MCA, TWO INDIES PROGRAMMING FOR PRIME TIME

WWOR-TV and KCOP order three hour series for fall start

Two major market independent stations—MCA Broadcasting’s WWOR-TV New York and Chris-Craft United’s KCOP-TV Los Angeles—have entered a co-production venture with MCA Television Entertainment to produce three hour-long prime time programs that will debut on the stations in October.

The first is an adventure series, She-Wolf of London, based on the 1946 Universal Pictures film of the same name. The second is Rest in Peace, an action/adventure series about a young detective. The third is a so-called “buddy comedy,” They Came From Outer Space, about two aliens who take a year to study abroad on Earth.

The venture reflects the increasing aggressiveness of independents in programming prime time. For years, independents have depended on theatrical film packages to fill their evenings. Recently, however, a number of A-title packages have been sold to basic cable networks, bypassing syndication.

SENATE KIDVID BILL LIMITS ADS

Version expected to pass this week gives broadcasters more leeway in programing requirements than earlier draft

Legislation that would limit the amount of advertising during children’s programing on both cable and over-the-air television and which also requires broadcast stations to air more educational and informational children’s programs for license renewal is expected to pass the Senate this week.

The National Association of Broadcasters has signed off on the measure after obtaining certain revisions that make the program requirements less specific than an earlier version.

The bill had been stalled since last fall when it passed the Senate Commerce Committee because broadcasters objected to the original renewal provision that would have required stations to provide educational and informational programing “specifically designed” for pre-school and school-age children as a condition for license renewal. But after lengthy negotiations with Communications Subcommittee Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), the bill’s chief author, broadcasters modified the section dealing with renewals to give stations more leeway in the type of programs they must air. Less restrictive language was added stating that a station would have to serve the educational and informational needs of children through its “overall programing, including programing specifically designed to serve such needs.”

The FCC could take into consideration during renewal time off-air broadcaster efforts to promote children’s programing and any efforts to fund programing aired by another station in the licensee’s marketplace.

Unchanged is a section that directs the FCC to complete its proceeding on so-called program-length commercials, although an earlier provision dealing with complaints at the FCC was deleted.

One addition was the establishment of a national endowment for children’s educational television. Under the measure, stations and cable systems must restrict ads to 10½ minutes per hour on weekends and 12 minutes per hour on weekdays.

MUST CARRY ORPHANS

The Home Shopping Network-led coalition of 110 TV stations has released a study showing 85 of the 249 stations in the top 20 markets would not meet the minimum viewing standard in 70% or more of the counties within 50 miles. Those standards are part of the cable bill passed by the House Telecommunications Subcommittee.

In Washington, the number of stations in the market area in the first column and the number of stations not meeting the viewing standard in 70% of the counties are in the second.

1. New York 13 7
2. Los Angeles 15 4
3. Chicago 11 5
4. Philadelphia 11 5
5. San Francisco 17 9
6. Boston 15 7
7. Detroit 7 2
8. Dallas 15 7
9. Washington 7 2
10. Houston 11 3
11. Cleveland 11 4
12. Atlanta 9 3
13. Minneapolis 9 3
14. Miami 11 3
15. Seattle 8 2
16. Pittsburgh 7 2
17. Tampa 10 4
18. St. Louis 7 2
19. Denver 8 1
20. Phoenix 10 2