

TV dish owners gathering here

by DON MORBERG
Citizen Staff Reporter

Owners of satellite television signal receiving stations, from companies to camps, will be in Prince George Friday and Saturday for a conference.

The two day conference, which will feature speakers, discussions and displays, is the organizational convention of the Western Canada Satellite Television Association.

The recently-formed association, based in Fort St. John, will serve as a resource centre for communities throughout Western Canada

who operate or plan to operate their own satellite-receiving television systems and assists communities interested in setting up satellite systems.

"Apart from being a resource and information centre, the association's major role will be in dealing with all levels of government in helping to initiate the necessary changes in the Communications and Broadcasting Act," said Dennis Jacobsen, president of the newly-formed group.

Jacobsen said he expects about 150 delegates to the conference and is hoping many of

the Union of B.C. Municipalities delegates will remain behind in Prince George and attend the satellite television conference.

On the agenda for the convention are a number of speakers including Prince George-Peace River MP Frank Oberle, Ralph Hogan of Canadian Satellite Systems, a CRTC representative has been invited to attend, a spokesman for the only company operating a pay-TV network in Canada, KNOW head Walter Hardwicke and Terry Preditis, assistant to Dr. Pat McGeer, B.C. minister of science and technology.

In addition, speakers and demonstrations are scheduled on Canada's Anik C satellite, receiver technology, government plans for the future, Pay TV and other topics.

Most of Saturday will be open discussions on the industry and the association's role in it.

A number of equipment suppliers will have displays at the Inn of The North during the convention.

Jacobsen was one of the organizers of the Fort St. John satellite system, one of the first. He said he does not anticipate any problems when the area's cable system goes into

operation in the next two weeks. That cable system was the subject of lengthy CRTC meetings in Prince George.

"When the cable comes to my house, I'm going to sign up," Jacobsen said.

"They are offering a completely different package," he said. "We have BCTV, a superstation and a movie station. They have U.S. sports networks and other stations. It's a whole different package."

When the cable system goes into operation, it will be the first time a satellite and a cable system serve the same area.

The CRTC estimates there are 700 to 1,000 earth stations operating in Canada, all technically illegal because they are unlicensed. The earth stations are dishes which act as antennas for signals from two U.S. and one Canadian television satellites.

MAYOR REPORTS

Vanderhoof gets superstations

According to its mayor, Vanderhoof is pleased with its new television signals.

A satellite television signal receiving station began broadcasting two U.S. television superstations (independent stations) to homes in the Vanderhoof area Monday. According to Mayor Don Grantham, the signals are good and the residents of the community, 97 km west of Prince George, are receiving clear television for the first time.

"We have always been in a fringe broadcasting area," mayor Grantham said. "I get a good reception at my house and I don't have a proper antenna. Everyone I've talked to is very pleased about it."

Grantham said the community got excited about satellite television when Bulkley-Nechako Cablevision brought its equipment to a trade fair earlier this year in Vanderhoof.

"The reaction then was overwhelming. I haven't talked to anyone with an adverse reaction to it," he said.

The company is receiving and broadcasting the signals of Chicago and San Francisco superstations.

"It's nice to have the television signals," Grantham said.

He said the company proposes to provide the signal free for one month and then have

the cost of the service carried by the community for two more months.

The Kinsmen club will be canvassing in the community to raise the money to pay the cost of the service. The service will be assessed during the three months and, if satisfactory, ways will be investigated for getting the signal in the village permanently, probably

through a regional district special area taxation.

The satellite receiver is a large dish-shaped antenna.

The community also receives CBC and BCTV television signals.



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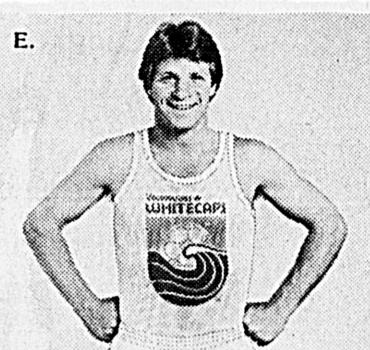
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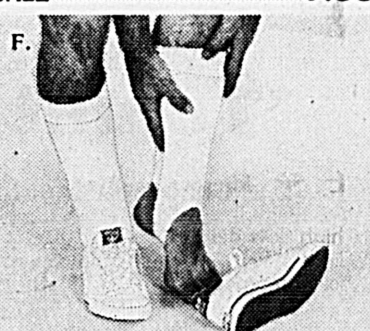
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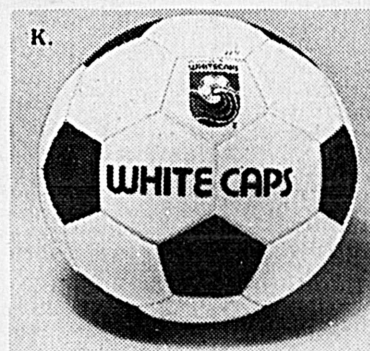
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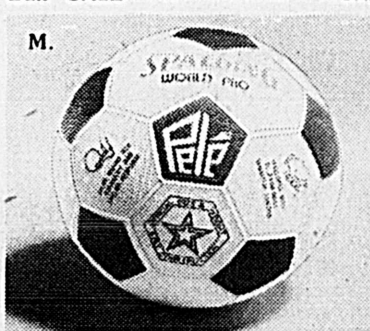
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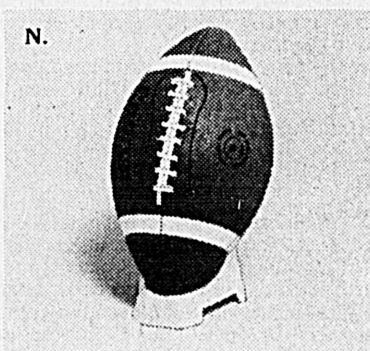
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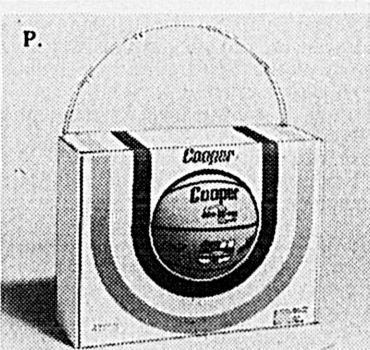
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