

Cablecasting

Beefing up for business

Business Times Inc. has assembled a staff of 53, including 20 editorial, nine production and seven technical people, to produce a two-hour business newscast to be carried weekdays from 6 to 8 p.m. NYT over ESPN, starting March 1 ("Cablecastings," Jan. 3).

James C. (Denny) Crimmins, president of the company, said *Business Times* will carry 12 minutes of commercials per hour and 48 minutes of editorial. He told a news conference in New York that a number of advertisers are "interested" in appearing on the show but declined to identify them.

Among the program's top staffers, he said, are Douglas Ramsey, editor and former business editor of *Newsweek*; William Wolman, executive editor and former deputy editor of *Business Week*, and Peter Martin, managing editor and former U.S. economic editor of *The Economist*. Crimmins said the *Business Times* also has made an exclusive TV rights agreement with the *Financial Times* of London, making available to it the news from the newspaper's correspondents and stringers in more than 90 countries.

The news segments will include "Market Watch," "High Technology," "Corporate Strategies," "Business People in the News," "Economic Outlook," "Washington Week" and "Sports Update" from ESPN. Crimmins noted there is an affinity between business and sports that makes inclusion of sports news in a business service appropriate.

Group W promotion

Westinghouse Broadcasting and Cable Chief Counsel Harlan Rosenweig is to get a new job as of Feb. 1—executive vice president of Group W Satellite Communications, reporting to GWSC President Jonathan Hayes. According to the company, in his new post, Rosenweig will "share in the day-to-day operating responsibilities of GWSC."

Sports networking

Group W Satellite Communications has all but announced its entry into providing regionalized sports services for cable. That, at least, was the perception left by GWSC senior vice president, program planning, Derk Zimmerman, in a speech to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's athletic director's conference in San Diego. Noting that his company has been looking into sports programming for some time, Zimmerman shared some of GWSC's conclusions with the sports directors, while stressing that "we haven't jumped—just yet."

A major point Zimmerman made is that "for a regional sports network to represent a worthwhile and profitable investment of the cable operator's valuable channel space and the viewer's money, there needs to be programming other than event programming. Basically, the service must be a fulltime, full-year, one-stop sports center." Zimmerman's envisioned package would include sports

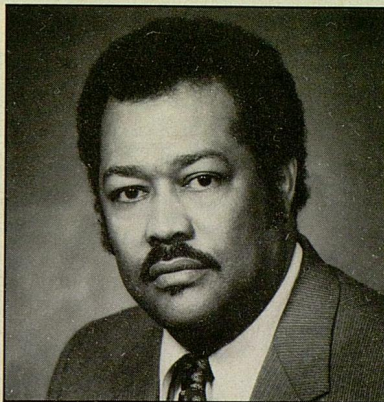
news and information as well as events.

Zimmerman also cautioned the college officials to "take a hard, cold, objective look at what your product is," saying that each school has to evaluate its own event's worth against the background of the full sports market in its particular region.

And Zimmerman made sure to mention the Sat-A-Dat switching system GWSC developed for Satellite News Channels, a system that can instantaneously switch a cable system between regional and national program feeds.

Cox criticism

"We think the cable industry should be put out of the black community," says Pluria Marshall, head of the National Black Media Coalition. "It is a disgraceful business in terms of how it treats black folks. There is no black ownership. There are virtually no black folks that work in it and there is no black programming." Marshall has made one of his points—few blacks are employed in



Marshall

the cable industry—by releasing a study of the minority and woman employment record of Cox Cable Communications, one of the nation's largest MSO's. The study, based on 1981 records at the FCC, shows a substantial number of systems are operating in violation of the FCC's "very lenient" guidelines for minority and female employment. Systems serving Saginaw and St. Claire Shores, both Michigan, and Orland Park, Ill., reported no minority employees, it said, and those in Jacksonville Beach and Ocala, both Florida, reported no minority employees in top management positions.

The NBMC decided to "trot out" Cox's record, Marshall said, because the MSO "seems to be going into a lot of communities with black majorities." Marshall suggested that Cox's record is typical of the industry. "We think the worst company is (Tele-Communications Inc.)."

Marshall sent a copy of the NBMC study to FCC Chairman Mark Fowler. In an accompanying letter, Marshall said Cox's failure to live up to the current cable employment guidelines suggest that stricter

guidelines, bringing the hiring quotas in line with those of broadcasting, may be in order. "Stronger standards would be appropriate in light of the growth of cable into urban areas with substantial minority populations," said Marshall, "in light of the commission's practice... of treating cable and broadcasting with the same regulatory approach."

Marshall said the cable industry may suffer if it doesn't improve its performance. If cable operators continue to exclude black people from the management of their urban systems, they are going to find black people "telling them in large numbers to get the hell out of the community."

