

Kaiser, Field put their U's together

Move will put six TV stations in top-eight markets under one banner

Negotiations to form partnership that would own and operate five Kaiser Broadcasting Corp. UHF TV stations and Field Enterprises Inc.'s UHF WFLD-TV Chicago were announced by Kaiser and Field officials Friday (May 26).

Kaiser would have 77.5% of partnership, Field 22.5%. Officials said no money would change hands, Kaiser's acquisition of majority interest in Field's WFLD-TV being treated as equivalent of Field's acquisition of minority interests in five Kaiser outlets. Kaiser stations involved are WKBG-TV Boston-Cambridge, Mass. (ch. 56); WKBF-TV Cleveland (ch. 61); WKBD-TV Detroit (ch. 50); WKBS-TV Burlington, N.J.-Philadelphia (ch. 48); and WBHK-TV San Francisco (ch. 44). Field's WFLD is on ch. 32.

Deal would be subject to FCC approval. Application is not expected to be filed for another 30-60 days. It would put new partnership in six of top eight markets, and new firm could still acquire one more U under FCC's multiple-ownership rules.

Richard C. Block, vice president and general manager of Kaiser Broadcasting, and James E. Fletcher, president of Field Enterprises, said in announcing negotiations that "we are confident the joining of WFLD with the five Kaiser stations will strengthen UHF television and increase service to the public."

Both Kaiser and Field are pioneers in independent, major-market UHF, Kaiser having started its Philadelphia-area and Detroit stations in 1965 and Field its WFLD following January. Field Communications Corp., wholly owned subsidiary of Field Enterprises, is licensee of WFLD and would be Kaiser Broadcasting's partner in new venture. Kaiser Broadcasting is wholly owned subsidiary of Kaiser Industries Corp.

One other TV and three radio stations owned by Kaiser are to be included in new venture. Kaiser announced earlier it planned to sell them, and spokesmen reported Friday that discussions with prospective buyers, whom they would not identify, were in progress. They are: KBSC-TV Corona, Calif.-Los Angeles (ch. 52), WCAS(AM) Cambridge, Mass., and WJIB(FM) Boston, and KFOG(FM) San Francisco.

Wometco expands its CATV

Wometco Enterprises Inc., Miami-based group broadcaster and multiple-CATV owner, announced Friday (May 26) that its CATV subsidiary, Wometco Com-

munications Inc., has agreed to acquire all stock of Ausable Communications Inc. for undisclosed amount of Wometco class A common stock.

Ausable owns systems in upstate New York (Keeseville, Peru, Cliff Haven, Plattsburgh Air Force Base) serving about 2,000 subscribers. It also holds franchises for Jay and Blackbrook, both New York.

Wometco's cable systems serve East Brunswick, Plainfield, North Plainfield and South Plainfield, all New Jersey. Company also owns majority of system in Freeport, Grand Bahamas, and is buying Lafourche Communications Inc., which operates system in Thibodaux, La., and surrounding communities.

Wometco stations are WTVJ(TV) Miami; WLOS-AM-TV Asheville, N.C., and KVOS-TV Bellingham, Wash.

Yorty wants debate blacked out in Calif.

Los Angeles Mayor Sam Yorty, in telegram Friday (May 26) to FCC Chairman Dean Burch, urged that scheduled nationally televised debates between Senators Hubert Humphrey (D-Minn.) and George McGovern (D-S.D.) (see page 43) be blacked out throughout California since it would not include all contenders.

Mayor told Chairman Burch: "The voters of California deserve to hear the entire spectrum of thought with all the other active candidates present and facing each other in the debate." He asked that he and Representative Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.) be included in the debate telecasts to be held prior to June 6 California primary.

Roanoke U wins over Lynchburg V again

Fight between competing Virginia VHF and UHF station, both with same network affiliation, has been decided for second time—in favor of U.

FCC review board last week denied application of WLVA-TV (ch. 13) Lynchburg, Va., for improvement of its facilities. Action came four months after U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington ruled against WLVA-TV, in denying station's appeal of FCC grant of application by competing WRFT-TV (ch. 27) Roanoke, Va., for similar technical improvements (BROADCASTING, Jan. 10). Both stations are ABC-TV affiliates.

Review board, as had court last January, ruled that survival of UHF is of primary importance in case. It said grant of WLVA-TV's application would impair ability of WRFT-TV and other potential UHF facilities in Roanoke area to compete in primary market area—which, if WLVA-TV application were granted, would

be penetrated by three network-affiliated VHF's.

Angered Parker to fight turndown of Mass. probe

FCC on Friday (May 26) was threatened with "further legal action" as result of its rejection of request of Office of Communication of United Church of Christ for inquiry into employment practices of Massachusetts' 11 television stations (BROADCASTING, March 27).

Dr. Everett C. Parker, director of office, expressed dismay and outrage at commission's "refusal" to investigate charges of employment discrimination against blacks and women by Massachusetts television stations, and said "further legal action" will be taken "to bring commission majority to its senses."

A spokesman for Dr. Parker said UCC's lawyers had not yet decided precise form legal action will take. He is just not going to let the matter

Commission on Thursday said it would not be justified in instituting investigative proceedings on basis of one year's statistics. UCC had requested inquiry examining minority employment reported in May 1971, first ones issued under rules requiring annual filing of such data. UCC had asked that station license renewals be deferred pending results of study.

Commission adopted its action by vote of 6-to-1, with Commissioner Robert Bartley concurring and Commissioner Nicholas Johnson lone dissenter.

In dissenting opinion, Commissioner Johnson said commission had shirked responsibility in not undertaking inquiry. "Real travesty of its action," he said is that it "attempts to give the impression that the commission has some meaningful program to evaluate the employment statistics it now receives. This simply is not the case."

He said one "positive result" of Parker's complaint is that commission staff has promised to do comparative analysis of Pennsylvania and Delaware stations—next renewal group—scheduled in July. Second year's statistics on employment are currently due. If commission does not do that analysis, Commissioner Johnson said, he will sue himself and release results at same time commission acts on renewal applications for licensees in those states.

UCC's study had concluded that Massachusetts television stations employ insignificant number of minority members and that there was evidence of industry-wide disregard of commission rules and policies barring discrimination and requiring licensees to implement affirmative equal-employment program.

Commission held that 1971 figures