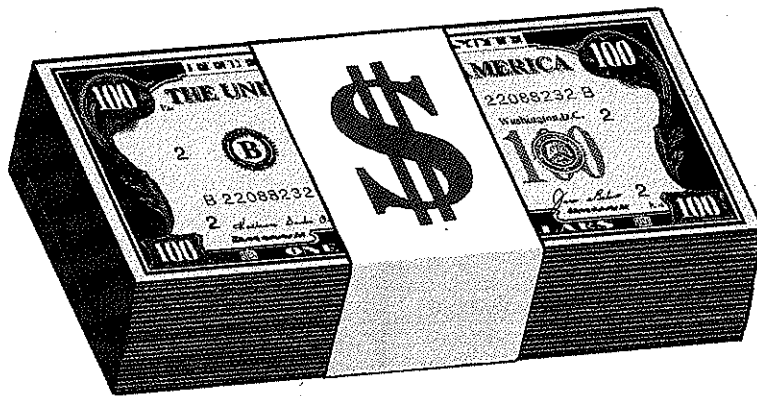


By Bob Papper and Andrew Sharma

SALARIES GOING UP

The salary stagnation of a year or two ago appears to be over, and paychecks are moving steadily, if cautiously, up. Most news directors in television tell of recent or planned expansion. Like TV salaries, radio news salaries averaged at

least a 4 percent jump, although some radio news directors worry about cutbacks. In a new development, many salaries of TV news managers in major markets are linked to news department profitability, with as much as half a news director's salary tied to profit margin incentives.



Two years ago, people were down, dejected. Now, things are back on track, salaries are moving upward, people are smiling again." Talent agent Alfred Geller's assessment of 1994 may be a little rosier than some, but calls we made across the country, in conjunction with the RTNDF/Ball State University Survey, certainly picked up an overall sense of optimism. The salary cutbacks of a year or two ago appear to be over, and paychecks are moving steadily, if cautiously, up.

"I see a tremendous demand for above average talent," said talent agent Conrad Shadlen. "Standouts—whether they're anchors, reporters, or weather and sports talent—there are substantial increases in demand and more money being paid and offered."

It's especially true for people in markets directly or indirectly affected by the affiliation changes.

About the Survey:

The RTNDF/Ball State University Survey was mailed to 1,164 television stations and a random sample of 942 radio stations. The survey was sent out in December 1994, with a return rate of 28.2 percent in television and 16.7 percent in radio.

"You hear this giant sucking sound—to paraphrase a political candidate," according to Don Fitzpatrick, of Don Fitzpatrick Associates' talent placement. "And that sucking sound is because of all these markets like Atlanta and Phoenix sucking up talent from smaller markets."

"In Phoenix, for example," said Fitzpatrick, "in a typical June, there may be six or seven openings for all the stations put together. In June 1994, there were openings for 140 people."

Talent agent Sherlee Barish said she saw salary increases of 3, 4 or 5 percent last year, nationwide. That's what we heard from most news directors—both television and radio.

Dave Roberts, news director at WBAL-TV in Baltimore (market 23), said their overall raises were in the four to five percent level. But, like most news directors, he said merit made the difference. "If they didn't perform, they didn't get any (raise), according to Roberts. "If they were strong performers, they got more."

That was a pretty consistent theme. The salary pool increased 4 to 5 percent, almost everyone went up, but performance determined how much.

Our survey found clear-cut salary correlations with market size and overall staff size, but the range of pay in the industry—even within markets and stations—can be enormous. Take a look not only at the av-

erage pay, but the pay range.

"The law of supply and demand has never been repealed," according to Conrad Shadlen. "If you have good talent, stations have always paid for it—austerity or not."

