

FOX STATIONS RE-UP WITH CNN

Contracts extended for a year to supplement Fox News Service

By Mike Freeman

Possibly looking to heal some old wounds with Turner Broadcasting System's CNN news service, the Fox Television Stations have extended their CNN contracts for one year to augment news feeds from the fledgling Fox News Service.

Less than six months ago, Fox Inc. Chairman Rupert Murdoch announced that Fox O&O stations would be phasing out their subscriptions to CNN's news service (BROADCASTING, June 29).

However, Mitchell Stern, executive vice president and chief executive of-

ficer of Fox Television Stations, said that the decision to renew with CNN is because the cable/ syndication news service continues to be the "backbone" of FNS's national and international news coverage, particularly for several of the stations' morning newscasts, he said.

"While the Fox News Service and the individual stations further develop their resources and expand their news presence, we feel that it will better serve our needs to continue to work with CNN," Stern said.

In related news, the man heading up Fox News's national programming efforts, former CBS news executive Van

Gordon Sauter, last week named Kim Montour, news director of Fox-owned WTTG(TV) Washington, as special assistant to the president of Fox News. Montour, who will relocate to Los Angeles next month, will be involved in encouraging Fox affiliates to expand or begin newsgathering operations locally and will help with the development of original programming for the Fox Broadcasting Co.

Filling WTTG's news director slot is Piers Ackerman, who has been editor-in-chief of *The Herald & Weekly Times*—one of Murdoch's News Corp.-owned newspapers—in Melbourne, Australia, since 1990. ■

SYNDICATION UPDATE

THEN THERE WERE TWO

Paramount Domestic Television and Cox Broadcasting Co. have completed a buyout of Great American Broadcasting's ownership interest in *Entertainment Tonight*, effectively reducing the three-way partnership to two in the longest currently running first-run prime access show in syndication.

According to New York rep source estimates, *ET* is said to gross more than \$100 million annually in cash license and barter advertising revenues, with the buyout of Great American said to be in the \$30 million-\$40 million range.

FIRST LOOK FOR ROSENTHAL

Rysher Entertainment has concluded a "first look," exclusive development deal with independent producer Gay Rosenthal, who is also slated to serve as co-executive producer of Rysher's teen-based talk-magazine strip, *Wavelength*, for fall 1993. Prior to her deal with Rysher, Rosenthal was senior producer of *One on One with John Tesh*, a daytime talk show that NBC canceled toward the end of last season.

'GUESS' WORK

Western International Syndication, DIC Enterprises and jeans

manufacturer Guess? Inc. have formally joined forces for the fall 1993 launch of *Guess Television*, a half-hour news magazine featuring the latest trends in fashion, music, TV, etc. Seven youth-oriented celebrities will be hosting the ensemble strip, including Carrie Hamilton, the daughter of comedienne Carol Burnett.

'FIREFIGHTERS' HEATS UP

Grove Television, a Chicago-based independent syndicator, has issued a 39-episode production order for *Firefighters* from Americom International Entertainment for weekly distribution beginning the week of Jan. 18, 1993. Top market clearances include WNYW(TV) New York, KCBS-TV Los Angeles, WFLD(TV) Chicago, WCAU-TV Philadelphia, WFXT-TV Boston, WRC-TV Washington, D.C., WDIV-TV Detroit and WAGA-TV Atlanta. Grove Television will be offering *Firefighters* on a straight barter basis.

TPS NETS 'WHEEL' VET

Turner Program Services, the syndication arm of Turner Broadcasting System, has signed *Wheel of Fortune* emcee Pat Sajak to host the year-end special *Variety Reviews '92*, which will feature

entertainment news and highlights from 1992 as covered in the pages of the industry magazine. TPS has cleared the special in 80% of the U.S., including 27 of the top 30 markets. TPS is offering the hour-long special on a straight barter basis for a January broadcast window.

BURT AND IRIS

Burt Reynolds, star of MTM Television's *Evening Shade* sitcom, which airs Monday nights on CBS, has committed to serving as host of NATPE's Iris Awards celebration at its annual convention on Thursday, Jan. 28.

SIMON UPPED AT BVPI

With plans to further beef up The Disney Co.'s television production overseas, David Simon has been named senior vice president for Buena Vista Productions International. Based in London, Simon is responsible for worldwide development and production for Buena Vista Productions, which produces regional versions of *Disney Club* programming for broadcast in 32 European territories. BVP operates seven production offices in Europe and the Far East. Simon will also continue as managing director of Buena Vista Productions Ltd.