BUSINESS/REAL ESTATE

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CABLE TV —Is the black community being shafted?

By Sue Williams
AFRO Staff Writer

After the preliminary report on cable television was submitted to the City Council Monday by a special committee formed to study cable possibilities here, there was considerable grumbling among black politicians and observers alike that the city's majority black population had gotten the shaft once again.

They were enraged over the recommendation that the city have "one integrated cable system," with a minority firm to own 25 percent of the single franchise awarded.

The twenty-five percent figure was blasted as potentially powerless for blacks; the word "minority" was sharply questioned (minority does not mean black, they said, and with other minority groups sure to clamor for a piece of the pie, blacks are not guaranteed anything.)

Still others charged that Mayor Schaefer and the city government had decided long ago that the city would have but one franchise instead of several, where, it was assumed, blacks would have a greater chance of owning a more realistic share of the new enterprise.

But aside from hearing about the controversy and the mumbling about the money to be had, many blacks are not aware of what cable television is, and how it is that a cable system could yield the millions of dollars everyone is talking about.

Why is cable such a hot item today and how much money can the city expect to earn from it?

How much money could be expected to funnel back into the black community were a franchise owned by a black company?

What are the political implications for the black community in cable television?

Could the average black family expect to afford a cable set up in its home?

Have black businessmen and black community members been shut out of the cable race before it has even gotten off its feet?

And, finally, is there any possibility of changing the tide of thinking that persists now so that a black cable company can own a franchise here?

WHAT IS CABLE TV?

Simply put, cable television is a system by which television signals are carried by wire rather than by transmission over the air.

Because of the absence of interference of air waves that present-day television and radio stations must now worry about, cable has the potential for carrying as many as 20 channels as opposed to the seven that most cities now have.

Cable began some time ago in small and rural communities where distances from large cities (and their television towers) were so great that normal television signals could not be carried. Air wave transmissions would feed into a central center which was wired to cables that extended out to the area and to the homes.

People had to pay for the services, usually a standard monthly fee, and in turn were able to receive signals from as far as 100 miles away. The fees paid were to pay for wiring the system required and also for the pulling in of signals from great distances.

Instead of just being limited to commercial television from large cities, however, cable operators were able to provide programming for subscribers in another way—by providing cameras and expertise to local groups which had something to say; by wiring into schools and colleges so that services as well as entertainment could be provided to subscribers.

In addition, the ever popular Home Box Office (HBO) was instituted, helping to bring in even more revenue for cable operators, and eventually, subscribers were able to order sports events, Broadway shows, and the like.

By taking advantage of a community's desire for different, sometimes better programming and their willingness to pay for it, by capitalizing on the reality that there are many community groups that feel they have something to say and are willing to invest in a cable signal to say it, and by coming up with even more alternative programming that the community will want to have, cable franchises will be able to net millions of dollars in a single city alone.

Because the cable network has as an objective to provide community-type services over its signals, the city has a vested interest in its installation right from the beginning.

The bidding cable company must present, with its proposal, plans for programming which the city government must not only scrutinize but approve. Theoretically, since community programming will be involved, community residents are supposed to be included in the decision-making processes.

The city could earn money from cable in several ways: it could own its own cable system and lease channels out to interested groups and companies, or sell the system to an interested company or companies; the city could own and operate its cable system by itself; or the city could lease or sell space to bidding companies to build the system and then receive a percentage of the profits made after the system is completed for as long as the system operates.

Baltimore falls under the last category mentioned. When the mayor and Board of Estimates approves a plan for cable franchising here, a single company will purchase the right to construct a cable plant here, and a minority firm will purchase one-quarter of those rights.

The company that wins the bid will pay the city for the right of city space to build the cables, and will pay the city a percentage of all profits made.

As the system grows and subscribers increase, profits both to the city and to the company will increase. Potentially, the city and the majority company will reap millions of dollars in revenues.

And while the city and the cable company are reaping profits, the community will have programming supposedly more to its liking, with local groups, churches, and political affiliations leasing rights from the cable company to make sure their views on issues and matters are seen.

