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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Cable Television: Handbook and Forms

Ira C. Stein

Shepard's/McGraw-Hill

P.O. Box 1235

Colorado Springs, CO 80901

1 Vol. Looseleaf. 1985

It began as a means of improving television reception in fringe areas. Towns far removed from broadcasting stations, and too small to afford relay towers of their own, could erect a community antenna to receive otherwise faint television signals and transmit them, by cable, to homes in the immediate area.

The ability of broadcasters to send program signals over the airwaves has, of course, increased enormously since cable television first made its appearance in the late 1940's. Cable technology has also improved however, and, to the surprise of some, cable TV has not been rendered obsolete. On the contrary, the producers of cable television have undertaken fierce competition with the traditional broadcast media.

The political, economic and legal problems engendered by competition in this fascinating industry are important and complex. Lawyers fortunate enough to have a piece of the action are likely to remain in the forefront of the profession for many years to come.

Ira Stein's excellent Handbook will not provide the average attorney with clients in the TV business. Nevertheless, Cable Television is well worth the attention of all scholarly attorneys who are excited by rapid developments at the cutting edge of law and technology.

Cable Television is accessible to the intelligent reader. It is intended for industry laymen as well as lawyers. It is written in an easy, almost conversational style. It is replete with humorous cartoons. While the book's intended audience will find the text learned and detailed, and the forms current and useful, the rest of us will be rewarded with a fascinating glimpse into the world of high technology.

The book is concerned with two aspects of cable TV law: regulation and operations. The regulatory function includes such matters as copyright law and control by the

Federal Communications Commission. While in a state of eclipse, the regulatory function of the Federal government is likely to resume increasing importance in the decades to come.

The operational aspect of cable television, to which a large part of the book is devoted, includes the purchase and sale of cable TV systems, financing, construction, utility pole agreements, advertising and programming. It touches on matters ranging from lease law to anti-trust.

Cable Television features a detailed table of contents and the full text of applicable regulations. The looseleaf format is designed to permit updating.

Lawyers who practice communications law will want to own this book. Others should consider asking their local law library to acquire a copy. Cable Television is well worth the effort.

NEPA Law and Litigation
Daniel R. Mandelker
Callaghan & Company
3201 Old Glenview Road
Wilmette, Illinois 60091
1 Vol. Looseleaf. 1984

Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332) requires "all agencies of the Federal Government" to "include in every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, a detailed statement by the responsible official on the environmental impact of the proposed action." The same section outlines the contents of environmental impact statements and specifies the manner of their preparation. The remainder of the relatively brief statute creates a council on Environmental Quality and requires the President to transmit to Congress an annual Environmental Quality Report. Thus, the NEPA lies at the heart of the Federal government's effort to monitor the effect of its own actions on the national environment. */

It is not the purpose of this brief review to expand upon the substantive and procedural law affecting environmental quality. Daniel R. Mandelker, Stamper Professor of Law at Washington University and one of the nation's leading experts in the field, has done so brilliantly, in a short volume which makes most other commentary superfluous. Mandelker's lucid compendium of the statutes, regulations and cases is certain to become the authoritative starting point for attorneys engaged in litigation under NEPA and related acts. The looseleaf format of the book (designed to facilitate updating) and the inclusion of the full text of the statute and regulations are particularly valuable features. This reviewer's only reservations are directed at the index, which is rather sparse, and, perhaps, at the author's use of the NEPA (rather than the broader topic of environmental regulation and reporting) as the central focus of the book. Nevertheless, attorneys engaged in environmental litigation will find this work invaluable.

*/ Other important legislation includes the Environmental Quality Improvement Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. 4371 et seq.), the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7609) and the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1371).