

Three cable TV plans examined

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Newspapers owned by Capital Cities include the Oakland Press, The Kansas City Star and the Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, which, like the Oakland Press, has been involved in bitter labor struggles.

United Cable Television Corp.'s headquarters are in Denver, while Nederlander Cable principals have ties to Oakland County through theater owners Harry Nederlander, producer at the Birmingham Theater, Joseph Nederlander, Fisher Theater producer, and James M. Nederlander, who runs the Palace Theater on Broadway in New York. United cable operates 35 cable systems serving 84 communities in the United States.

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Omnicom's parent, Capital Cities, admitted it had had a business license revoked in the case of Cablecom General, Inc. prior to its acquisition. The company admitted the Kansas City Star had lost a lawsuit with independent contractors over newspaper distribution rights. Capital Cities admitted a National Labor Relations violation at the Oakland Press and disclosed a pending case filed in Philadelphia in 1978 against the company and other network affiliates, alleging that the union failed to fulfill its obligation to New Jersey audiences.

United Cable admitted involvement in litigation with Galesburg, Ill. officials over the issue of payment to the

city of franchise fees for premium (optional) services. Company officials explained that the contract with Galesburg was signed before premium services were available and thus excluded premium services. A settlement was reached with the community and United continues to service Galesburg.

In all three proposals cities would receive a percent of the annual gross cable subscriber revenue. That is the maximum payment cities may receive, although some communities request additional services such as requiring TV studios to be built in local schools. The tri-city alliance has waived such extras with the hope that less frills will mean lower cable cost for citizens, Savage said.

Metrovision offers a minimum service option for \$2.25 per month which includes all local TV stations plus a government access channel, a religious station and a Windsor station.

The cheapest package available in the Omnicom offer would cost a customer \$9.25 monthly but it would include the Home Theater Network at no extra cost and WOR, a New York station.

The cheapest service available from United-Nederlander would cost the subscriber \$4.95 per month. Home Box Office (HBO), the most popular pay TV option, costs subscribers \$7.50 with United Cable and Metro Vision and \$9.95 with Omnicom.

IN THEIR PROPOSALS

the companies were required to answer a series of "character qualification questions" which seek to determine how well the company has served the communities in the past, and if they have been found

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IT IS DIFFICULT to compare the rates proposed by the three bidders because, while all three offer base levels of tiers of service, the offerings are different in each.

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