Only those homes which pay for the services will be able to receive cable programming; other homes will retain commercial television programming, as they have today.

FRIDAY: How much money, in dollars and cents, can be made from cable? How much money could be put back into the black community from cable?

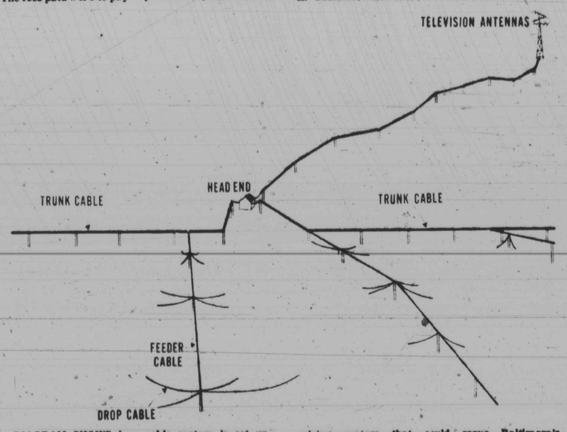

DIAGRAM SHOWS how cable system is set up. Franchise in city would be responsible for elaborate wiring system that could serve Baltimore's population.

Columbia Air new carrier at BWI

BWI officials have announced that a new carrier, Columbia, has filed with the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) for authority to provide low fare service between Baltimore-Washington International Airport and key cities in the eastern region of the United States.

Columbia Air, centering its operation at BWI, intends to initiate service by the end of 1981.

Maryland State Aviation Administrator T. James Truby said, "The new airline's proposed high frequency service compliments service already provided at BWI, making BWI an even more attractive alternate to overcrowded and congested National Airport."

The timing of this service is significant in that the U.S. Department of Transportation is currently considering limitations on activity at National Airport.

BWI officials believe that the new service will provide a relief valve for National Airport without inconveniencing the Washington air traveler.

Federal officials are on record as stating that BWI is an airport of service to the Washington region.

Just last year, an administrative law judge at the CAB noted that "located between the nation's capital and the port of entry of Baltimore, BWI's site is a transportation engineer's dream."

Truby continued, "I am gratified that the founders of Columbia Air are joining an increasing number of airline executives and air travelers who recognize and take advantage of BWI's assets."

Recent air passenger statistics for the first quarter of 1981 indicate that BWI is continuing to outpace the industry nationwide with a 3.8 percent increase over passenger traffic in the first quarter of 1980.

BWI officials are hopeful that the CAB will expedite approval of the proposal so that the Baltimore-Washington region's air travelers can take advantage of the new service at the earliest possible date.

Realtors to hold seminar on loans

The Real Estate Brokers of Baltimore, Inc. will hold a seminar on Monday, July 6 at 6:30 p.m. in the Grace Hill Jacobs Classroom Building of Coppin State College. - residential program. There will be a question and answer period following the discussion.

This seminar is free and open to the public.

Energy Store offers different kind of power

The Energy Store in Columbia, Md. has installed a 50-foot windmill for use in generating electric power.

One of the few businesses on the East Coast to harness the wind for energy, the store is currently saving about $25 a month on its utility bills with its Enertech wind-powered generator.

Unlike old-style windmills which utilize a storage battery, this one (which can be seen on Red Branch Road off Route 108 in Columbia) produced 115 volt AC 60-cycle electricity at all operating windspeeds.

Because this electricity is identical to utility power, it can flow directly to lights and appliances.

Any current not used by The Energy Store is purchased by the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company under a 1980 federal law requiring utility companies to buy excess power generated by private individuals.

When the wind speed is fairly high and the lights in the store are off, the dials on the electric meter actually spin backwards.

Suitable for both commercial and residential installation (although they do require a fairly large lot), windmills have already been approved for use by such local utility companies as Potomac Edison, Baltimore Gas and Electric, Pepco and Delmarva Power and Light.

The cost of installation is about $7,000 to $8,000, although at least 40 percent of the expense comes back to the consumer in the form of federal tax credit.

According to Energy Store owner, George Hunter, "You can save about $30 a month on your utility bill when the average wind speed is 14 miles per hour.

