

## Time Warner blames FCC for fiscal troubles

Time Warner Cable last week issued a statement criticizing the FCC and announced some belt tightening that it said was necessitated by the second round of rate regulation.

In last Wednesday's announcement, the second-largest MSO said it would cut expenses by \$100 million in 1994, immediately institute a hiring freeze and "initiate cost-cutting measures in all our divisions."

The capital-spending reduction would still leave the company spending perhaps double the \$353 million it spent in 1993, according to an estimate by Jay Nelson of Brown Brothers Harriman.

The reduction would not affect the company's rollout of fiber to nodes serving roughly 500 homes, according to a Time Warner spokesman. Nor would it affect the company's showcase interactive TV project in Orlando, Fla., or its recently announced contract to purchase digital-capable converter boxes from Scientific-Atlanta.

Asked for examples of what the budget reduction would affect, the spokesman said fewer purchases of cars and trucks and perhaps extensions of cable to less dense neighborhoods.

Nelson and Oppenheimer & Co.'s Jessica Reif both project a roughly \$90 million decline, or about 8%, in the company's cable cash flow in 1994 versus a year ago due to the latest round of rate reregulation. —GF

## Curtain going up on Independent Film Channel

By Rich Brown

**H**ow long does it take to launch a new cable network?

Four months, according to executives at Rainbow Programming Holdings. The cable programming company last week said it will launch a new cable network, The Independent Film Channel, on Sept. 1.

Helping distribution along will be Rainbow's parent company, Cablevision Systems Corp., which has committed to launch the new network in the 2.5 million homes it serves. Cablevision will roll out the channel as part of its "Spectrum" programming tier which currently is available to half of Cablevision's subscribers and eventually will be on all company systems.

IFC programming will include 30-35 premiere feature-length titles per month, along with documentaries, shorts, animation and original productions featuring behind-the-scenes looks at independent filmmaking. The first of these original productions, to be done in conjunction with the network's University Advisory Board, will be a look at the recent black cinema conference at New York University. The network also will have a



Filmmakers Advisory Board, composed of directors Martin Scorsese, Robert Altman, Spike Lee and others.

In preparation for the new network, Rainbow has renewed or extended film agreements with Sony Classics, Fine Line, New Line, Samuel Goldwyn, October Films, Janus, Triton and Castle Hill. Titles on the network will be presented unedited and without commercial interruption.

IFC is the latest addition to a family of Rainbow programming services that includes movie channels Bravo, American Movie Classics and Romance Classics as well as NewSport and News 12 Long Island. Kathleen Dore, senior vice president and general manager of Bravo, will serve as general manager of the new service. ■



'Confederate Widow' got CBS off to a strong start in the May sweeps race.

## 'Widow' wins week for CBS

By David Tobenkin

**C**BS took the household ratings prize in the first week of the May sweeps, aided by its strong Saturday and Sunday night lineups and the strength of miniseries *The Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All*.

For the first eight days of the May sweeps through last Thursday night, CBS averaged a 12.3 rating/20 share, followed by NBC's 11.7/19, ABC's 11.3/19 and Fox's 7.8/13. *Widow's* Sunday installment of 15.7/24 helped CBS best NBC's network debut of the feature film "Cape Fear" (12.4/21) and a strong showing by ABC's TV movie *A Place for Annie* (14.8/23). *Widow's* second installment on Tuesday (13.8/21), however, could not overcome ABC's usual strength in that night. The *29th Annual Country Music Awards* on NBC generated a 13.4/21, dominating the early hours of Tuesday evening.

NBC's hastily made and critically panned *Tonya and Nancy: The Inside Story* generated a disappointing 10.4/19 on Saturday, a distant second to CBS's *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman* (13.7/25) and *Walker, Texas Ranger* (11.4/21). Fox stalwart *The Simpsons* showed unusual strength on Thursday with the show's 100th episode (12.4/21) and a special repeat of the show's first episode afterward (12.7/20). ■