



FCC considering cuts in cable rates

WASHINGTON (AP) — The 57 million American households that receive cable television could get a cut in subscription rates under new rules being considered by the Federal Communications Commission, an FCC official said Tuesday.

The official, who requested anonymity, said it is premature to speculate on the size of possible cuts. But he said the aim of the FCC at its Feb. 10 meeting will be to adopt a new formula that could lower prices for nearly all customers.

New FCC Chairman Reed Hundt hinted at the change in a Jan. 11 speech in Los Angeles.

"Our goal is to set competitive prices where competitive markets do not exist without stifling incentives for further investment and innovation," Hundt said.

The commission source said setting competitive prices for cable companies, which almost always operate as monopolies, inevitably means reducing rates.

Word that the FCC might cut rates soon was welcomed by consumer groups, but cable operators warned any price slashing would endanger development of the "information superhighway."

"They're talking about doing the right thing. It's a real good sign," said Bradley Stillman, legislative counsel of the Consumer Federation of America.

He said the FCC's current

"benchmark" formulas that determined price changes for cable operators "were set far too high." Stillman estimated that if cable companies were forced to compete, rather than being awarded local monopoly franchises, rates would plummet 27 percent.

But the National Cable Television Association said it has studies showing operators already have lost \$2 billion since new congressionally mandated regulations took effect last year, jeopardizing future expansion.

A \$2 billion revenue loss means the start-up of 40 new program networks has been delayed, the association said.

"There is no basis in the record to roll back the rates," said association spokeswoman Torie Clark. "It could have a chilling effect. If they want this information highway built, you've got to give this major player the ability to raise the funds."

The FCC has imposed a freeze on cable TV revenues until Feb. 15 to give local governments time to become federally certified to regulate rates. The companies were allowed to raise rates for some customers but only if overall revenues of each operator did not increase.

Local authorities regulate basic cable rates, packages that usually include local broadcast channels and public access channels.



COURTESY PHOTO
Dick Dale the King of Surf Guitar will bring his pioneering sound to WOW Hall Monday night. Tickets are still available

The King of Surf Guitar plays WOW

By John Fleischli
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

If you like surf music, then you must see the man known as "The King of the Surf Guitar," Dick Dale, Monday at the WOW Hall.

Dale is the author of the single, "Let's Go Trippin'" (1961), one of the first original, documented instances of the style. If you like the song "Pipeline," you'll like many of the songs Dale does. Also, the dudes that back him up complement his unique style.

Popular back in the 1960's, the surf music pioneered by Dale was later popularized by The Beach Boys and other popular bands. The *Encyclopedia of Rock n Roll* says his "twangy, heavily reverbed tone, influenced Beach Boy

Carl Wilson and many other California guitarists."

A new album, *Tribal Thunder*, is Dale's latest release. It features some fast-paced finger-pickin' by this master of the guitar.

Dale plays his psychedelic, jammin' sounds on a Fender Stratocaster. The instrument he uses was built personally for him by Leo Fender.

Recently, Dale's music has been making a comeback. He has been on the Conan O'Brien show and was recently in Eugene. This time, through he'll be playing an all ages show.

Tickets are \$8 for students and \$10 for general admission and are still available. The show will be sponsored by the Cultural Forum.

NIelsen RATINGS

Prime-time ratings as compiled by the A.C. Nielsen Co. for Jan. 17-23.

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|--|---|
| 1. 60 Minutes, CBS | 9. Coach, ABC |
| 2. NFC Championship Post-Game, CBS | 10. Frasier, NBC |
| 3. Home Improvement ABC | 11. PrimeTime Live, ABC |
| 4. Murder, She Wrote, CBS | 12. In the Best of Families: Pt 2 — CBS Tuesday Movie |
| 5. Seinfeld, NBC | 13. Murphy Brown, CBS |
| 6. Grace Under Fire, ABC | 14. Rescue: 911, CBS |
| 7. Incident in a Small Town — CBS Sunday Movie | 15. Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman, CBS |
| 7. Roseanne, ABC | 16. Full House, ABC |
| | 17. Love & War, CBS |
| | 18. Northern Exposure, CBS |
| | 18. 20-20, ABC |
| | 20. NYPD Blue, ABC |

ENTERTAINMENT UPDATE

► NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A federal judge has kicked a band of wannabe Beatles off their magical mystery tour.

The judge ruled Monday that an Akron, Ohio, group once known as "1964 as The Beatles" cannot use the Fab Four's name or likenesses.

The copycats can perform in Beatles' costume, talk with British accents and play Beatles' songs, said U.S. District Judge Robert Echols. But they cannot use props or backdrops with any likeness to Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, George Harrison or the late John Lennon.

Apple Corps, a British organization representing the interests of the Beatles, filed a lawsuit against the group after a 1991 concert in Kingsport.

Apple charged that the group carefully copied the original Beatles in portraying a typical concert between 1963 and 1966, even referring to each other as John, Paul, George

and Ringo on stage.

► LOS ANGELES (AP) — Maximilian Schell said he wasn't harrasing a former entertainment executive when he commented on her breasts. He was complimenting her.

The actor is being sued by Diana Botsford, who claims he made graphic comments about her breasts and asked her to bathe with him.

"After 10,000 years of intense studies of the female bosom — from cavemen to the Renaissance to the decoltes of the 19th century — our society has come to the conclusion that it is an offense to find the female bosom beautiful," Schell said Monday in a statement.

"For all lovers of art, this is a very sad day," he said.

Botsford, former vice president of post-production at Kushner-Locke International, said she rebuffed Schell but the experience last August caused her to quit her job.

The two were working on *Candles in the Dark*, a Family Channel movie Schell starred in and directed.

The lawsuit, filed two weeks ago, seeks unspecified damages.

► SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — There was almost a tattoo beneath the stuffed shirt of Britain's Prince Charles.

The prince paid a visit Tuesday on a homeless youth refuge in Surry Hills, a seedy Sydney suburb. He admired the tattoos of a former drug addict and said he nearly got one himself while serving in the Royal Navy 20 years ago.

"I had a friend who had an eagle on his chest. I really liked it and was thinking of having one, but I never got round to it," Charles said.

The prince was on the first of 12 days in Australia. His visit is regarded as an attempt to improve his popularity here and in Britain.

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