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 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 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 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 franchisees 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.

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?

Wright named SBA minority administrator

Robert L. Wright, former president of a Columbus, Ga. political consulting firm, has been appointed to head the Small Business, Wright ministration's Minority Small Business and Capital Ownership Development program.

As associate administrator for Minority Small Business, Wright will have the responsibility of administering the SBA's Contracting and Capital Ownership Development programs.

In making the announcement, SBA Administrator Michael Cardenas said, "Bob Wright's many talents and experience will add a new dimension to the agency's programs for socially and economically disadvantaged firms."

Wright founded his consulting firm, Wright, McNeill & Associates in 1974. It provides technical and practical research on race relations, minority programs and politics.

Wright, who graduated from Ohio State University with bachelor of science and doctor of optometry degrees, has maintained an active practice in optometry since 1961.

He also has served as vision consultant to Headstart programs in Lee County, Ala. and Cusseta, Ga.

SBA's new associate administrator has served on the Columbus City Council, the Advisory Committee to the Muscogee County Planning Commission and the Lower Chattahoochee Planning and Development Commission.

He was an alternate delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1975. He has served as second vice chairman of the Georgia Republican Party and chairman of the Southeast National Black Republican Council.

His contributions as a member of the Georgia Council on Aging resulted in the establishment of a better vision program in nursing homes and geriatric services throughout the state of Georgia.

In 1972 and 1974 he was appointed to SBA's Regional Advisory Council in Atlanta.

—Reagan cuts

(Continued from Page 11)

The President also proposed to end funding for SBA's non-physical disaster program and to increase interest rates on physical disaster loans to the cost of Treasury borrowing.

The President said he was withdrawing the pending $780 million 1981 supplemental spending bill for SBA's physical disaster assistance.

SBA maker loans to individuals and businesses who have suffered physical damage in natural disasters (hurricanes, drought, tornadoes, etc.). Up to now, the agency also has extended financial assistance loans to businesses suffering economic injury as a result of physical disasters. Interest rates on such loans range from three percent to 13 percent.

"Given existing fiscal restraints," the budget proposals said, "the administration believes that federal disaster assistance should be provided only to those who are most in need."

Under today's budget proposals, SBA's new loan guarantee commitments would total $4.9 billion in 1981 and $4.4 billion in 1982, compared with the January proposals of $5.9 billion in both 1981 and also in 1982.

The President proposed to reduce SBA's employment to 4,700 employees in 1981 and 4,800 in 1982. In January, full-time employment at the agency was proposed to be 5,000.

Tessa Hill to compensation committee

Tessa Hill has been appointed to the Governor's Compensation Committee.

The committee will evaluate salaries of elected officials and appointed officials.

Ms. Hill has been a manager with Prudential Life Insurance Company for two years. The is the first black female to become an assistant manager with the agency.

She works at agency's Franklin and Charles Streets office. Ms. Hill will be teaching a course in beginning insurance with the Life Underwriter Training Council (LUTC).

Tessa Hill

Fairfax Savings & Loan
Where The Smart Money Is . . .
"CHEXTRA 7"
FREE CHECKING THAT PAYS 7% 7.35% Yield
Get free checking that pays an extra 7.35% in your checkbook balance. There's no monthly service charges as long as you maintain a $100 minimum balance. Be sure to look into our SENIOR CHEXTRA ACCOUNT for people over age 55.
ALL ACCOUNTS INSURED TO $100,000 BY M S S I C
Fairfax Savings & Loan
Open Monday thru Friday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
PIKESVILLE 1101 REISTERSTOWN RD 486-6700
Open Mon. Thurs. 9-3 Fri. Nite till 8

OCEANIOUS FLOWER SHOP
has served
• ODELL BROCK, JR. • REV. JOHN BRYANT
• THE GATSBY • KEVIN DETT • DOROTHY BRUNSON
WHY NOT LET US SERVICE YOU . . .
851 Bentalou St., Balt., MD. BUS.: 362-6510
Bernard James, Jr., Prop. RES.: 947-3603

WILLIAM C. MARCH
FUNERAL HOME, INC.
Salutes
BLACK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

"A Reasonably Priced Service"
William C. March Funeral Home, Inc.
1101 E. NORTH AVE. • BALT. MD. 21202
WILLIAM C. MARCH, President
J. ROBERTA MARCH, Director
ERICH W. MARCH, Manager

