

INN is in business

WPIX-originated news service for independents opens for business with 27 stations and potential for 36.5-million homes

In New York, nothing much looked different. The WPIX(TV) news set was the same as it has been for the past couple of years. And at the anchor desk were the familiar faces of Pat Harper, Bill Jorgensen and Steve Bosh.

Behind the scenes, however, things were tenser than usual. Cosmetically, it may have seemed just another show, but in content and concept, it was considerably different.

The stories covered weren't local but rather national and international, and the viewing audience extended well beyond the New York metropolitan area. From its New York studios last Monday (June 9), WPIX launched *Independent Network News*, a half-hour barter newscast carried by 27 stations with a potential household reach of 36.5 million (BROADCASTING, May 5). Unlike veteran network competitors, this Monday-Friday half-hour is intended for prime time.

It was the second new news network to emerge this month, the first being Ted Turner's Cable News Network emanating from Atlanta. Given the differences in scope between launching 24 hours a day of CNN and 30 minutes of INN, it's no surprise that the latter hasn't come close to attracting the attention of the former, even though INN's household reach is some 18 times that of CNN.

Charter affiliates of INN, which last week began airing the Westar satellite-transmitted feed from WPIX, were KCOP Los Angeles; WGN-TV Chicago; WTAF-TV Philadelphia; WSBK-TV Boston; WDCA-TV Washington; KXTX-TV Dallas; KDNL-TV St. Louis; WANX-TV Atlanta; KSTW Seattle-Tacoma; KWGN-TV Denver; KPTV Portland, Ore.; WVTM Milwaukee; KBMA-TV Kansas City, Mo.; WUTV Buffalo, N.Y.; WPTY-TV Memphis; KGMC Oklahoma City; WOFL Orlando, Fla.; WDRB-TV Louisville, Ky.; WYAH-TV Norfolk-Portsmouth, Va.; KSTU Salt Lake City; KMPH Fresno-Tulare, Calif.; KZAZ Tucson-Nogales, Ariz.; WFFT-TV Fort Wayne, Ind.; WQRF-TV Rockford, Ill.; KADN Lafayette, La., and KVUU-TV Las Vegas-Henderson.

At the close of INN's premiere newscast, each affiliated station was welcomed to the fold, with the three anchors reading off call letters on a map. WPIX was treated as just another affiliate, and if a casual viewer did not notice a WPIX copyright signature at the end of the broadcast, the WPIX/INN connection may



Harper, Bosh and Jorgensen on the INN set

not have been made.

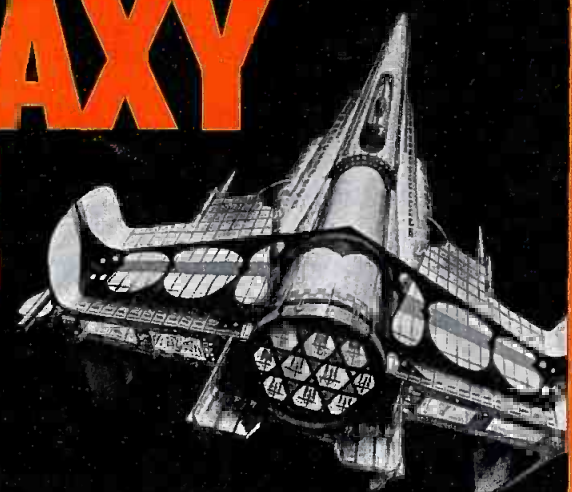
The report itself was geared for a national audience, leading off with President Carter in Miami and followed by other stories on subjects ranging from Iran to Israel. A broad-appeal sports feature came from INN (and WPIX) sports editor Jerry Girard. When anchor Harper gave the weather, it was in terms of region, with a rundown of the forecast for selected cities.

A business report also was included.

The launch wasn't without its snafus—but nothing the viewers hadn't seen before. This time, it was instability in the tape of a report by INN senior Washington correspondent Ford Rowan, formerly of NBC. Rowan is part of a 10-15-person Washington bureau being set up by INN and led by Elvera Ruby.


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