

Still another new news group

WPIX(TV) New York will launch nightly half-hour feed for independents in June via Westar

Beyond Ted Turner's Cable News Network, ABC's late-night *Nightline* entry and perhaps an extended *CBS Evening News*, the broadcast news business last week heard from yet another venturer.

After two years of pursuing the idea, WPIX(TV) New York has decided to proceed with *Independent Network News*, a Monday-through-Friday half-hour newscast in prime time for television stations unaffiliated with a network. The launch is scheduled for June 9.

With WGN-TV Chicago, KCOP(TV) Los Angeles and 27 other independents joining WPIX, the initial reach will be 40 million homes, amounting to about 50% U.S. clearance. WPIX will be feeding the program via Westar satellite, at 9:30 p.m. NYT, with about 90% of the affiliates expected to carry it at 10 p.m. NYT. Contracts specify that the newscast be carried in full and during prime time.

For its rotating anchors, WPIX is using its own local talent—Pat Harper, Bill Jorgensen and Steve Bosh. A magazine-style sports feature will come from the station's Jerry Girard. Other *Independent Network News* elements will include a business feature and a national weather forecast.

According to Leavitt J. Pope, WPIX Inc. president, the program will "look like the 7 o'clock news" of the networks. John Corporon, WPIX's vice president-news, is



Pope and Corporon

heading the operation.

The network will rely upon the services of international suppliers UPITN, Visnews, UPI and AP. Affiliated stations also will contribute stories and a 10-15-person Washington bureau is to be established.

The affiliate arrangement is on a barter basis, with WPIX selling three minutes of national advertising and local stations selling an equal amount.

From advertisers (like affiliates), WPIX is looking for a year's commitment, with each 30-second spot running \$1 million annually, or slightly less than \$4,000 each evening. Already in the fold, according to Pope, are General Foods, through Young & Rubicam, and Bristol-Myers.

With a complete sell-out—\$6 million in revenues—Pope said the project would break even its first year.

WPIX has guaranteed advertisers a 4 rating, based on a reach of 30 million homes; now, with 40 million, the minimum rating drops. Cost-per-thousand is about \$3, in-

tionally less than current network prices.

The 30 charter affiliates are: WPIX: KCOP: WGN-TV; WTAF-TV Philadelphia; WSBK-TV Boston; WDCA-TV Washington; WPGH-TV Pittsburgh; KHTV Houston; KDNL-TV St. Louis; WCIX-TV Miami; KSTW Seattle-Tacoma; KWGN-TV Denver; KTXL Sacramento, Calif.; KPTV Portland, Ore.; XETV Tijuana, Mexico-San Diego; WVTW Milwaukee; KBMA-TV Kansas City, Mo.; WUTV Buffalo, N.Y.; WZTV Nashville; WCCB Charlotte, N.C.; WPTY-TV Memphis; KGMC Oklahoma City; WOFL Orlando, Fla.; WDRB-TV Louisville, Ky.; KSTU Salt Lake City; WUHF Rochester, N.Y.; KMPH Fresno-Tulare, Calif.; KZAZ Tucson-Nogales, Ariz.; WFFT-TV Fort Wayne, Ind., and KVVU-TV Las Vegas-Henderson.

Independent Network News's reach is said to extend to all but about five markets with nonethnic and nonreligious independents.

What all this means for the Independent Television News Association, supplier of stories to independent stations, remains to be seen. Ten of ITNA's 24 members—including WPIX and WGN-TV—now have joined the network project and will have to give notice by July if they are pulling out of ITNA.

Despite the uncertainty, probably to be flushed out at ITNA's annual meeting in June, Managing Director Charles Novitz remained optimistic. "I have heard from key elements of the (ITNA) association that no matter what happens this service is essential," he said, adding that KTVU(TV) Oakland-San Francisco is among the staunchest supporters.

Novitz said that some stations, planning to carry the national newscast as well as

often accompanying administrative delays and backlogs that exist in certain regulatory quarters. I am confident that deregulation would neither foster abuses by broadcasters nor create a lack of sensitivity to the need to address the interests and concerns of all segments of their communities.

"For too long, broadcasters have been burdened by a regulatory scheme which inhibits free and full treatment of political, social and economic issues and casts doubt over renewals even where there is a proven record of superior performance. Therefore, I support efforts, such as those of Senator Goldwater, to bring some form of certainty and stability to the renewal process where the record of performance lacks evidence of serious defects."

President Carter is coming out of Rose Garden—but not to debate his challenger for Democratic presidential nomination. President last week announced intention of ending ban on travel that he had imposed on himself after hostage situation developed in Tehran, in November. Problems which had been occupying his time, he said, had become "manageable." But news secretary Jody Powell made it clear President **does not intend to debate Senator Edward M. Kennedy** in any of remaining presidential primary campaigns, though Powell said President would debate his Republican opponent after party conventions.

Saying that Johnson Newspaper Corp. has made "good faith efforts" to sell WWTN-TV Carthage, N.Y., in accord with FCC's 1975 ordered break-up of "egregious crossownership" situations, **FCC granted six month deadline extension**—from June 1 to Jan. 1, 1981—**for Johnson to get rid of station.**

Possibility of new House common carrier bill got big boost last week when Representative James Broyhill (R-N.C.) circulated memo to Communications Subcommittee members on revised proposals. Broyhill 6-point plan is radical one and would basically, after 12-year transition period, split AT&T in half. After 6-8 years, AT&T would be required to have in place separate subsidiary with its own product manufacturing capability and own marketing operation for all unregulated telecommunications products and services. Within 12 years, Western Electric would serve only regulated network.

James P. McCann has resigned as president of Top Market Television, New York, to form his own business in television, nature of which he will disclose shortly. **Henry J. O'Neill**, executive VP and chief executive officer of Top Market, continues in that post.

Representative **John D. Dingell** (D-Mich.) was given Distinguished Citizen's Award at annual Michigan Association of Broadcasters dinner in Washington last Thursday. Ranking Democrat on Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee and chairman of its Energy and Power Subcommittee, he is expected to become chairman of full committee in next session, succeeding retiring Harley O. Staggers (D-W.Va.).

CBS News claims to have been burned by former Secretary of State **Henry Kissinger** regarding "Kissinger/Shah Connection" segment rescheduled to run yesterday (May 4) on *60 Minutes*. CBS said it postponed piece for week after Kissinger finally agreed to give interview. Statesman then was said to have pulled out, "alleging that it was a 'hatchet job.'" Early reports last week said Kissinger planned to sue network; on Friday his Washington office characterized them as "hearsay."