

FIVE UHF STATIONS MAKE THEIR DEBUT; PITTSBURGH, BUFFALO AMONG MARKETS

Commercial programming by the newest group of permittees makes it a big week for uhf. One vhf station starts operation, another turns in permit after two months on the air.

THE PAST WEEK was one of the biggest in uhf television.

Five uhf stations began commercial programming—two of them in the big Pittsburgh and Buffalo markets—and three in healthy medium-sized markets where they are the first television stations on the air—Macon, Ga., Monroe, La., and Decatur, Ill.

Only one vhf station swung into action, a Ch. 6 outlet in Texarkana, Tex., while another Ch. 6 station kept the vhf situation *status quo* by turning in its permit after two months' operation (see story page 71).

Here are the new commercial stations:
WENS (TV) Pittsburgh, Pa., uhf Ch. 16.
WBUF-TV Buffalo, N. Y., uhf Ch. 17.
WETV (TV) Macon, Ga., uhf Ch. 47.
WTVP (TV) Decatur, Ill., uhf Ch. 17.
KCMC-TV Texarkana, Tex., vhf Ch. 6.
KFAZ-TV Monroe, La., uhf Ch. 43.

Meanwhile, reports on service continued to pour into WGLV (TV) Easton, Pa., uhf Ch. 57 station which started last week [B•T, Aug. 17]. The messages came from points as far as 70 miles from the station, according to a WGLV spokesman. In Norfolk, where WVEC-TV on uhf Ch. 15 started its test pattern operations a week ago, set dealers and distributors

said they were swamped with orders for new sets with uhf built in, uhf converters and uhf adapters.

One of the most dramatic uhf stories came from Buffalo, where WBUF-TV—which didn't even have a transmitter on Aug. 14—began commercial programming Aug. 17.

On Friday, Aug. 14, Allen B. DuMont Labs Inc. shipped, via truck, its first 1 kw uhf transmitter [AT DEADLINE, Aug. 17]. Early Saturday morning, the transmitter arrived and eight TV engineers—five from DuMont and three from WBUF-TV—began uncrating and assembling the parts.

Around the Clock

The engineers worked around the clock and on Monday transmitted the test pattern. A few hours later the station started commercial broadcasting. Douglas Edward's 7:30 p.m. newscast and Arthur Godfrey's *Talent Scouts* program an hour later were among the first network programs aired.

Almost as soon as the station hit the air, its switchboard was jammed with calls, WBUF-TV reported. Station added that viewers as far as northern Toronto, Ontario (60 miles away), Dunkirk, N. Y., on Lake Erie (40 miles away),

and dozens of other cities telephoned WBUF-TV to report bright pictures without snow. By late last week no nulls had been detected in the Buffalo area, the station reported.

President and General Manager Sherwin Grossman and Executive Vice President Gary Cohen expect that uhf conversions will be made at the rate of 5,000 a week for at least the next three months.

The area's dealers are hopping on the uhf bandwagon with their own publicity. Most display large banners provided by WBUF-TV which exclaim "Conversion is available here!" Dealers also are utilizing posters on trucks and store windows, and uhf displays in shopping centers. The chain of drive-in theatres owned by Mr. Cohen's father ran trailers about the new station.

So far, 24,631 sets are uhf-equipped in the area, it is reported.

One segment of the station's opening received nationwide publicity.

The tower erection company, which has headquarters in South Carolina, used a Confederate flag to mark its progress during construction of the 428-foot tower. When the tower was finished, one of the steeplejacks left the flag at the top and dared anyone to go up and remove it. Challenge was not accepted.

WBUF-TV is carrying programs from ABC-TV, DuMont and CBS-TV.

In Pittsburgh last Saturday the city's second uhf station—WENS (TV)—was to have had its commercial debut.

It follows by about three weeks WKJF-TV, which is on uhf Ch. 53 [B•T, Aug. 3].

WENS, on Ch. 16, will carry programs from

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