $45 million.

Since the beginning of this year, the FCC has had in place exposure limits based on standards developed through an industry organization, American National Standards Institute (ANSI). But at least three federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, are moving ahead to establish federal standards for public and occupational exposure and nearly all proposed limits being considered are far more restrictive than the FCC rules.

The commission would probably be pressured to implement any new, more stringent federal standards, particularly those of the EPA, according to FCC RF radiation policy spokesman Robert Cleveland, speaking at a Federal Communications Bar Association seminar in Washington last Thursday, Feb. 20.

The EPA has proposed four regulatory options, two of them are five and 10 times more stringent than limits set by the FCC, the third is identical to the ANSI standard and a fourth option requires no action to be taken. The proposals, completed last June after a five-year effort, had been held up for final approval at the Office of Management and Budget, which argued they could lead to unnecessary regulation (“Closed Circuit,” Dec. 9, 1985).

OMB has since reversed itself, cleared the EPA proposals, and was last week projecting their publication in the Federal Register as early as this Tuesday, Feb. 25.

The two other government bodies developing exposure standards are the congressionally chartered National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurement (NCRP) and the Department of Health and Human Services’ National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). NCRP’s proposed limits, scheduled for release in April after approximately three years in development, are equivalent to limits set by FCC for occupational exposure but have more restrictive criteria for public exposures. NIOSH recommendations, widely circulated in draft form since last summer, also go beyond ANSI limits. No release of NIOSH recommendations is expected until the latter half of 1986.

Cost estimates prepared by EPA showed that the options would require stations to spend a combined total of, in the worst case, $45.6 million for compliance, but only $8.4 million under the less stringent option. The average TV station not in compliance would have the costliest bill, spending from $23,100 to $70,300. The average FM would spend from $6,400 to $22,000, and an average AM would spend from $1,300 to $2,600.

Only between 5%–10% of stations were projected by the FCC to be in compliance with some aspect of its ANSI limits, Cleveland said, but the figures would rise under stricter rules.