USA ad-vances

They're selling like hotcakes... advertising commitments on USA Cable Network, that is. So far the network has commitments totaling about \$15 million for 1983, slightly more than the total billings it had for all of 1982. With billings of almost \$15 million last year, the network came close to doubling its 1981 output of \$8 million. Contributing greatly to that growth was USA's expansion to a 24-hour schedule last April when C-SPAN moved to its own transponder.

"It's a nice beginning," said Jeffrey Lawenda, USA's vice president, advertising sales and commercial program development, of the commitments obtained so far this year. He was reluctant to talk about billing goals for 1983, but asked if he thought the network would double last year's total billings in the current economic environment, he said: "We're pacing very well and are right on target to do that." He said it was "the quality of the business from a sales standpoint" that has impressed him the most this year. Nine clients are now in the multimillion-dollar advertiser category and among others, have increased their USA budgets to cover additional dayparts.

And a number of advertisers have become involved, to varying degrees, with program sponsorship and development on the network, including Bristol-Myers, Noxell, Mattel, Miller, Hallmark, Kellogg's, General Foods, Mazda and Saks Fifth Avenue.

With all the talk about the creative potential of advertising on cable, Lawenda is somewhat disappointed that more agencies haven't explored that potential on USA. Except for a handful (including a 90-second spot for Chevrolet's Camaro created by Campbell-Ewald), most spots are the same 30's and 60's carried on broadcast television. The media departments of those agencies tapping cable, suggests Lawenda, are buying cable much more effectively than their respective creative departments are developing new approaches for cable campaigns. Longer lengths, compatibility with particular programs and targeting specific audiences are three aspects that creative agency people should devote more attention to, he said.

USA now reaches 15 million homes, an

increase of more than 50% since October 1981 when the network reached just under 10 million. Lawenda attributes those gains to HBO, which has been handling USA's affiliate sales and marketing since Time Inc. bought one-third of the network (along with Paramount and MCA) in 1981.

Shop talk

The Home Shopping Channel Inc., the Clearwater, Fla., company that has been successfully blending retailing and electronic media, was scheduled to open today (Jan. 17) three new facilities—The Home Shopping Medical Center, Legal Center and Tax Accounting Center. The new facilities join HSC's Home Shopping Mart, a discount merchandise store, in a Clearwater shopping center. Since July 1, 1982, HSC has been drumming up business for the discount store and its other services (insurance and travel) over a channel leased on the local cable system, Vision Cable. The Home Shopping Channel features different personalities who appear at regularly scheduled times throughout the week to sell HSC's various goods and services to the Vision Cable viewers. HSC's name derives from the fact that merchandise can be ordered by telephone and that HSC will deliver the merchandise to those who don't want to pick it up at the HSC store. The addition of the new facilities and services mean the addition of new programs on the Home Shopping Channel: The Medical Center Show, the Legal Center Show and the Tax & Accounting Show. Each features experts from the centers. Membership, which is

opened to all, is required to buy from HSC. According to Jim Stanley, approximately 25,000 households are now belong to the club. Not all are cable subscribers, however. Many are recruited by WWQT(AM) Dunedin, Fla., which broadcasts the audio portion of the Home Shopping Channel. The station is licensed to HSC President Lowell Paxson.



HSC hopes to expand its marketing reach by leasing channels on other cable systems in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area, Stanley said.

Sunshine center

Anixter Communications, Skokie, Ill., has opened a new sales and distribution center in Tampa, Fla., to serve cable and other telecommunications companies in the state. The new facility will be linked to other An-

ixter Communications plants by Anixter proprietary on-line data processing network, which permits an order taken at one location to be shipped from another within minutes. Using the system, sales people can receive up-to-the-minute information on Anixter's national inventory.

TBS tally

Turner Broadcasting System is claiming that as of November it had placed WTBS(TV) Atlanta in 25 million homes nationwide, or 30% of all U.S. TV households. It's basing the figure on a Nielsen Television Index survey, which also indicated that WTBS households have increased by 31% since November 1981. Turner also claims that WTBS reached 75% of all cable homes, while CNN now reaches 17.5 million homes nationwide, 21% of all U.S. TV households and 53% of cable households.

Staunton rebuilds with S-A

Staunton Video Corp., a cable system serving nearly 10,000 subscribers in Staunton, Va., is in the midst of a complete rebuild, according to Scientific-Atlanta based manufacturer that is supplying most of the hardware. When completed in July, S-A said, Staunton Video will boast a 54-channel residential system and a 35-channel institutional loop. Staunton Video's \$2-million order with S-A includes a pre-wired headend, trunk and drop cable, 400 mhz distribution amplifiers, taps and passives, a five-meter earth station and 12,000 descrambler/converters.

STATION #11
FOR STONER
BROADCASTING
SYSTEM, INC.

ARE YOU OUT THERE #12?