

patible 6 mhz system to be simulcast with an NTSC signal. This would mean that cable systems would have to duplicate all of their local broadcast signals to serve all of their customers. Cablecasters may be forced to choose which signal they wish to carry, Fox said.

Ben Crutchfield, director, special engineering projects for the National Association of Broadcasters, pointed out that cable will be forced to make the same decisions if broadcasters decide to adopt an augmentation-channel system, which would also require more spectrum. But Fox said that cable operators could choose to not carry the augmentation information for some stations and still serve all of their customers without duplicating service. She questioned "the FCC's presumption that the dual transmis-

sion is an effective way for handling transition" to broadcast HDTV.

The one medium that will not have any bandwidth limitations, said James B. Carpenter, assistant vice president, technology planning for Southwestern Bell, is fiber optics. The phone companies are becoming interested in video distribution, he said, because "we believe that we are a telecommunications company and that video is an important and growing component in the future of telecommunications." The price of fiber optic transmission equipment is going down because the volume production needed to meet telephone company demand is driving it down. It is now more economical to transmit voices by fiber than any application of copper wire, he said.

The last big expense will be extending the

fiber networks the phone companies are now building directly into consumers' homes. Southwestern Bell has begun that task, Carpenter said. A prototype system will be installed for voice only in Leawood, Kan., in 1990, he said.

Quality will be an issue when HDTV pictures delivered by fiber are compared to those of other media, Carpenter claimed. Fiber pictures are most likely to be delivered digitally, he claimed, and "I don't think you're going to like the impairments that analog transport brings you for very long on a high-definition TV system." The higher quality and unlimited spectrum space that will one day be available through fiber should be taken into consideration by the FCC before it sets any transmission standard, he said. □

Cablecastings

Second language

HBO is making Spanish its second language as of January 1989, at which time such films as "Platoon," "La Bamba" and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" will be made bilingual. HBO's goal is to offer between five and 15 films a month in both languages.

HBO Chairman Michael Fuchs explained that the choice is being offered to viewers because movie studios are currently dubbing more films into Spanish than in the past and because they have increased their output of titles with Spanish themes. HBO has no plans to offer a dual language feed on its original programming.

Also, with the development of stereo TV sets, viewers of a movie with a dual audio track may choose between the two languages, pressing the "second audio program" button on sets or remote controls. Those without stereo sets may purchase a relatively inexpensive component providing the audio program option.

To offer the bilingual option, cable operators will need to make a relatively small modification in equipment at their head-end. HBO Vice President of network management Bob Zitter said those modifications would cost between \$1,000 and \$1,500.

The choice of English or Spanish will be offered to HBO's 15.9 million subscribers and Cinemax's 5.1 million subscribers. There were no predictions from HBO about how much subscriber growth will result from the dual feed.

Closer eye

Several divisions of the Connecticut state government are looking into the proposed purchase of Storer by Comcast and Telecommunications Inc. The state attorney general's antitrust task force is looking into

the matter of concentration of ownership in the cable industry within the state. And the Consumer Counsel, a branch of government that reviews actions affecting consumers, also is examining the proposed transfer.

The state's official body that approves cable transfers is the department of public utilities, which is expected to issue a tentative decision, this week. The Consumer Counsel has the right to appeal the department's decision, and the state attorney general has an advisory role in the process.

In addition to the Storer transfer, the application to fold United Cable under TCI's roof through United Artists is also pending before the state, and there is discussion of folding all those matters into one proceeding, officials at the utilities division say.

More from Lifetime

Lifetime is piloting two new series: *Esquire: About Men, For Women*, a weekly half-hour with Susan Winston (most recently a producer at Lorimar and previously the programming executive brought in to revitalize CBS's *Morning News* [BROADCASTING, Aug. 4, 1986]); and *Quest*, a fantasy/adventure game-show strip. Pat Fili, senior vice president of programming, announced the two new series during a New York Academy of Television Arts and Sciences luncheon.

Although it will be based on a magazine for men, *Esquire* will target Lifetime's female audience by giving women an opportunity to see how men think day-to-day. Features from *Esquire*, the magazine, that will be incorporated into the television program will be "A Date With..."; an essay on fatherhood; "Fact or Fiction: Do Men Really Kiss and Tell?"; and what men really talk about in the steamroom.

Esquire will air on weekend afternoons. There will be no host for the program, but a regular team of reporters will appear each week. *Esquire* will be produced by King Features Entertainment. King Features is owned by Hearst Corp., which also owns the *Esquire* magazine, as well as a one-third share in Lifetime.

Quest is a 65-episode strip for late afternoons that will ask players to go on a quest for fame, fortune or love. Players will be faced with videotaped scenarios and asked to choose one of three resolutions. By making an appropriate choice, a player moves on to another set of choices. The show is a production of Angel Entertainment in association with Jay Redack Productions.

TNT previews its wares

The Eastern Cable Show allowed a new network—Turner Network Television—to show its stuff last week in Atlanta.

Turner arranged a videoconference for cable operators to update them on the launch of TNT. Turner Chairman Ted Turner said he was "particularly excited about the original programming" on the service. He said the programming will have either a positive story to tell or stars with marquee value. Among those signed for TNT productions are Charlton Heston, Vanessa Redgrave, Sir John Gielgud, Faye Dunaway, Farrah Fawcett, Martin Sheen, Emilio Estevez and James Brolin.

Turner officials said that TNT, which will launch Oct. 3 with a showing of "Gone with the Wind," will help cable operators attract nonsubscribers.

Gerald Hogan, president of Turner Entertainment Networks, said TNT projects its 24-hour ratings will be a 0.6 at launch and will increase 0.2 in each of the next two years to reach a 1.0 by 1991. He and Turner said they hoped the NBA would