ELIZABETH L. PHILLIPS FUNERAL HOME PA.
Salutes
BLACK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Compassion, Concern, Love and Quality
ELIZABETH L. PHILLIPS, Funeral Directress
DORETHA F. HECTOR, Directress & Embalmer
1721-27 N. MONROE ST. BALTO. MD. 21217
(301) 523-4918

CRIPS FLORIST
ONE OF THE OLDEST BLACK FAMILY FLORISTS IN BALTIMORE
Salutes
BLACK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SINCE 1939
• Clarence, Sr. • Clarence, Jr. • Michelle • Debbie • Kim • Peaches
721 POPLAR GROVE
945-4340
WHOLESALE · RETAIL
FLOWERS BY WIRE

CARLTON C. DOUGLASS
FUNERAL SERVICE
The Fine Name in Professional Service
301-669-1738
All Services Rendered from Chapels
Available Throughout the City of Baltimore, Maryland East & West
District Governor of National Funeral Directors & Morticians Association. Specializing in Pre-Arrangements, Consultations, Cremations and Funerals to your customized ideas.
Suburban Chapel
103 Avondale Road, Dundalk, MD. 21222
Your Shipping Specialist in Baltimore
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Need a date?

SELECT is a new business about love

By Portia E. Badham
AFRO Staff Writer

There's a new business in town. But it's not a retail or food establishment, or even a manufacturing or industrial firm.

In fact, this new business is all about love.

Select is Baltimore's newest dating service and was formed four months ago by Ken and Wenda Royster.

Mrs. Royster, a sales representative for an orthopedic supply company, says the idea came to her while working.

"I met several residents and employees at the hospitals I went to for my job and they all asked me where do you go to meet someone nice. That's when it hit me."

After discussing it with her husband, who agreed whole-heartedly to the business venture, the couple formed Select.

"All singles are playing a game, not only with other people but with themselves. They try to tailor their interests to what they think the other person would like," said Wenda.

"That's why a lot of people end up meeting people that are not right for them. And that's where Select comes in."

Mrs. Royster explained that they work out of their home so they can add a personal touch to the service and make their clients feel comfortable and right at home.

In order to be chosen as a Select client you must pass a fact-finding interview which includes questions on the client's biographical background, a description of their interests and what the person looks for in a date.

"Usually a client finds someone they really like within three dates," said Ken, an art professor at Morgan State University.

The Roysters report that several of the more than 135 clients that were introduced when Select was first formed are still dating each other.

Ken and Wenda pointed out that once the clients have met and gone out on a date, they get in touch with them for feedback.

"We stay in touch with our clients," said Wenda, who added that many of the Select clients have become friends to the Roysters.

And how did the Roysters meet? Yes... on a blind date. They met in February and married in August. That was three years ago.

The service is based, in part, on how the Roysters met through mutual friends and later went out for their first date.

"Select does not promise wedding bells," says Wenda, "but it does guarantee adventure and a lovely time for someone who is busy and doesn't like the single bar scene."

To make an appointment with SELECT, call 542 - 3680.

A PERSONAL TOUCH — Wenda and Ken Royster, who operate Select Dating Service, interview their clients at home over a glass of wine which makes for a more comfortable and relaxing setting.

AFRO photo by Mark Gail

Market strengthened in Balto.-Wash. area

In its full year of operations the Washington - Baltimore Regional Association (W-BRA) has "increased awareness of the Baltimore - Washington common market and our economic strength both within the region and elsewhere," W-BRA Chairman Vincent C. Burke Jr. told members of the board at the association's annual meeting.

"More and more there is an acceptance of the validity of the basic concept of the common market and with this increased sense of place, one of our primary goals will come more and more attention and inevitably increased interest in the assets we have to offer to national and foreign corporations," said Burke.

The year 1980 saw the association's first successful recruitment of national business to the region, said Burke, when Wells Fargo Credit Corporation of Phoenix established offices for their commercial credit operations in Silver Spring, Md. and Tysons Corner, Va.

Another half dozen other corporate prospects "are still in the exploratory stages," said Burke. "We anticipate a continued increase in this area that represents the ultimate test of the association's effectiveness."

Other W-BRA marketing efforts in 1980 have included a "MarkeTour" of the area by diplomatic representatives of nations most likely to invest in the U.S., preparation of an economic study by noted analysts Robert R. Nathan Associates development of a statistical data base for the area, including media materials drawing on the information publication of a high quality promotional brochure "The Unique Market;" and distribution of a newsletter, "Around the Region," that reaches 2,000 readers each month.

