



## Major Broadcast Groups Unite to Establish iBlast™, a National Digital Broadband Distribution Network

March 7, 2000 at 12:00 AM EST

iBlast Networks Will Use Dedicated Portion Of Digital Spectrum To Deliver Free And Widely-Accessible Broadband Service Directly To Consumers

iBlast Solves "Last Mile" Problem By Creating Powerful Wireless End-To-End Distribution Platform Capable Of Delivering Full Array Of Digital Media

Founding Partners and Investors Include Tribune, Gannett, Cox, The Washington Post Company, Scripps, Meredith Corporation, Media General, Lee Enterprises, The New York Times Company, McGraw Hill, Smith Broadcasting, And Northwest

LOS ANGELES, CA, March 7, 2000 – iBlast™ Networks, comprised of 12 major television broadcast groups and a proven management, technology, and development team, announced today that it has formed a national network that will use a dedicated portion of the digital spectrum assigned to local television stations to deliver a wide array of high-speed, over-the-air broadband digital content and services direct to consumers. This digital content will include music, video, games, software, and other applications.

iBlast has concluded exclusive agreements with 143 local television stations in 102 markets – covering more than 80% of U.S. homes and all of the nation's top 25 media markets, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco and Atlanta. iBlast will create a branded network that is the farthest-reaching, fastest and most cost-effective distribution system for popular digital content, applications and services. The iBlast service will seamlessly co-exist with the stations' traditional over-the-air and HDTV programming.

1999 Avenue of the Stars · Suite 500 · Los Angeles, California 90067 · 310-551-1900 · 310-551-4068

The 12 major broadcast groups that are investors and founding partners in iBlast are Tribune Company, Gannett, Cox, Post-Newsweek Stations, The E.W. Scripps Company, Meredith Corporation, Media General, Lee Enterprises, The New York Times Company, McGraw Hill, Smith Broadcasting, and Northwest.

iBlast is being run by an experienced management team with a broad background in technology, broadcasting, engineering, and finance. The company's top executives are Michael Lambert, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, Oliver Luckett, co-founder and Chief Technology Officer, and Ken Solomon, President.

With testing of its new wireless digital network underway, iBlast expects to begin service in early 2001. The company has already signed agreements amounting to more than 80% coverage across the nation, and is in discussions with other broadcast outlets to both expand that footprint and provide for additional capacity in its existing areas of operation. At the time of its launch, iBlast expects to have agreements with stations covering in excess of 95% of the country's homes.

Key to the iBlast strategy is deploying its network through multiple stations in each market, which provides for maximum capacity and establishes a common standard for the distribution of data over the air. iBlast currently has agreements with as many as four stations in a single market. In announcing its formation and initial progress, iBlast is inviting all broadcasters to become a part of the company, which has a tremendous first-mover advantage in the realm of delivering high-speed digital content direct to consumers.

Under terms of the agreements with iBlast, the station groups are contributing a portion of their allocated digital spectrum, a cash investment, and a guaranteed marketing commitment in exchange for equity ownership in the company, an ongoing revenue-sharing arrangement, and the ability freely to use iBlast's equipment to distribute local data content to consumers. The station groups are thereby becoming true partners in the development of the iBlast business, promoting the service and participating in what is already a rapidly expanding multi-billion dollar market.

Lambert said: "The formation of iBlast represents a truly extraordinary level of vision and cooperation on the part of this country's broadcast television stations. In today's increasingly digital world, the ability to reach the consumer is still technology's weak link. Through the iBlast network, we have together created a free, wireless platform capable of distributing vast amounts of digital content, in varying forms, directly to consumers with incredible speed and efficiency. Because the value and the power of the network will increase with scale, we will continue to add new broadcast groups and stations that share our commitment to this form of digital delivery."

Dennis FitzSimons, President, Tribune Broadcasting, said: "We are excited to be one of the founding partners of iBlast, a company that is going to revolutionize the way digital content is delivered to consumers in the U.S. The formation of iBlast underscores broadcasters' commitment to use the digital spectrum to deliver both high-definition pictures and additional digital content to their communities of license."

