

which owns independent WTXN(TV), serving Hartford. That station has been struggling in its battle against Chase's WTIC-TV; Renaissance would likely combine the stations.

However, with the FCC in the process of reviewing its TV ownership rules, it is possible that either group might request a temporary waiver of the one-to-a-market and/or duopoly rule until new rules are established.

If the sales are completed, both Renaissance and River City will move up as major Fox affiliate groups. Renaissance already owns Fox affiliates in Sacramento and York, Pa., as well as an independent in Miami. River City owns Fox affiliates in St. Louis and Des Moines and independents in San Antonio and Kokomo, Ind. The Kokomo station is a satellite of River City's Indianapolis station.

Chase Communications is just about out of the communications business. It sold its other Fox affiliate, WPTY-TV Memphis, for \$21 million to Clear Channel Communications last February. Its only remaining radio properties are WTIC-AM-FM Hartford, said to be worth around \$45 million. In January, Chase sold rep firm Seltel Inc. to competing firm Katz Communications for \$16 million. ■

## NAB HOLDING TO MODERATE POSTURE ON OWNERSHIP LIMITS

By Randy Sukow

**T**he National Association of Broadcasters Television Board, meeting in Washington last week as part of an annual joint board meeting, appeared to be leaning toward supporting a moderate set of changes to the FCC's local and national television station ownership rules. But with more than six weeks before the commission's comment deadline on the proposed changes (Aug. 24), the board agreed to spend a few more weeks to study the issue before solidifying its position. It will meet by conference call some time in July to finalize a decision.

"There was a sense of moderation among the board. I would be very surprised if after our conference call anything but moderate proposals will be

agreed to," said NAB Joint Board Chairman Gary Chapman, president of LIN Television Corp., Providence.

"We have found that sometimes on these issues, if [board members] haven't had a period of gestation, they sometimes feel ill-prepared," said NAB President Eddie Fritts. "We felt it was a good opportunity...to let them talk to their constituencies and then continue that dialogue."

Last month, the FCC proposed a range of ownership options, including changing 12-station/25% TV household penetration national limits to 18-24 stations/30%-35% and possibly allowing VHF-UHF or UHF-UHF combinations in some local markets (BROADCASTING, May 18).

After negative Capitol Hill reaction to earlier-approved major changes in the FCC radio ownership rules, the

NAB radio board filed a petition to reconsider, asking the commission to moderate the reforms (BROADCASTING, May 25). On the television board, "There is a sense that there are some structural changes that should take place, just as have been proposed on the radio side, on the television side that reflect the changes in environment in which we find ourselves. But we would not think we would want to turn the industry on its head," Chapman said.

The commission's proposed TV rules were part of a list of about a dozen issues addressed by the NAB radio, TV and joint boards during their annual week of summer meetings in Washington. The boards also spent a significant amount of time discussing current congressional battles over cable reregulation, digital audio broad-



*Board retirements meant the selection of three new members to NAB's executive committee last week: Wayne R. Vriesman, vice president of Tribune Broadcasting's radio group, as radio board chairman; Robert Fox, chairman, KVEN Broadcasting Corp., Ventura, Calif., as radio board vice chairman, and John Siegel, senior vice president, Chris-Craft/United Television, as TV board vice chairman. The full executive committee (front row, l-r): NAB President Eddie Fritts; Siegel; Fox; Joint Board Chairman Gary Chapman, president, LIN Television Corp.; (back row) TV Board Chairman Ronald Townsend, president, Gannett Television; Mark MacCarthy, vice president, government affairs, Capital Cities/ABC (network representative), and Vriesman.*