

Changing Hands

Viacom swaps Shreveport VHF for Atlanta UHF

UPN affiliation is key to trade; Ellis buys La. station

By Elizabeth Rathbun

Bert Ellis is taking over KSLA-TV Shreveport, La., from Viacom International. Originally, Hillside Broadcasting, to which Ellis has loaned money, was to be the buyer.

However, the \$30 million sale hinges on Viacom's acquiring WVEU-TV Atlanta. In its quest to acquire stations that are or can be affiliated with the United Paramount Network, such as WVEU, Viacom is taking dramatic steps. WVEU, for example, was an independent on ch. 69, while KSLA-TV is a CBS affiliate on ch. 12. WVEU is owned by David Harris and licensed to Broadcasting Corp. of Georgia.

In Philadelphia, Viacom is selling

Fox affiliate WTXF-TV, ch. 29, to Fox Television Stations and buying WGBS-TV, a UPN affiliate on ch. 57.

Without selling KSLA-TV, Viacom would exceed the FCC's 12-station ownership cap. Viacom also is "the direct or indirect parent," according to papers filed with the FCC, of NBC affiliates WVTM-TV New Britain/Hartford, Conn., and WNYT-TV Albany and WHEC-TV Rochester, both New York; CBS affiliate KMOV-TV St. Louis; and the following UPN affiliates: WSBK-TV Boston; WKBD-TV Detroit; WDCAT-TV Washington; and KTXH-TV Houston, KTXA-TV Fort Worth and KRRT-TV Kerrville, all Texas. This past spring, Viacom made plans to buy UPN affiliate WBFS-TV Miami.

WVEU recently has been in the news as a football for CBS: In May, the network sold the station to Viacom for \$27 million after seven months of ownership.

Viacom bought Paramount in March 1994 and has the option to become half-owner of the United Paramount Network. Viacom plans to replace its network affiliates with independents that will become UPN affiliates.

Hillside Broadcasting officially backed out of the deal to buy KSLA-TV on June 27. "The reality is, Shreveport was...a little bit of a stretch for us," says Della Baeza, president of Englewood, N.J.-based Hillside. "We're looking at some different markets." The company owns WWAY-TV Wilmington, N.C., and is hammering out its "master plan," Baeza says.

Meanwhile, Ellis's goal is to acquire stations in the mid-South and mid-Atlantic. Atlanta-based Ellis Communications already owns 12 TV stations; it plans to cancel its construction permit for KAIR-TV Douglas, Ariz., to meet the ownership limit. ■

The week's tabulation of station sales

TELEVISION

WUTV-TV Buffalo and WUHF-TV Rochester, both N.Y.; WNRW-TV Winston-Salem, N.C.; WRGT-TV Dayton, Ohio; WZTV-TV Nashville; WRLH-TV Richmond, Va.; WVAH-TV Charleston, W.Va.; WTAT-TV Charleston, S.C.

Price: \$520 million

Buyer: ABRY Holdings Inc., Boston (Royce Yudkoff, president/owner); also owns WNUV-TV Baltimore and KSMO-TV Kansas City, Mo.

Seller: Act III Broadcasting Inc., Los Angeles (Richard Ballinger, president); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: WUTV: ch. 29, 1,050 kw visual, 105 kw aural, ant. 920 ft.; WUHF: ch. 31, 1,200 kw visual, 200 kw aural, ant. 497 ft.; WNRW: ch. 45, 5,000 kw visual, 500 kw aural, ant. 2,000 ft.; WRGT: ch. 45, 5,000 kw visual, 501 kw aural, ant. 1,171 ft.; WZTV: ch. 17, 3,266 kw visual, 326 kw aural, ant. 1,161 ft.; WRLH-TV: ch. 35, 2,588 kw visual, 259 kw aural, ant. 1,259 ft.; WVAH-TV: ch. 11, 51 kw visual, 5.1 kw aural, ant. 1,722 ft.; WTAT-TV: ch. 24, 5,000 kw visual, 497.5 kw aural, ant. 1,800 ft.

Affiliation: All Fox

WIVB-TV Buffalo
Price: \$95 million

Proposed station trades

By dollar volume and number of sales

This week:

TVs □ \$687,750,000 □ 14

AMs □ \$3,100,000 □ 2

FMs □ \$13,580,000 □ 5

Combos □ \$4,811,050 □ 3

Total □ \$709,241,050 □ 24

So far in 1995:

TVs □ \$2,356,542,000 □ 73

AMs □ \$63,719,744 □ 96

FMs □ \$390,199,113 □ 200

Combos □ \$849,983,250 □ 118

Total □ \$3,660,444,107 □ 487

Buyer: LIN Television Corp., Providence, R.I. (Gary R. Chapman, president); also owns WISH-TV Indianapolis; WANE-TV Fort Wayne, Ind.; WAND-TV Decatur, Ill.; WAVY-TV Portsmouth, Va.; WTNH-TV New Haven, Conn.; WOOD-TV Grand Rapids, Mich.; and KXAS-TV Fort Worth, KXAN-TV Austin and KXAM-TV Llano, all Tex.
Seller: King World Productions Inc., N.Y. (Michael King, president/CEO); no other broadcast interests
Facilities: Ch. 4, 100 kw visual, 20 kw aural, ant. 1,201 ft.

Affiliation: CBS

KSLA-TV Shreveport, La.

Price: \$30 million

Buyer: Elcom of Louisiana Inc./Ellis Communications Inc., Atlanta (Bert Ellis, president; Kelso Partners IV LP, controlling shareholder, Elcom). Ellis Communications also owns KAME-TV Reno; WUPW-TV Toledo, Ohio; WEVU-TV Naples, Fla.; WTNZ-TV Knoxville, Tenn.; WACH-TV Columbia, S.C.; KOLD-TV Tucson and KAIR-TV Douglas, both Ariz.; WECT-TV Wilmington, N.C.; WSAV-TV Savannah, Ga.; WHLT-TV Hattiesburg and WJTV-TV Jackson, both Miss.; KABY-TV Aberdeen, KPRY-TV Pierre and KSFY-TV Sioux Falls, all S.D., and WMC-TV-AM-FM Memphis.

Seller: Viacom International Inc., New York (Frank Biondi, president/CEO); owns WHEC-TV Rochester, N.Y., WLTI (FM) Detroit, WLIT (FM) Chicago and 6.4% of WGBS-TV Philadelphia, WBFS-TV Miami and WGBO-TV Joliet, Ill.

Facilities: Ch. 12, 316 w visual, 40.7 kw aural, ant. 1,800 ft.

Affiliation: CBS

WHP-TV Harrisburg, Pa.

Price: \$30 million

Buyer: Clear Channel Communications Inc., San Antonio (Lowry Mays,