

onne and Bergen, Monmouth and Ocean counties. News 12 Vice President Pat Dolan says Cablevision is negotiating with New Jersey cable systems owned by Comcast, Adelphia and TKR Cable to carry the news service.

The service will be headed by News Director and CEO Jeff Marks, former president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association. News 12 New Jersey will have a staff of 130 (including 20 reporters and 15 photographers) and will operate four news bureaus, in Newark, Trenton and locations in Bergen and Monmouth counties.

The channel's format, to be roughly modeled after co-owned News 12 channels, will focus on state, regional and local news.

The station will broadcast daily six hours of new programming comprising three hours of live news at 7-10 a.m.

and hour newscasts at noon, 5 and 10 p.m. Cablevision's partnership with Advance Publications also will allow News 12 and the *Star Ledger* to share news leads and information resources on a regular basis.

News 12 New Jersey will employ "video kiosks," portable booths that record subscribers' comments about issues for possible use in newscasts. The station also will experiment with an interactive talk program.

Next up for Cablevision will be Westchester, N.Y. Next month the company will expand its daily newscast into a 24-hour news channel. Last to change over will be Cablevision's Bronx/Brooklyn systems, which now carry Time Warner's New York 1 local news channel. No date is set yet, but Fein says the system will continue to carry New York 1. ■

Bell joins Encore

In line with Encore Media Corp.'s current efforts to boost its original programming, the company has named Steve Bell president of Encore's newly formed Encore Entertainment Group. Bell, former President of Foxstar Productions and President of Network Television for Fox, will oversee programming, promotion packaging and production for Encore's 10 pay cable networks. Bell will also be in charge of the development and production of original movies and programming for Encore's networks. Prior to joining Fox, Bell was senior vice president and general manager of Tribune Broadcasting's KTLA-TV Los Angeles.

Delays typical for new channel launches

Finding open channels on cable systems can take time

By Jim McConville

Announcing plans for a new cable network is one thing; launching it is another.

Launch dates for many new networks have been postponed. A variety of factors are cited, among them the scarcity of channel space.

Take the Outdoor Life channel. Scheduled to launch last January, the debut was postponed until early July, but

the channel did not launch until July 31.

The delay of Outdoor Life, owned by Cox, Comcast, Continental Cablevision and Times Mirror, was caused in part by a reorganization in ownership and difficulty getting carriage. In July, Times Mirror reduced its stake in Outdoor Life to 10%, leaving Cox with 45% and newcomers Comcast and Continental with 22.5% each.

The channel is to be carried on Cox's expanded basic tier, which

reaches 3.2 million subscribers. Outdoor CEO Roger Williams says that information on other cable systems signed to carry the channel will be released this week.

The Sundance Channel, co-owned by Showtime and filmmaker Robert Redford, originally was slated to launch this fall. Make that late fall, as in late October or early November, says a Showtime spokesman. Showtime, he suggests, wants to launch the independent film channel just before the Western Cable Show to get the most bang for its marketing buck.

The Popcorn Channel, a cable network devoted to previews of theatrical movies and local movie time schedules, was scheduled to launch in the first quarter of this year but was bumped to September. A spokesman says The Popcorn Channel, owned by the *Toronto Star*, will bow late this month. Details of the cable system agreements are not final.

The Health Channel, owned by the Novus Group, was scheduled to launch in the second quarter, but a company spokesman says it has been postponed indefinitely. BET Cable Jazz Channel, originally scheduled to kick off this year, has changed its date twice and is now looking at early next year, says BET spokesman Craig Muckle. ■

Liberty Media move

Liberty Media Corp. will relocate the senior management and financial departments of its Irving, Tex.-based Liberty Sports group to its Englewood, Colo., headquarters (outside Denver) by the end of the year. The move likely will mean some layoffs or reassignments.

"We've grown to be a very large business, and Liberty Media would like to see a consolidation of management to the greatest extent possible [in Englewood]," says Joe King, vice president and CEO of Liberty Sports. Liberty Sports—made up of 15 regional and four national sports cable networks, including Prime Sports—is a subsidiary of Liberty Media, the programming arm of Tele-Communications Inc. (TCI). Liberty Sports' Irving offices won't be shut down, says King: "There are still going to be several hundred people here." Divisions staying in Irving will include Prime Sports Southwest, Liberty Satellite Sports and "a half dozen other smaller entities." King says some positions may be filled in Denver rather than relocated. "Anytime you're moving a full staff of people, there may be some positions at certain levels that aren't offered relocation." Liberty Sports will try to absorb most of those positions within the company, says King. —JM