NEWS DIRECTORS

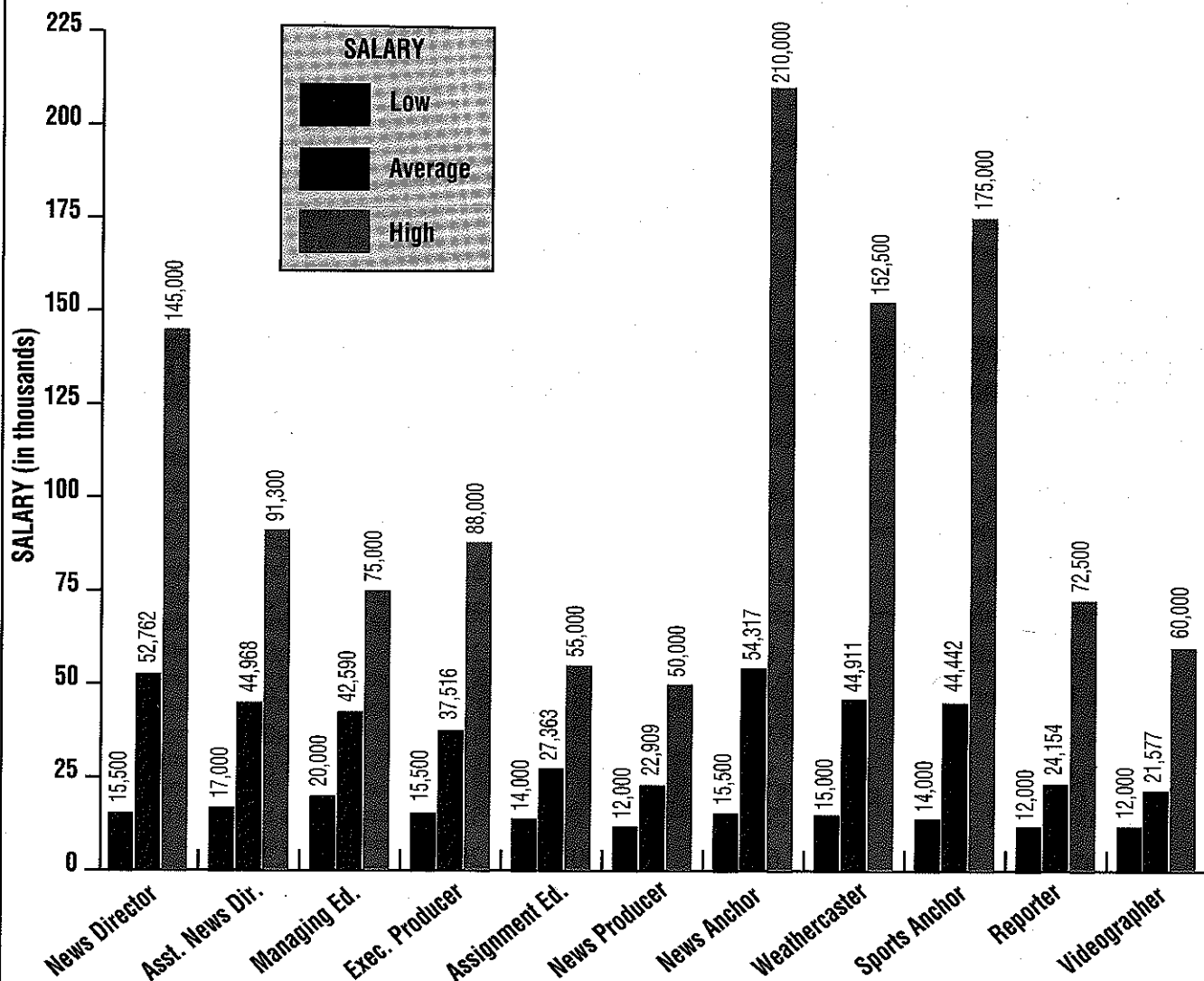
"If you're paying your anchors 400 grand, it's hard to pay the bosses 90," according to Keitha Mashaw, who places news directors for Don Fitzpatrick. "The salary for news directors at the biggest shops: a quarter of a million dollars. That's salary plus bonus and incentive. That's the top end," says Mashaw—meaning markets 1 through 5. Mashaw says that more and more of those salaries are linked to news department profitability, with as much as half a news director's salary tied to profit margin incentives.

In Minneapolis-St. Paul (market 14), WCCO-TV news director Ted Canova says news directors there make between \$110,000 and \$150,000.

But they don't do badly in much smaller markets, either. Steve MacDonald, news director at KTVA in Anchorage, Alaska (market 156), says they're in the high 30s to low 50's. But, as with many smaller markets, news directors are also anchors.

About \$65,000 to \$70,000 is what a news director would likely get in Cedar Rapids, Iowa (market 84), according to Bob Smith, news director at KCRG-TV.

High, Low and Average Salaries for Television Newspeople



In Knoxville, Tennessee (market 63), news director Jim Swinehart at WBIR-TV says news directors make \$50,000 and up. And, yes, "It could be up quite a bit."

