

Educators Seek Local TV Channel in Testimony at Washington

Three suburban educators appeared last Friday at Federal Communications Commission hearings in Washington, which may play a vital role in the future of educational television in the

greater metropolitan area. Testifying on the needs and interests of six suburban school and community college districts in a television channel serving the children and adults of the western Wayne County area were: Benton Yates, Superintendent of Schools, Livonia; Dr. Eric Bradner, President of Schoolcraft College; and Alex Baskin, Director of Instruction, at Television for the Livonia Board of Education.

According to Baskin, who has been active in Michigan television circles for the past seven years, the Commission is presently considering a new table of ultra-high frequency channel allocations for educational purposes and is also at the threshold of making a decision on a request for six channels sought by the Midwest Program on Airborne Television Instruction (MPATI).

AFFECTS 83 CHANNELS
Engineering studies show that granting six channels to MPATI will negatively affect assignment of 83 channels in Michigan, in five other states, and in Canada. The Commission sought the testimony of the Livonia educators to help it decide whether the airborne channels or locally operated ground-based stations best serve the public interest.

The problem, confusing to many laymen, is in the nature of the UHF television broad-

casting signal, which when transmitted from a high elevation, as in an airplane, makes unusable a number of channels which could be used for local programs over a wide geographic area. Granting six channels to MPATI would wipe out the hopes of scores of colleges, school districts, and cultural institutions have for operating their own stations with locally approved educational and avocational programs.

MPATI broadcasts only during school hours and cannot be heard or seen on the average UHF or VHF television sets. Schools in the Detroit metropolitan area have reportedly experienced severe problems in receiving a clear, dependable, broadcast-quality signal from MPATI's circling aircraft.

EDUCATORS TESTIFY
The position taken by the suburban educators was one which favored giving preference to ground-based stations. Programs from such stations can be received in the home. If such an allocation is granted to a cooperative association of suburban school districts, it will be

capable of providing the western metropolitan area with day and evening cultural and educational programming.

Others who testified in favor of community controlled educational television and against airborne channels which will blanket out local educational stations in the middle west were spokesmen for the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, the Joint Council on Educational Broadcasting, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the American Association of School Administrators, and others representing state, local, and national associations.

Principle advocates for the group seeking the six channels for an extension of the airplane idea were Dr. John E. Ivey, Jr., chairman of the Board of MPATI and a spokesman for Benjamin C. Williams, Superintendent of Schools in Chicago, an area where the airborne signal reportedly comes in strong and clear.

Recently, representatives of Schoolcraft College and five contiguous northwestern metro-

politan area districts met to discuss the possibility of utilizing a UHF television channel to provide in-school and home educational programs for the suburban area.

Attending the exploratory

meeting were Schoolcraft College President Eric Bradner; Clarenceville School Superintendent, Louis E. Schmidt; Northville Superintendent, Russell H. Amemar; Plymouth Superintendent Russel

L. Ishbister; Livonia Superintendent, Benton Yates; Jack Kirsch who represented Garden City Schools; and other curriculum and technical specialists from all six school boards.

According to Dr. Bradner, the group will shortly report its recommendations for establishing a non-profit corporation to explore the potential for a multi-community television service in the suburban area.

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ADVICE FROM his former boss, Senator Everett Dirksen, was given Republican Congressional candidate from this district, Richard Kuhn (left). He made a flying trip to Washington last week to invite Senator Dirksen to speak at the Kuhn for Congress banquet Oct. 22 at 6:30 at Frontier House, 30689 Grand River, Farmington. Prior commitments prevented Dirksen's attending; however, Clare Luce Booth will be the main speaker. For tickets call Livonia, Neal Hall, GA 2-0541; Farmington, Ruth Davenport, 476-7777; Redford Township, Delores Kory, KE 4-3847.

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