



Abe Lincoln winners. John P. Criswell II, anchorman-producer for WFAA-TV Dallas, and Rick Devlin, vice president and general manager of WOR(AM) New York, were announced Feb. 11 as television and radio winners, respectively, of the top Abe Lincoln awards. Presentation ceremonies took place in Fort Worth, sponsored for the 13th year by the Southern Baptist Radio-Television Commission to encourage broadcasters to enrich their local communities through programing. The commission had earlier announced its list of honors except for the Criswell and Devlin selections (BROADCASTING, Feb. 8). Left to right: Criswell, Devlin and five Merit Award winners—Eleanor Curry, public affairs director, KSOL(FM) San Mateo, Calif.; Ike Newkirk, public service/community affairs director, WOXI-AM-FM Atlanta; Ethma Elaine Odum, director of community affairs, KALB-TV Alexandria, La.; Elizabeth H. Sheahan, public affairs director, WPLO(AM)-WVEE(FM) Atlanta, and Walter Windsor, general manager, WFTV(TV) Orlando, Fla. Continuing, left to right: humorist Grady Nutt, who received the Christian Service Award; John Chancellor, *NBC Nightly News* anchorman and editor, recipient of the Distinguished Communications Award, highest honor of the SBRTC; and Dr. Jimmy R. Allen, president of the commission, who made the presentations.

gested installing small private cable systems in hotels, apartments and condominium complexes. He said his firm, which will provide this service, will offer a three-channel package of sports, news and movies.

In addition, the participants were advised to look into teletext and videotext services. The group also heard complaints about the need for "quality" black programing.

In a closing session, MIC members were asked to make recommendations to its board, one being for more outreach to minorities other than blacks.

It was also suggested that an ad hoc committee be formed to conduct a feasibility study with minority banks for cable financing. Also the board was asked to form a subcommittee on international communications, and a legislative committee.

The conferees passed a resolution, to be acted on by the board at a later date, that calls for cities to make a careful examination of the full range of CATV ownership options with an aim toward maximizing the social and economic benefits to the local community. The options should include, but not be limited to, for-profit corporations with an emphasis on multiple franchising, cooperatives, economic development corporations, municipal ownership, and a combination of the above.

WATR-TV decides to go it alone

Connecticut station to drop NBC affiliation, become independent

Better to be a large independent than a small affiliate.

That's the decision made by Channel 20 Enterprises, the new licensee of a Waterbury, Conn., UHF TV station. On or about April 15, WATR-TV will give up NBC-TV affiliation as it dramatically expands its coverage area.

At that time, WATR-TV (taking the new call letters WTXX-TV) will boost its power from 200 to 2,500 kw, sending a city grade signal into Hartford and New Haven, both Connecticut, and also reaching parts of Massachusetts and New York.

Already providing NBC-TV programing to that area is another UHF, Viacom's WVIT(TV) Hartford-New Britain.

NBC said the network and WATR-TV "mutually agreed to terminate the relationship."

Channel 20 Enterprises, a joint venture of Esen Associated IX and the Oppenheimer & Co. investment firm, received FCC approval to buy the station from Thomas Television Inc. for \$4.5 million a few months ago (BROADCASTING, Dec. 7, 1981). Esen Associated IX is owned by communications attorney

Michael Finkelstein and others in the Washington-based law firm of Nixon, Hargrave, Devans & Doyle.

WATR-TV isn't the only station dropping out of the NBC affiliate fold in coming weeks. NBC-affiliated KCMT(TV) Alexandria and satellite KWMT(TV) Walker, both Minnesota, are set to join CBS beginning March 15.

NBC said that it did not know how much of the Alexandria market it would be covering without KCMT but it added that its affiliates in Fargo, N.D., Duluth, Minn., and Minneapolis-St. Paul can be picked up there.

NAB task force narrows list on public broadcasting funding alternatives

Forty options have been reduced to nine with further input slated

The National Association of Broadcasters Task Force on Public Broadcasting Funding has begun narrowing its list of funding alternatives. The task force had been considering a list of about 40 options to help noncommercial broadcasters raise revenues from private sources (BROADCASTING, Jan. 18). Nine options have been selected, including restoration of federal funds, an excise tax on new television sets, a national telethon fund raised held on an annual basis, a lottery, a tax credit, a tax checkoff, and airing of some of commercial television's outstanding informational and cultural programing.

The task force, composed of eight commercial and noncommercial broadcasters, has met twice and will meet again Friday (Feb. 26) at the NAB. It was formed to help public broadcasting face the impending reductions in government funding.

Each task force member is holding community meetings this week with local commercial and noncommercial broadcasters. Those meetings are designed to provide the task force with outside input.

Once the task force comes up with its recommendations it will prepare a report. The report will be sent to the Temporary Commission on Alternative Funding for Public Telecommunications. The TCAFPT also is pursuing alternative funding for public broadcasting and will present a report on its findings to Congress in July. However the task force's job may not end with that report. Thomas Bolger, task force chairman, notes that the NAB could end up lobbying for those alternatives on Capitol Hill.

Bolger, president of WMTV(TV) Madison, Wis., and immediate past NAB joint board chairman, says the report will include implementation of the selected options. He noted that it would not be unusual for the NAB to lobby for public broadcasting. In the past, he said, NAB has lobbied for restoration of federal funding for public broadcasting.