Dan Ehrman, Vice President, Planning and Development of Gannett said: "In joining together with this group of forward-thinking broadcasters to create this new company, we will maximize the value of the digital spectrum and complement the delivery of traditional television programming in new digital formats with a full range of digital content."

Andy Fisher, Executive Vice President of Television for Cox Broadcasting, said: "While HDTV will remain one of the primary uses for our digital spectrum, the introduction of iBlast represents an entirely new and valuable use of this important asset – the transmission of the full range of digital content, application and services delivered free to consumers, in the convenience of their homes or offices."

Alan Frank, President of Post-Newsweek Stations, said: "iBlast was created by broadcasters and will allow us to pool our resources to create a unique

nationwide digital network with specialized local services. iBlast represents an immediate opportunity to both realize the promise of the digital spectrum for consumers, and to generate additional revenue from the content providers who will use the iBlast network to deliver content and applications far more efficiently than is possible today."

### **Immediate Demand for Broadband**

The exploding demand for software, video, music, games, and information on the part of the ever-expanding base of Internet users has created an immediate need for a scalable, cost-effective, ubiquitous, and fast distribution solution.

Even according to the most aggressive industry projections, only one in six Internet users in the U.S. will have the ability to purchase broadband access by 2002. iBlast will provide a free high-speed experience to virtually all Internet users precisely when the demand for high-quality content distribution to the home is increasing rapidly.

By driving the ubiquitous distribution of low-cost, consumer-friendly receiving antennas, and by Internet Protocol (IP)-enabling the existing broadcast infrastructure, iBlast intends to bridge the "broadband divide" between all content and service providers and the customers upon whom their businesses depend. The iBlast broadcast network is capable of delivering data at guaranteed speeds that are more than five times faster than DSL or cable modem connections, and up to 200 times faster than upgraded 56K modems.

Luckett said: "By offering fundamentally improved economics, unsurpassed end-to-end quality of service, speed and an IP-based, open standards approach, iBlast opens the flood gates for rich, broadband media and services to reach the consumer directly, through the installed base of personal computers and – in the future – a new world of emerging Internet appliances.

Solomon said: "The magic of iBlast is that it marries two distinct and powerful worlds by building the long anticipated bridge between the traditional and new media establishments. iBlast capitalizes on the inherent strengths of both, placing broadcasters – who are the best marketers and distributors of mass media – in partnership with existing and emerging companies that are creating virtually limitless applications and content. The iBlast service will be the perfect complement to the existing Internet, relieving the burden placed upon the system by the growing demand for large, live, streaming or popular content. This is the pipe everyone has been waiting for."

### **An Experienced Leadership Team**

Lambert has more than 25 years of experience in the television industry. He currently owns and operates a broadcast station group and is general partner of Partner Stations Network, the broadcaster-owned programming alliance. He is also the former President, Domestic Television for Fox and has held senior level executive positions at HBO and Viacom.

Luckett, co-founder and Chief Technology Officer, has held key network development positions at several leading technology and communications companies. He was Senior Vice President, Network Affiliates for Digital Entertainment Network, Senior IP Services Architect for Qwest Communications and Vice President of Network Development for Anschutz Digital Media.

Solomon is a veteran of television distribution and production. He has served as President of Universal Studios and Studios USA Television, and co-head of DreamWorks Television. He was also Executive Vice President of Network Distribution for NewsCorp.'s Fox Broadcast Network and 20th Television, and has held senior positions with both Disney and Paramount's TV units.