W-BRA officials have also promoted the common market concept at meetings of professional organizations such as the National Association of Corporate Real Estate Executives, the Society of Industrial Realtors, and the National Association of Manufacturers.

Working closely with the Economic Development Council of Greater Baltimore and the Greater Washington Board of Trade, "the association has become part of our regional economic development structure, it has put together its basic materials and tools, it has helped create greater awareness within the area and beyond of the existence and the nature of the common market.

"And also it is slowly starting to see the results of these efforts in the form of increased interest in the common market and actual prospects," said Burke.

In presenting the W-BRA marketing program for 1981, W-BRA President Barry Zorthian said the association will develop a program of media contacts within and outside the region which will include radio public service announcements and a series of press releases on important economic developments within the region.

In 1981 W-BRA will also expand its personal contact program with national and foreign corporate executives, and will continue to explore the possibility of a highly targeted direct mail campaign aimed at specific industries.

The Washington-Baltimore Regional Association is a private, non profit corporation established by representatives of business and industry to promote economic development in the Baltimore - Washington common market, a unique economic and marketing unit comprised of the two cities and 15 contigous counties in Maryland and Virginia.

More blacks needed in engineering fields

LC BS Of the 55,000 students who graduated in the engineering fields in 1979 across the country, only 1,509 were black.

These figures indicate that there is a real need for more black students to pursue the engineering field. Edward Gordon, manager of marketing development and applications at Westinghouse Electric Corporation has taken on a personal crusade traveling around the country interest students in this field.

"There's a whole array of jobs in the engineering field field because there is a need to find alternate energy sources, a need to increase productivity with the use of automated equipment and the need to further explore the field of computer science," said Gordon, who has been with Westinghouse for 16 years.

Edward Gordon

Gordon points out that while the preparation for engineering takes a little extra effort and requires that students place emphasis on math, science and chemistry, the work is "not as difficult as most people think."

He pointed out that many corporations, such as Westinghouse offer financial asistance to students as well as job-study programs.

"If we're ever going to have equal opportunity, we've got to be in the mainstream of this field," he said.

BLAIR'S BEAUTY SALON
is proud to be a part of
"BLACK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT"
We are proud to be a part of Black Economic Development in our city. Progress is our goal
For Quality service and beautiful styles
CALL OR VISIT US . . .
1355 W. NORTH AVE.
523-6888

Ann Blair Robinson, Proop

BLACK & DECKER
A world leader in the manufacture, sales and service of power tools and accessories.
An Equal Opportunity Employer
Minorities and females are encouraged to apply.

NOW YOU CAN MAKE SOMETHING BIG OUT OF $300.

INTRODUCING AN INSURED FIXED RATE MONEY FUND CERTIFICATE.
• 2½-year certificate
• Minimum investment as low as $300
• Purchase certificate at prevailing Treasury-security interest rate, and rate is fixed for duration of certificate
• Interest payment options available on certificates of $3,000 or more
• Interest compounded daily
• Penalty for early withdrawal
• FDIC insured up to $100,000

INTRODUCING AN INSURED VARIABLE RATE MONEY FUND CERTIFICATE.
• 4-year certificate
• Minimum investment as low as $300
• Purchase certificate at prevailing Money Market certificate rate, and rate will vary weekly for duration of certificate
• Interest payment options available on certificates of $3,000 or more
• Simple interest
• Penalty for early withdrawal
• FDIC insured up to $100,000

Union Trust Bank

THE INNER HARBOR MARINA
SAIL BALTIMORE DOWNTOWN
Taste the twin pleasures of boating life and city life in the Chesapeake Bay area's newest marina...with the latest, most modern floating docks.
• 158 slips with individually consoled electric & water service
• Heads and Showers
• Service Center
• 24-hour Staff attention
• Within walking distance of all Inner Harbor office buildings, museums and festivities
• Convenient to Baltimore's finest restaurants, shops and theatres
• Agent for Dinner and Theatre reservations
NOW accepting Reservations for permanent dockage and transient cruises
Contact: Captain William L. Flohr, Jr., Marina Manager
(301) 837-5339
THE INNER HARBOR MARINA OF BALTIMORE, INC.
400 Key Highway • Baltimore, Maryland 21230