

Small dishes: FCC to tell CATV it's got them, if it wants them

Commission OK's receivers as small as 4.5 meters, says there will be trade-offs in technical quality

The FCC last week, as expected, cleared the way for small-dish earth stations. In a declaratory ruling and order, which is expected this week, the commission said that earth-station antennas smaller than nine meters in diameter could be licensed if proper technical showings are made. It further ruled that applications for parabolic antennas as small as 4.5 meters for receive-only CATV operations would be routinely processed if accompanied by supplemental technical data.

The commission also gave conditional approval for horn antennas slightly more than four meters in diameter.

The commission, in 1970, established a nine-meter criterion to insure that the design of domestic satellite systems would mesh with its plan for small inter-satellite orbital separations. It, did not, however, set that standard down as a rule and stated

With the new ruling, the commission granted the petition of the Community Antenna Television Association, which had opposed the nine-meter standard (BROADCASTING, July 5). The commission said that antennas as small as 4.5 meters in diameter could be used as long as engineering judgment was used in assessing trade-offs among antenna size, receiver noise, FM threshold, desired performance and cost of facilities. The commission, in effect, is allowing cable operators to proceed at their own risk.

The commission, however, denied a petition by ABC that had asked for "the establishment of a basic over-all design for the development of domestic communication-satellite services." Among other things, ABC also expressed concern that earth stations smaller than the 10-meter variety now in general use would erode spectrum space in the 4/6 ghz bands (BROADCASTING, Oct. 20, 1975). The FCC said that precluding the smaller dishes solely on the basis of size would be inconsistent with its policy.

The FCC order also opens the door for broadcasters to use the smaller antennas. There has been some question within the broadcast industry as to whether the small antennas provide the quality of the 10-meter antennas without additional equipment or expense.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting earlier this month released a technical research report that was said to demonstrate that antennas as small as three meters in diameter meet FCC criteria without any sacrifice in technical quality, radio spectrum efficiency or scarce orbital slots.

In Brief

- **Field Communications Corp.**, which already owns 22.5% of **Kaiser Broadcasting Co.**, will purchase other 77.5% for **\$42,625,000**, subject to FCC approval. If all goes well with earnings in 1977, 1978 and 1979, price could escalate another \$11,625,000. It's anticipated that present management (Don Curran, president) will be retained, with headquarters still in San Francisco (Field is Chicago company). Company will be renamed, perhaps **MF(for Marshall Field) Broadcasting**. Deal is subject to approval by boards of both companies and by Kaiser Industries stockholders. Kaiser U's are WFLD-TV Chicago, WKBD-TV Detroit, KBHK-TV San Francisco, WLVJ-TV Boston and WKBS-TV Philadelphia.
- **Barbara Walters's** first full-scale prime-time special on ABC-TV, consisting of interviews with President-elect and Mrs. Jimmy Carter, at with Barbra Streisand and Jon Peters and tour of Miss Walters's New York apartment last Tuesday (10-11 p.m. NYT), scored 21.5 rating and 36 share, **easily winning time period** against NBC's *Police Story* (19.1/33) and CBS's (*Switch* 14.7/25).
- **Ernie Schultz**, director of information, KTVY(TV) Oklahoma City, elected vice president/president-elect of Radio Television News Directors Association at RTNDA's annual conference last week in Bal Harbour, Fla. (see page 34). He will succeed **Wayne Vriesman**, VP-news director, KWGN-TV Denver, at association's next convention, Sept. 14-18 in San Francisco. Mr. Vriesman stepped up to presidency at last week's conference, taking over from John Salisbury, news director, KXL-AM-FM Portland, Ore. RTNDA's annual Paul White Award was presented on final day of meeting to **Ted Koop**, one-time CBS Washington VP and former president and Washington director of RTNDA, who wowed audience with his litany of what makes professional newsman.
- Exclusive television **rights to musical gala** at Washington's Kennedy Center Jan. 19, **night before Jimmy Carter's inauguration** ("Closed Circuit," Dec. 6) were sold to CBS-TV for undisclosed price. Gerald Rafshoon, Atlanta agencyman who coordinated transaction, had been asking \$2 million. Live telecast will run two and half hours in prime time.
- **Storer Broadcasting Co. has endorsed** Westinghouse Broadcasting Co.'s petition for inquiry into network-affiliate relations, at least to extent of supporting proposal for examination of possible anticompetitive practices.
- FCC has ordered television manufacturers to provide **UHF antenna** on any set with VHF antenna after July 1, 1978.
- CBS News will introduce **Newsbreak**, one-minute news headline service, on CBS-TV each evening at 9 p.m., starting Jan. 1 ("Closed Circuit," Dec. 6).
- ABC, CBS and NBC **broke off their rivalry for TV rights to Moscow Olympics** last Thursday in face of what source called "shocking" and "excessive" demands by Russians, and indicated in joint statement they would consult Justice Department on "desirability of the networks assuming jointly the costs and risks of making available to the American public broadcasts of the 1980 Olympic games." Reversal of their earlier stands against joint venture apparently was triggered

Atlanta TV goes national via satellite

SSS firm gets FCC nod to begin transmitting Turner's WTCG to cable systems as far away as Nebraska; over 1 million subscribers expected to be involved by fall of next year

Turner Communications Corp.'s WTCG(TV) Atlanta was scheduled to take to the skies last Friday (Dec. 17)—making it the first television station signal to be brought to cable systems via satellite. The kick-off transmission, slated to be received by four cable systems, is the first step in a

new type of common-carrier domestic-satellite video service.

The initial systems on board—either to test the transmission or begin subscriber service—are Troy (Ala.) Cablevision; Newton (Kan.) Cable TV; Hampton Roads Cablevision, Newport News, Va., and Multi-Vue TV, Grand Island, Neb. By January, close to 20 systems are expected to be taking the signal; many are now awaiting FCC approval to pick up WTCG.

The FCC last week granted an application by Southern Satellite Systems, Tulsa, Okla., to act as a "resale" common carrier in transmitting WTCG's signal. And the commission noted that "it is reasonable to consider SSS's initial service offering as a necessary business 'first step' towards a diverse common-carrier operation." In a separate statement, FCC Commissioner Abbott Washburn said "it could turn out