ting about one-third less than what regular hour-long fall series were receiving, maybe one-half of what the budget is for The Flash," said Brand. When the producers got the current order for eight more episodes, the show's budget "went up significantly, putting us on par with other first year shows." The increase in license fees has freed the producers from a six-day work week to a five-day week and has allowed them to take eight days to produce an episode.

If there was some skepticism on the network's part before the show premiered, its brief run and reception has intensified their commitment. "This is probably the most difficult show for me to talk about because I have less objectivity about it than probably any other show," said Peter Tortorici, senior vice president, program planning. CBS Entertainment, who admits he became a quick fan. "The level of writing and execution is fantastic," said Tortorici. The network is considering slotting the show at 10 p.m. on Monday night at the end of CBS's lone night of comedies. The producers are hoping for the time period following Murphy Brown and Describing Women that will become vacant when The Trials of Rosie O'Neil has finished its run.

The series has also caught the attention of the Museum of Broadcasting, which is including the show in its upcoming 8th Annual Television Festival in Los Angeles. Ron Simon, curator of television for the museum, said the series is a rare example of two contemporary and traditional series. "We look for new programs that haven't been discovered by either an audience or by many critics. We thought Northern Exposure was a new show trying to do something different. They've really showed the characters developing with each episode," he said.

In addition to Northern Exposure, Brand and Falsey are in the beginning of a two-year exclusive production contract with Lorimar Television last year. Brand said the first project from the new alignment would be ready to air next fall or midseason. He said one project which may be the first to air is a traditional drama for NBC. For the time being, though, his attention is focused on Northern Exposure. As for having the show on CBS, which might be construed as a liability because of its third-place standing, he said there is a definite upside. "The third-place guy has to try harder. We're with a network that seems to want to take chances. And besides," he said, "when we did St. Elsewhere, NBC was in third place."