

WTTG(TV) Washington, at any INTV meetings in a year.

INTV President Jim Hedlund, while declining to discuss specifics of Fox's departure, said "in part there was a feeling that INTV's agenda was not Fox's." Hedlund pointed to Fox's efforts to repeal the compulsory license (which INTV is against) as one point of difference between the two parties. "Fox's agenda may be more in line with Hollywood companies," Hedlund said.

INTV Chairman Randy Smith said in some ways "the organization is better off without having a network representative at the board table. Unfortunately, the Fox-owned stations were

going to take the position of the network, not the position of any station operation. They have the network's agenda."

Currently, according to Hedlund, INTV membership is down about 20 stations to 115 compared to a year ago. Most of the departures, he said, have been from small market stations for economic reasons.

One exception to that was Renaissance Communications, which late last year pulled three of its four independent stations from the association, apparently in a dispute over INTV's stance on financial interest and syndication. Renaissance owns two Fox affiliates.

INTV received letters of reassurance last week from several members, including Paramount Broadcasting, Cox Broadcasting and Pappas Telecasting. All praised INTV and said they were upset about Fox's decision. Kevin O'Brien, executive vice president of Cox's independent group and chairman of the Fox affiliates' board of governors, wrote Hedlund that he is "confident INTV will continue to benefit from the Fox-affiliated stations" and INTV has O'Brien's "full commitment for continued support." Paramount Broadcasting head Jim Boaz wrote: "Rest assured that, as key Fox affiliates, we intend to continue supporting INTV." ■

BLAIR 'RE-EVALUATES' FIRST-RUN BUSINESS

Company says it needs outside investors for production but denies report exit is imminent

By Steve McClellan

Blair Entertainment is re-evaluating its commitment to the first-run syndication business and may get out of first-run production and distribution altogether if it cannot find one or more investors for the company.

Blair officials, however, strongly denied a report, which originated with Allan Chapman, president of Glenn Warren Entertainment, that Blair Entertainment would shut its doors within the next month. Chapman said last

week that Blair Entertainment President Alan Berkowitz had said earlier in the week that that would be the case.

Glenn Warren is producing the weekly magazine *Famous Hollywood Mysteries* next season with partners NBC News Productions and Scripps Howard Productions. Blair Entertainment has been handling domestic station sales. The show is cleared in over 50% of the country for next fall.

Chapman said Berkowitz had contacted Glenn Warren General Manager Wilf Copeland early last week and

told him that Blair Entertainment was "closing the operation in 30 days." Chapman also said the company was seeking another distributor for *Mysteries*.

But Berkowitz denied making the statement. "I never said that," he said. "It's not true. We are not disappearing. We are not closing down. What I have said is Blair is likely to leave the first-run production and distribution point," a likelihood that will turn to certainty if no investors are found. "We will not be in the business of financing first-run production," said Berkowitz.

But he insisted that the company, although it will "gear certain things down," will continue to distribute a library that includes movie packages, specials and the long-running *Divorce Court*, now being sold as a back-end strip.

Berkowitz also said the company was still committed to *Stuntmasters*, the one first-run series the company helps finance, along with other U.S. and French partners. But it's unclear how long that commitment will last if the company does not find an investor.

The company also distributes *Studio 22*, a weekly magazine produced by KCBS-TV Los Angeles. Whether that show will continue next season has not yet been determined.

Responding to the report last week, Blair issued a statement authorized

NBC OFFERS PER-DAY PRICING ON OLYMPICS

NBC last week unveiled a new per-day viewing option on its ambitious summer Olympics Triplecast, in part as a response to widespread cable operator interest in the lower-priced offering.

NBC Cable President Tom Rogers says the \$29.95 daily package would be offered alongside higher-priced packages for several reasons, including stronger-than-anticipated enthusiasm for the winter Olympics, the weak economy and strong operator interest. NBC also just locked up distribution deals with two of the nation's largest multisystem operators—TeleCommunications Inc. and Time Warner Cable—which Rogers says has enabled Triplecast staff to focus on promoting the new package.

"We had a lot of logistical work to do with the industry to gear up the packages and build awareness and interest before responding to what has always been of strong interest [the per-day option], well," said Marty Lafferty, vice president, Olympics pay per view.

Rogers said the just-signed deals with TCI and Time Warner were not contingent upon NBC offering the new package. The Triplecast is nearing its target of 40 million addressable homes, he said. "Our present thinking is that, as a whole, hopefully we'll break even," said Rogers. ■