

achieve locally what the Fox network has succeeded in doing nationally. "It comes down to creating a personality, a distinction and a memorability in the mind of the viewer," said Wall.

Two key areas of focus are promoting the news, where the station, once unchallenged, now has strong competition from independent rivals, and early fringe, where the station has just launched a new teen-targeted talk show, *Jane*, produced in-house.

Wall said that, besides the program director's position, no other job cuts are expected as a result of the reorga-

nization.

"There may be a couple of shifts, but there are no other planned job staffing changes," she said. The station has about 300 employees.

The program director was Joe Weber, whose last day was Friday (April 3). With the change, said Wall, "one department head became a reality instead of two. It was one of those tough decisions that had to be made."

"I understand what they're trying to do," Weber said of the reorganization. Fox has offered Weber the opportunity to look around the company

for other possible job opportunities. "Nothing has come up yet," he said. "I'm looking to the outside as well."

It's expected that other Fox-owned stations will make similar moves. Managers at Fox O&O's KTTV(TV) Los Angeles and WTTG(TV) Washington refused to comment on whether they were contemplating similar moves.

But one company insider said: "You'll see it happen at other O&O's, and probably at some other Fox affiliates, within the next year. It really makes sense." ■

## CBS, ABC WEIGH IN WITH FALL CONTENDERS

*CBS has fewest shows in development of any of the networks*

By Steve Coe

**O**n the heels of the release of Fox's and NBC's development slates two weeks ago, CBS and ABC made theirs known to advertisers last week. While CBS released its slate to the press, ABC gave out its projects only to advertisers.

The CBS crop consists of fewer projects than any other network including Fox. With a total of only 23 projects (13 comedies and 10 dramas) CBS is banking on the A-level production and acting talent involved in the shows.

In addition to projects in the works from producers currently with series on CBS, like Diane English and Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, the network has lured producers such as David Kelley (*L.A. Law*), Cheri Eichen, Bill Steinkellner and Phoebe Sutton (*Cheers*) and Janis Hirsch (*Anything but Love*). Acting talent involved with some of the shows includes Bob Newhart's return to series work, John Ritter, Shelley Long, Dudley Moore, Ryan O'Neal, Kathy Baker and Tom Skerritt.

In addition to their prospective series projects, the networks also announced their long-form plans for next year. Despite the industry trend away from miniseries longer than four hours, CBS's long-form list consists of four projects of five hours or more: *Scarlett*, the 8-hour adaptation of the recently published sequel to "Gone with the Wind"; *Return to Lonesome*

*Dove*, a six-hour sequel; *Sinatra*, a five-hour biography, and *Queen*, a six-hour production based on the life of Alex Haley's grandmother.

The ABC development slate boasts 36 projects, including 10 in the reality or sketch-variety form. Among the 10 drama projects are shows from Steven Spielberg, Joshua Brand and John Falsely, John Sacret Young, Ron Koslow and the Paltrow Group. Of the 16 comedy shows being looked at, Barry

Kemp, Jeff Franklin, Danny Arnold and Neal Marlens and Carol Black are among those contributing.

### ABC

#### *Comedy Development*

■ *A New Day* (Lorimar) stars Cindy Williams as the mother of a family that is thrown into disarray when she

## OTV EARLY MORNING BLOCK TO TEST IN APRIL

**N**early eight months since introducing its Overnight Television Network programing block to the first-run syndication marketplace, David Sams Industries is finally slating an April through May broadcast test of a 90-minute early morning entertainment block. Word has it that OTV has been cleared in more than two dozen markets, with seven new major markets signed for the April 11 test: KCOP(TV) Los Angeles, WPHL-TV Philadelphia, WSBK-TV Boston, WXON-TV Detroit, WTHR-TV Indianapolis, WTTA-TV Tampa and WTLK-TV Atlanta.

Renee T. Kenneth, vice president of programing and talent development, said that "most of the markets" are committing 1-2:30 a.m. to the block, which consists of *Overnight Zoo!*, *Meet Your Match* and *National Dateline*. Initially, Kenneth says, stations can pick up the test block on 10-minute national/10-minute local barter splits, but plans call for a full-time OTV series to be offered later this summer on 8/8 barter splits. She added that all the national advertising has been sold for the test, but declined to identify the major sponsors.

According to a prepared statement by Sams, who is a former sales executive at King World and creator of the ill-fated *Rollergames*, the purpose of the two-month test is to reach the 18-34 male and female demographics in the major metered markets. The metered market research would then be presented to prospective stations, in hopes of a full national rollout late this summer.

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