But if you live in a windy area—on the bay, for example, you can save considerably more."

The Energy Store, opened in 1976, specializes in alternative energy products such as solar hot water systems and water heating pumps.

It has already installed several windmills in nearby localities including Baltimore city. Its next one will be for the Montgomery County School System's Environmental Center.

Installation can usually be completed within 60 days after the order is placed. The store will take care of all details, including utility approval, anywhere in Maryland.

Profit planning seminar set

A seminar entitled "Profit Planning for the Small Business" will be held Tuesday, July 21 from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Neighborhood Business Advisory Center, 4324 York Road.

The seminar is open to all Baltimore area businessmen and women and also to anyone planning to go into business.

Bill Brown, chairman of the business department at Towson State University, will conduct the seminar. Brown will discuss the importance and the "how to's" of planning for small business, and how planning affects the profitability of business.

Assisting with the seminar will be a panel of businessmen and women who will lead a discussion providing practical examples of profit-planning applications.

This seminar is the first of a series to be offered by the Neighborhood Business Advisory Center, a private, not-for-profit program of the York Road Planning Area Committee, offering management assistance to small businesses.

The next seminar will be in September and is entitled "How to Increase Your Retail Sales."

Persons interested in attending the seminar must register in advance. Registration is limited to 50 and a $5 fee must be received no later than July 16.

Realtors nominate new officers

Robert E. Latshaw Jr. has been nominated president of the Greater Baltimore Board of Realtors.

Latshaw, a resident of Homeland, is president of Latshaw & Co. and Latshaw Commercial Properties.

He currently serves as first vice president of the Greater Baltimore Board of Realtors and chairman of its membership services committee.

A graduate of Johns Hopkins University, Latshaw is a member of the Maryland Association of Realtors' directorate, the Real Estate Securities and Syndication Institute and has earned the designation of Certified Commercial Investment Member of the Realtors National Marketing Institute.

He is also a member of the Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce, a former member of the Maryland House of Delegates and past president of the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute Alumni Association.

The following also were nominated officers of the Greater Baltimore Board of Realtors for one-year terms each: Otis Warren Jr., vice-president; James Piper III, second vice-president; Michael Yerman, secretary; and Sally Broadbent, treasurer.

Nominated directors to serve two-year terms each were the following: H. Richard Belman, Frederick E. Chippendale, H. Adrian Cox, Ronald F. D' D'Anna, William H. Engel III, Mary Lou Kaestner, James E. Matthews (the board's retiring president) and Mary E. Schuler.

C. Willis Hammond, the board's executive vice president, is appointed annually by the directorate.

The election of officers and directors will take place at the board's annual meeting Oct. 14.

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People in the News

International Administrator

WASHINGTON — In one of the most significant appointments of the Reagan administration, Dr. Joan S. Wallace has been appointed administrator of the Office of International Cooperation and Development in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, effective July 6.

Wallace, a former executive of the National Urban League and administrator at a black college, has served as assistant secretary for administration at the Department of Agriculture since December 2, 1977.

Joan Wallace

The new appointment was announced by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block.

In her new position, Block said, Wallace would be responsible for "the coordination of USDA's overall program to aid agricultural development in the less-developed countries of the world, including the responsibility for technical assistance, international training and development programs as well as the coordination of international organization affairs and scientific exchange and research agreements in transnational and developed countries."

James Wilson

MIAMI — Eastern Airlines has promoted James (Jim) Courtney Wilson to administrator, ramp services. He formerly was a supervisor in ramp services.

Wilson is in charge of resource allocation for the largest department of the airline's airport operations. His responsibilities include scheduling manpower and equipment on the ramp and writing operating procedures.

Wilson joined Eastern as part-time mail clerk in 1969. Prior to joining Eastern, he worked as an agent with Bahamas Airways and British Airways in Nassau. At Eastern, he held a variety of positions, including aircraft cleaner, crew scheduler, aircraft service supervisor in Boston and Miami, until his advancement to ramp services supervisor here in 1978.

