

## Otherwise meeting

Related convention activities

### Saturday, March 24

**BEA workshops.** 8:45 a.m., convention center Rooms 214, 218, 220. General session, 10 a.m., Room N215. **Luncheon,** 12:30 p.m., Ballroom A. **Workshop,** 3 p.m., Rooms N 214, 218, 220.

**AWRT Educational Foundation board meeting.** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sheraton.

**Society of Broadcast Engineers meeting.** 1 p.m., convention center, Room N 222.

### Sunday, March 25

**BEA workshops.** 9 a.m. Convention center Rooms 214, 218, 220. **General session.** 11 a.m., Room N 215.

**Association for Broadcast Engineering Standards technical committee meeting,** 10:30-noon, Hilton hotel, Blue Bonnet Room. **Joint meeting of board of directors and membership,** 3-4:30 p.m., Blue Bonnet Room.

**Association of Maximum Service Telecasters membership meeting.** 12:30 p.m. Convention Center, mezzanine.

**National Association of Spanish Broadcasters formative meeting.** 4 p.m. Registry hotel, Suite 452.

### Monday, March 26

**Emergency Broadcast System meeting.** 2 p.m. Convention center, Room N 236.

**Society of Broadcast Engineers meeting.** 4 p.m. Convention center, Room N 215.

**Harvard Seminar Alumni reception.** 5:30 p.m. Fairmont hotel, Fountain Room.

### Tuesday, March 27

**AMST engineer's breakfast.** 7:15 a.m. Convention center, mezzanine.

**Broadcast Pioneers breakfast.** 8 a.m. Regency hotel, Ballroom.

**Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers Broadcast Group administrative committee meeting.** 2:30 p.m. Convention center, Room S 412.

### Wednesday, March 28

**Society of Broadcast Engineers meeting.** 4 p.m. Convention center, Room N 222.

## Media

# Metromedia and NAB hit the FCC panic button over superstations

**Do something, and do it fast, both urge commission in petitions**

Concern within the broadcasting industry over superstations boiled over last week into two petitions urging the FCC to do something about them. The National Association of Broadcasters urged the commission to undertake an expedited rulemaking aimed at curbing "the harmful impact of superstation development on broadcast program service to the public." And Metromedia Inc. asked the commission to halt temporarily all superstation activity.

Neither petition offered solutions to the problem described. But Metromedia—whose KTTV(TV) Los Angeles is being transformed against the company's will into a superstation—says that unless the commission suspends all authority for the satellite marketing of television signals, the policy options of those in government will be severely limited.

NAB, noting that the commission said a year ago it would "step in" if it found that superstations were being created and that their creation is harmful to the public, "can no longer continue to 'wait and see.' It must cease dancing its circular jig around the superstation issue and face the problem squarely."

The petition notes that superstations—those whose signals are transmitted by satellite to cable television systems around the country—"are here today." It contends that the public already has been harmed—in the loss of locally oriented broadcast service and in the damage it says superstations are doing to the commission's efforts to promote UHF development.

The original and self-proclaimed superstation is WTCG(TV) Atlanta. But, NAB notes, other superstations are devel-

oping—KTVU(TV) Oakland, Calif., and WGN-TV Chicago. In addition, the FCC has approved applications for the satellite-distributed carriage of six more stations—WOR-TV, WCBS(TV), and WPIX(TV), all New York, KTTV, and WSBK-TV and WCVB-TV, both Boston.

NAB also said superstations pose a serious threat to program producers. Indeed, it says superstations have "magnified, by geometric proportions, the degree to which program suppliers have lost control over their product once it is sold to a station and then carried by cable." A syndicator no longer can offer "a real guarantee of exclusive presentation rights to current or potential buyers," NAB said.

Both NAB and Metromedia said the superstation issue is entangled with other matters pending before the commission. NAB petitioned the commission to consolidate the superstation petition with a number of those issues.

And Metromedia in expressing concern about a narrowing of options, noted that the National Telecommunication and Information Administration, in its petition for a rulemaking to adopt a retransmission consent arrangement that would bring new cable systems "into the competitive syndicated market," stressed the importance of the commission acting before there is "a plethora of new operations with grandfather expectations." And, Metromedia said, the superstation debate "is certain to be involved" in the rewrite of the Communications Act now under way in Congress.

It also said the commission's Artec decision provides further justification for a temporary suspension of the superstation activity. Metromedia noted that, in denying a petition of the Motion Picture Association of America requesting a superstation rulemaking, the commission last year said superstations posed no threat because of the commission's rules limiting the number of signals a cable system can import. But the Artec decision in November (BROADCASTING, Nov. 6, 1978) is regarded as easing the path for cable systems seeking a waiver of the distant-signal rule.

A key argument made by both NAB and Metromedia involves the marketplace reaction to the superstation phenomenon—particularly when the station being carried is an unwilling partner of the signal distributor. NAB recounted WGN-TV's loss of the rights to National Collegiate Athletic Association basketball tournament games because of its status as a superstation—a status it did not seek, and does not want.

Metromedia said that when it became known that ASN Inc. had been given temporary authority by the commission to transmit KTTV's signals, calls and letters were received from sports interests from which the station had purchased local Los Angeles area broadcast rights. They argued that nationwide marketing of games exceeded the scope of the rights that were purchased. Then calls and letters were received from lawyers and agents of program distributors from which the station purchased its product. They now want

## Meet "The Achievers" And find out why they are the fastest growing Radio-only Rep.

Sam Brownstein / General Manager   Tom Hayes / Eastern Division Manager  
Dave Ring / Central Division Manager   Bob Allen / Pacific Division Manager  
Jim Cathey / Manager Dallas   Eugene Gray / Manager Kansas City

**PROradio**  
A Division of PRO TIME SALES, Inc.  
Hospitality Suite, DuPont Plaza  
899 Stemmons Freeway, Dallas