

Although TNT will launch with more than Nielsen's minimum requirement for gathering ratings, Hogan said it will be four to five months before ratings will be available because of recalibrations the ratings service has to make. Even that, he said, "is a pretty quick turnaround." For the moment, Turner is selling TNT in tandem with his superstation, WTBS(TV) Atlanta.

TNT has been taking shape for several years in the minds of Turner and other top executives in the industry who believe cable needs a broad-based, high-quality programming network fueled by original product. The 1987 MSO buy-in of Turner Broadcasting System both boosted the chances of widespread success for the network and brought a greater degree of financial accountability to Turner operations. Although TNT's programming vision is Turner's, its business plan is shaped somewhat by the MSO's, which approved the launch of TNT earlier this year after several rounds of fine-tuning by Turner executives. TNT's programming budgets increase commensurate with revenue increases from subscriber fees and advertisers, a pay-as-you-go plan that bears the MSO's fiscal imprint.

Some in the cable industry see TNT as Turner's hedge against the gradual decline of superstations. Between copyright costs and the return of syndicated exclusivity, the growth of distant signals is likely to plateau and, in some cases, drop dramatically. WTBS(TV) Atlanta, a top profit producer for TBS, is in the best shape among superstations, however. Most systems have carried WTBS since before increased copyright costs took effect in 1984, and Turner officials have bought programming that will prevent operators from having to black out any part of the signal when syndex returns. Still, MSO's can't sell local avails in WTBS, as they will with TNT. And since local advertising is increasingly becoming a more potent revenue stream for the operators, many feel TNT will serve as a means for TBS to phase out WTBS if that day arrives.

Cable companies that are carrying TNT on some or most of their systems at launch include Tele-Communications, American Television & Communications, Continental, Warner, Newhouse, Jones, United Artists, United Cable, Heritage, Daniels & Associates, Times Mirror, Sammons, Rogers, Cooke and the National Cable Television Co-op.

Turner is reportedly close to signing Cablevision Systems. Among those yet to sign contracts are Cox, Comcast, Viacom, Storer (which will likely follow the lead of its new corporate parents, TCI and Comcast), Cablevision Industries and Century. Many of those companies, however, are expected eventually to sign to carry TNT. Tight channel capacity has prevented some from signing and prevented other companies from providing a full rollout of TNT.

After Turner's introduction, TNT will present the national anthem, using the same videotape recording of the anthem used when CNN was launched eight years ago. At 8 p.m., the first part of "Gone With the Wind" will air. The movie will be repeated at 11 p.m. to provide West Coast viewers with a prime time viewing of the movie,



TURNER NETWORK TELEVISION

since there will initially be only one national feed of TNT.

Part two of "GWTW" will air at 8 p.m. on Tuesday (Oct. 4), and will be repeated at 11 p.m. On Wednesday, Turner will carry "The Making of a Legend: Gone With the Wind," a behind-the-scenes look at the making of the movie that was produced by L. Jeffrey and Daniel Selznick, sons of the film's producer, David Selznick.

"GWTW" star Clark Gable will figure prominently in other first week programming on TNT, which will feature seven other Gable films plus two specials on the actor.

TNT's special presentations throughout October will include four installments of its *Portrait of America* series, featuring the states Hawaii, Kansas, Delaware and South Carolina, and three Jacques Cousteau specials, "Atlantis I," "Atlantis II" and "Clipper-ton."

TNT's basic program lineup will focus on movies, along with children's series and cartoons. Weekdays, TNT will carry cartoons at 6-8 a.m., *Fraggle Rock* at 8-9, a movie at 9-11, *Medical Center* at 11-noon, three movies throughout the afternoon, *The Muppets* at 6 p.m., *Bugs Bunny & Pals* at 6:30-7:30, *Fraggle Rock* at 7:30-8 and movies from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Saturday's movie fare will be punctuated with action/dramas throughout the day, including *National Velvet*, *Travels of Jamie McPheters*, *How the West Was Won*, *Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *Then Came Bronson* and *Daktari*. Sunday's lineup will include more children's series, Cousteau specials and the *Portrait of America* series, plus movies.

On Madison Avenue, TNT is being sold in tandem with WTBS, much the same way *Headline News* was sold in tandem with CNN when it first launched. Hogan said TNT projects its 24-hour ratings will be .6 at launch, and will increase to .8 by 1990 and a 1 by 1991.

Initially, TNT will debut one major production per month. That will increase to two per month, then once each week, and finally over 200 original programs a year by 1992. TNT, said Hogan, will carry about 250 films per month, which compares to about 60 on American Movie Classics, 80 to 100 on the pay movie services and 120 movies on a strong independent station, said Hogan. It will also premiere two colorized movies each month, said Hogan.

In the sports area, Turner has the rights to the National Basketball Association, and once TNT hits 30 million homes, the games can shift from WTBS to TNT. Hogan hopes that will be the case for the 1989-90 season.

When that happens, Turner's Hawks will return to WTBS. TNT also plans to go after special events, and has had discussions with Major League Baseball about gaining part of the new television rights contract that is being negotiated. One special event that will be on the network will be the Turner-conceived 1990 Goodwill Games.

If all goes according to plan, TNT may be one of the quicker Turner networks to make money. Turner expects TNT to break even after an initial loss of \$40 million, which pales in comparison, he said, to CNN, which went \$250 million in debt before becoming profitable. Turner's original program budget calls for expenditures of \$30 million this year, \$40 million in 1989, \$90 million in 1990 and \$150 million in 1991. To support that, TNT will be charging operators 15 cents per subscriber per month in 1989, 20 cents in 1990 and 25 cents in 1991. Turner will retain six minutes of advertising each hour and remit four to local cable operators.

TNT will also launch with one of the biggest promotional drives in history for a cable network. TBS has begun a newspaper and consumer magazine campaign that will total over \$4 million, plus it will provide 25 cents per subscriber for launch support. At a projected 17 million homes, including 25 of the top 30 cable systems in terms of number of subscribers, that would mean another \$4,250,000. □

King World to produce tabloid show

Major distributor to add production to its plate with half-hour program for January 1989 start

King World, one of the biggest distributors of syndicated programming, is getting into the business of program production. The company announced plans last week to produce in-house, for the first time, a new half-hour tabloid magazine strip—available for January 1989—called *Inside Edition*. The program will be offered to stations on a cash-plus-one-minute-barter basis.

In addition, company officials said they were preparing announcements on the first two new programs to be developed and tested by King World's "Research & Development Partnership" consortium of broadcast stations, including both daytime and late night strips. A King World spokeswoman stressed that *Inside Edition* is not an R&D project, and will proceed, assuming enough stations pick it up in the next couple of months.

A strong indication that *Inside Edition* will take a similar approach to the Fox-produced *A Current Affair* came with word last week that *Current Affair* producer John Tomlin and Bob Young, producer of another Fox-produced tabloid, *The Reporters*, have been hired as co-producers of the new King World program. A Fox spokesman said the two have not yet been replaced.

According to King World program devel-