### **About iBlast Networks**

Comprised of 12 major television broadcast groups and a proven management and development team, iBlast Networks has formed a broadband wireless network capable of delivering a wide array of digital content directly to the consumer. Using a dedicated portion of the digital spectrum assigned to local television stations, iBlast transmits movies, music, software and other data content quickly and efficiently into a user's personal computer and other receiving devices. The company currently covers more than 80% of the U.S. through its exclusive agreements with 12 of the nation's major television broadcast groups, which collectively own 143 stations in 102 markets, including all of the nation's top 25 media markets. The 12 major broadcast groups that are investors and the founding partners in iBlast are Tribune Company (NYSE: TRB), Gannett (NYSE: GC), Cox, The Washington Post Company (NYSE: WPO), The E.W. Scripps Company (NYSE: SSP), Meredith Corporation (NYSE: MDP), Media General (NYSE: MEG/A), Lee Enterprises (NYSE: LEE), The New York Times Company (NYSE: NYT), McGraw Hill (NYSE: MHP), Smith Broadcasting, and Northwest.

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, said: "We are excited to be one of the founding partners of iBlast, a company that is going to revolutionize the way digital content is delivered to consumers in the U.S. The formation of iBlast underscores broadcasters' commitment to use the digital spectrum to deliver both high-definition pictures and additional digital content to their communities of license."

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**James M. Hart, Senior Vice President/Television for the E.W. Scripps Company**

, said: "After weighing several options, we've decided that iBlast provides the Scripps television station group one of the best opportunities to unlock the value of its newly allocated digital television spectrum. Further, our partnership and investment with iBlast positions our stations to take advantage of emerging interactive media technologies."

**John Loughlin, President of Meredith Corporation**

, said: "iBlast is pioneering the way for leveraging local broadcasters' digital spectrum with the promise of accessibility, speed and capacity benefiting consumers and content providers alike. Meredith's investment in iBlast fits perfectly with our strategy of reinvigorating and reinventing local broadcast television for the digital age."

**Jim Zimmerman, President of Media General's Broadcast Group**

, said: "We are thrilled to be one of the founding partners and investors in iBlast, a company that is redefining the role of broadcasters in this country in a meaningful and valuable way. Not since the dawning days of television have broadcasters had the ability to have such a dramatic effect on the way popular content is delivered to consumers. We expect great things from this partnership, for our customers and our respective businesses."

**Colleen Brown, President of Lee Broadcasting**

, said: "The iBlast network will create a powerful partnership among the nation's premier television broadcast groups to deliver a breathtaking array of content in a way that has never been possible before. The Lee stations are excited to be in such good company creating such great new value for our customers."

**Elden A. Hale Jr., Executive Vice President, New York Times Company Broadcast Group,**

said: "The ability to transmit wireless Internet and other digital data, in an open architecture model, adds new value to our local stations in their communities. We are pleased to be one of the founders of iBlast, a broadcaster-owned company that allows us to deliver high-quality HDTV programming and allow our communities to receive high speed video, games or other data without being tied to wires or cables."

**Ed Quinn, President McGraw-Hill Broadcasting Co.**

, said: "If you are known for the company you keep, the founding partners of iBlast are all in great company. Together we have developed a business plan that allows broadcast stations to fully realize the value of their digital spectrum, while enhancing service to their local communities. iBlast represents an unprecedented effort on the part of broadcasters to both serve the community and to reposition their businesses in the digital age."

**Bob Smith, President of Smith Broadcasting Group, Inc.**

, said: "iBlast represents an extraordinary opportunity for traditional media to take a leading role in the digital revolution. The ability to brand and market these services through the proven and inherent strength of our nation's broadcasters represents an enormous advantage..

**Brian Brady, President/CEO of Northwest Broadcasting, Inc.**

, said: "iBlast provides the opportunity for local broadcasters to utilize their digital spectrum to serve our local communities beyond broadcasting entertainment programming. iBlast's robust delivery system will propel local broadcasting into the new millennium by enabling our communities to receive a rich array of digital content. Northwest Broadcasting is proud to join with this distinguished group of broadcasters who together are breaking the rules of traditional thinking."

[Click here](#) for an excel spreadsheet of station lists.

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Contacts: Ken Solomon, iBlast Networks  
(310) 551-4081  
Jim Maiella, Robinson Lerer & Montgomery  
(212) 484-7485