Born August 21, 1950 in Homestead, Fla., Wilson attend the University of Miami and Boston College. He was graduated from Florida International University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Transportation Systems.

121-year-old: 'They made me out of good dirt'

OAKLAND, Calif. (UPI) — Arthur Reed time, but he says he remembers President Lincoln. He says he remembers them all since then, but he's just a little fuzzy on their names. Teddy Roosevelt, though was the best.

If Teddy Roosevelet were alive today, he would be less than two years older than Arthur Reed.

Reed, the world's oldest man whose age is authenticated on record, quietly celebrated his 121st birthday Sunday, June 28.

His birth certificate on file with the Social Security Administration lists his date of birth as June 28, 1860.

"In them days during the (Civil) War, you moved around a lot," He said. He thinks he was born in Albany, N.Y., but, then it could have been in Tennessee or anywhere along the East Coast. Any records would be long gone, he said. Besides, in those days midwives didn't keep records.

Some records, however, do exist. The Social Security administration says it has his birth certificate on file and it shows he was born on the date he claims.

That would make Reed five years older than the Guinness Book of Records' "oldest" man who died last year in Japan. He was 115.

"They made me out of good dirt," Reed said in explaining how he has lived so long. And he never smoked or drank. "Just dancin' and gamblin," he said. "Been drunk just one time and no more."

Through the years Reed has been a farmer, a railroad worker, a handyman and a lot of other things that he can't quite remember. He's always worked, though. "You had to in them days," He said.

He never had any kids. "I had to work all the time," He said.

But he has been married, two or three times.

He first married in 1910, he said. That was in Tennessee and he was 50 years old. Her name was Mary. His last wife, Susie, he married in 1953. She died several years ago, he said, and he now lives with her daughter, Sally Robinson, 60.

In between those two wives there was another one, he said, but "I forget her name."

Reed, who can't read or write, said he has seen a lot of changes over the last century and, he said things are better now than when he was young.

But not all the changes have been good, he said. They "don't sift corn anymore. Them days they sift corn for meal, but they don't do it no more."

Coffee isn't as good either, he said. Back then "you had to wash it out of your cup, now you don't."

Arthur Reed

Council on minority engineers ends meet

WASHINGTON — Corporate support for programs to increase the number of minorities in engineering will continue to expand, predicts Honeywell chief executive officer who participated in a two-day forum of the national Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, Inc., held recently at the Sheraton Washington Hotel and Howard University.

Edson W. Spencer, also chairman of Honeywell, Inc., said "We're getting more corporations to contribute than we've had in the past. We're getting larger contributions from those who did contribute in the past, and more important, is the personal involvement of corporations."

NACME, a non-profit, tax exempt organization formed to increase the number of minority engineers, is supported solely by the private sector.

Spencer made his comments as part of a press conference to announce $248,593 in matching grants given by NACME to 11 colleges and universities nationwide to retain minorities in engineering programs.

Institutions of higher learning that will receive the grants include North Carolina A & T University, Greensboro, N.C.; Purdue University, West Lafayette, Inda.; University of Massachusetts, Amherst; California State University, Los Angeles; University of California, Berkeley; Kansas State University, Mahattan; University of Texas, Austin; Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas; University of Washington, Seattle; Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.; and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N.Y.

NACME President Lloyd Cooke, who announced the grants, said, "We'll follow closely the work of these universities, so that we can share their experiences for the benefit of other retention programs."

Cooke also stressed the importance of the need to use teaching methods such as Project SEED (Special Elementary Education for the Disadvantaged) as a vehicle for increasing the number of minority engineers.

Project SEED recruits private sector scientists and university engineering professors from employers such as Bell Laboratories, IBM, and Yale University to teach for a duration in public elementary schools attended by the underprivileged.

New Orleans protesters leave mayor's office

NEW ORLEANS (UPI) — Six blacks demanding the firing of "all killer cops" ended their three-day occupation of the mayor's office June 20 walking from city hall to a crowd of about 500 supporters waiting on the steps outside.

The protesters, who stormed the mayor's office and vowed to remain until he acted on their complaints of police injustices, unexpectedly left Morial's office and joined a large group of supporters who had marched from the St. Louis Cemetery and gathered outside.

The protesters triumphantly said they had accomplished their goals by focusing national attention on the Algiers police shootings and other alleged police violence toward blacks.

Three blacks were killed by police last November during raids after the mysterious death of officer Gregory Neupert. A fourth black was also shot to death by officers during the tense investigation.

Ernest Morial

Protest leader Michael Williams characterized the takeover as "civil disobedience." He vowed to continue the escalation of confrontation tactics until Morial acted on complaints from the black community on police injustice.

Morial, who refused to meet with the protesters, had been conducting business out of a temporary office set up in the city council chambers and seemed unaffected by the sit-in.

"I'm not under duress or concerned about anything," said Mayor Ernest Morial. "Actually, it's quite amusing. The city is functioning well and your business is being managed with due diligence and efficiency."

The number of participants in the protest, which began June 18 when demonstrators rushed into city hall blowing whistles and pulling fire alarms, was nine originally.

Troy Abery, 19, left the mayor's office after his mother saw him on television, went to city hall and ordered him home. Two other protesters left after a meeting with black ministers.

Floodwaters send Kan. residents packing

Driven from their homes by floodwaters, two Hoisington, Kan. women buddle in a Red Cross relief station. 20 people went to the aid station when more than six inches of rain caused flash flooding. Hoisington is approximately nine miles from Great Bend, the site of a major flooding recently caused by 15 inches of rain. Many of the Hoisington flood refugees June 22 drove to the Great Bend aid station because it was easier to get to than the one in Hoisington. Left to right are: Rosemary James and Darlene Givens. The floodwaters covered highway U.S. 281 (pictured right), driving 2,000 residents from their homes.

Youth riot again in London ghetto

LOUDON (UPI) — About 500 black youths stormed through a street in Southeast London smashing shop windows, looting stores, and hurling fencing at motorists, police said.

A civilian and a policemen were slightly injured in the rioting, which began just as a carnival in the Peckham district was closing down, a Scotland Yard spokeswoman said.

The mob of about 400 to 500 youths — most of them blacks— ripped up the fencing around the fairground, hurled it at passing motorists and went on a rampage down Peckham High Street June 20, and looting about 30 shops, she said.

Riot police rushed to the area and arrested 24 youths, the spokeswoman said.

The trouble occurred as government investigations continued into the cause of last April's riots in the poverty-stricken black district of Brixton, where 1,000 people were arrested in the worst race riots in Britain's history.

Rioting similar to the Peckham disturbances also occured in April in other London districts at the close of holiday carnivals.

Art scholarship changes career

PHILADELPHIA— Three years ago, Jo Ann Fulton Elam, of Villanova, PA decided it was time to change careers. A former Philadelphia resident, Mrs. Elam had already earned a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics. And, she says, for a time the rigors of classroom teaching and counseling were satisfying challenges, but she didn't "love" her work. More than that, she learned the hard way that years and quality of performance do not always assure job security.

Now she is on the path to a career in what she loves best—art; with a specialty in sculpture. And she is back at her alma mater, Cheyney State College.

Helping her in this endeavor for the next academic year will be a scholarship. Mrs. Elam has been named the recipient of the George Beach, Incorporated tuition scholarship at Cheyney State. The scholarship, created by Beach, a Philadelphia-based artist and president of the George Beach, Inc. graphics in Philadelphia and New York, was awarded following highly competitive applications among the college's art majors.

The scholarship will underwrite the entire cost of a full academic year of study for the winner. Mrs. Elam's winning portfolio of prints and watercolors, and the ceramic pieces submitted as part of the application procedure, won praise from the panel of scholarship judges.

Married, and the mother of two, Mrs. Elam believes that returning to college was the best challenge she has undertaken. "This time," she says, "I'm here because I wish to be here. With the scholarship, I will be able to attend school full-time." She expects to complete her studies in three academic semesters. Mrs. Elam was also the recent winner in the print-making category of the 1981 C lotheline Art Exhibit at Cheyney.

Voting rights talk planned for PUSH convention

CHICAGO — The Rev. Jesse Jackson's annual convention address, hearings on an extended and strengthened Voting Rights Act and speeches by two of the nation's top labor leaders will highlight the "Labor and Political Day," Thursday, July 9, at the 10th annual national convention of Operation PUSH.

Milwaukee had commandos before New York got angels

MILWAUKEE (UPI) — Night after night, the images of the Milwaukee Commandos went into homes by newspaper and television.

The pictures of tough, young blacks striking military poses in fatigues, berets and boots invoked fear and hatred in many burgers of the rather conservative city known for its beer and teutonic background.

Milwaukee had been shaken by a brief riot just weeks before that summer of 1967 and the commandos — formed to protect demonstrators during 200 consecutive days of open housing marches — became a symbol of the confrontation.

Today the organization — now Commando Project I — is Milwaukee's largest inner city social services agency and is respected by both whites and blacks.

The para-military accouterments have long been put aside for business suits and briefcases. The group is funded by state and federal programs and such establishment organizations as the Milwaukee Association of Commerce which has contributed about $1 million since 1968.

"We have always thought that the commandos is the best program of its kind in the country," said John Duncan, association president. "What's important at the commandos is that it is not imposed upon by government."

"A lot of the people in those days thought of the commandos as a gang of thugs," recalled Jesse L. Wade, the project's executive director.

The commandos were originally a force of about 100 mustered by the youth council of the Milwaukee chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

A veteran of those days and the stormy open housing marches, Wade is now 40, a stocky, friendly man who still answers to "Hook," a nickname he acquired for his youthful boxing prowess.

"When we were marching out there, we weren't marching because we wanted to be tough guys. I was marching for something I beleived in. Just like I'm still marching right now for something I believe in," said Wade.

But he admitted the future of the commandos is uncertain.

Proposed government budget cuts, Wade said, will threaten the organization he and several other commandos started in 1968 when they broke away from the NAACP and made a successful application for state funds to start a counseling program for parolees.

"We saw a need and tried to fill it, we're still trying to do that," he said.

The organization is headquartered in a two-story building on Milwaukee's Near North Side. It provides adult and youth counseling, youth employment, vocational training for ex-offenders, prison work-release job placement, recreation and community improvement programs.

About 25 of the commando staff of 60 are parolees, aged 18 to 50, who work full-time providing pest control and repairing and winterizing inner city homes for the elderly and physically disabled. They have helped improve more than 300 homes since 1979, Wade said.

Opened in 1974, the Commado Academy assists dropouts and chronic truants whose academic skills average third or fourth grade levels. It does not grant diplomas, but classes count for credit at local high schools.

Instructors teach basic educational skills using such unorthodox methods as a pool table to teach geometry or dice to teach the theory of probability. In the afternoon, the students work on home repair or other projects designed to give them job skills, Wade said.

"What we are trying to do is compete with street life, to relate to things these kids understand so we can develop the basic skills of reading, writing and math," Wade said.

One of the most important things is discipline, he said. "We tell them that this school is operated for them. It's theirs so they better behave and take care of things. And, if they are going to learn to 'make it' they had better learn self-discipline," he said.

The organization is especially proud of its counseling of parolees, youths on probation and troubled youths.

Less than 10 percent of the commandos' youth parolees return to institutions. The state average in 1979 was 40.4 percent.

Wade, a school dropout and ex-offender himself, said he knows his organization gets the rejects, the people regular service agencies have given up on.

"With understanding, most change," he said. "I try to tell them, cut the mistakes I made. I believe, if you can make mistakes, share them. Someone can learn."

The commandos exist today because the organization adapted to the times and learned to work with bureaucrats, according to Michael A. Schoenfield, Wade's assistant, who is white.

"When they get money for their programs, they like to run' them their way. It costs less and works best for their clients," he said.

Sufficient state and federal funding has always been a problem, Wade said. Now, more private money will probably have to be sought to keep the programs operating. He worries that unemployment, less money for social programs and hard times may create an explosive situation.

"I know what time it is," he said. "I move around out there."