Jim Loy, who was the news director at KRQE TV in Albuquerque, New Mexico (market 49), says news directors there make between \$75,000 to \$80,000. Loy is now news director at WOOD-TV in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

News director Chuck Samuels, at WKBW-TV in Buffalo, New York (market 36), pegs the salaries of news directors

there between \$80,000 and \$100,000.

ASSIGNMENT EDITORS & PRODUCERS

Salaries for these two positions were close in both the survey and our phone sample group. Producers were slightly higher with our sample group; assignment editors were slightly higher in the survey.

Our survey showed producers in the smallest markets making in the high teens, but that wasn't the case with any of

the news directors we spoke with. Even in the smallest market, Anchorage, producers were making in the \$20,000's and up. The same was true for assignment editors.

"Producers are the biggest hiring surge," according to Keitha Mashaw, "and the hardest to fill. We see more and more producers under contract."

Dave Roberts at WBAL-TV in Baltimore said their biggest change in pay involved upgrading entry-level positions: production assistants. They used to hire
(continued on page 16)

AVERAGE TELEVISION NEWS SALARIES BY MARKET SIZE

	ADI 1-25	ADI 26-50	ADI 51-100	ADI 100-150	ADI 151+
News Director	\$79,144	\$78,904	\$54,410	\$41,225	\$37,954
Asst. News Director	71,971	55,285	40,428	35,136	24,666
Managing Editor	59,714	41,700	—	—	—
Executive Producer	58,923	46,925	32,753	27,306	26,636
Assignment Editor	39,483	30,978	26,955	24,408	21,700
News Producer	34,156	29,826	22,073	19,056	17,618
News Anchor	110,411	85,333	53,324	34,257	27,030
Weathercaster	105,750	71,136	44,094	33,374	26,066
Sports Anchor	88,038	64,521	40,256	28,405	23,522
Reporter	45,404	33,450	22,959	18,112	16,968
Videographer	35,435	26,340	20,625	17,248	16,226

AVERAGE TELEVISION NEWS SALARIES BY STAFF SIZE

	FT 51+	FT 31-50	FT 21-30	FT 11-20	FT1-10
News Director	\$96,468	\$69,985	\$50,536	\$38,459	\$25,853
Asst. News Director	69,118	48,973	33,458	27,181	23,425
Managing Editor	56,944	42,800	26,100	—	—
Executive Producer	55,583	41,706	29,518	24,500	24,433
Assignment Editor	36,444	31,708	25,296	21,966	19,777
News Producer	35,411	26,142	20,483	17,686	20,966
News Anchor	125,777	76,442	43,771	31,274	22,743
Weathercaster	101,281	56,777	37,984	27,985	18,535
Sports Anchor	91,562	56,611	33,366	24,881	21,116
Reporter	47,694	29,000	20,488	17,345	18,902
Videographer	36,138	24,442	18,005	17,419	17,460

(continued from page 15)

relatively inexperienced people at about \$17,000, Roberts said. Now they want at least two to three years' experience in a production role—and they're paying in the low to mid-20s to get it. "In an environment of fewer people, we need the best people possible in every position in order to make a real impact," according to Roberts.

ANCHORS

Half our phone sample group declined comment on the upper end of anchors in their market. Ron Fineman, the news director at KERO-TV in Bakersfield, California (market #129), is sure there are at

least three anchors there making more than \$60,000. Outside of Anchorage, that may be the lowest of the group.

Dennis Smith at WLBT-TV in Jackson, Mississippi, reports that anchors make \$30,000 "and up and up and up." Bob Smith at KCRG-TV in Cedar Rapids says they make \$50,000+—and there are rumors up into six figures. Jim Swinehart at WBIR-TV in Knoxville, Tennessee, reports \$60,000 and up. Jim Loy at KRQE TV in Albuquerque says half the main anchors there are in six figures, with a general range of \$75,000 to \$150,000. Chuck Samuels at WKBW-TV says main anchors in Buffalo make between \$100,000 to

\$200,000 a year. And you can double that for Minneapolis-St. Paul, where Ted Canova at WCCO-TV says most of the main anchors make \$200,000 to \$400,000 each year. In New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, main anchors get "a half million to \$1.4 million, depending on years in the market and name value," according to Don Fitzpatrick.

REPORTERS

Canova said finding a really good reporter is the toughest challenge. "There's a lot of average out there," Canova says. "It's easy to find that, there's a ton of it. But a superior reporter—very few."

It's not as if Minneapolis-St. Paul, like other major markets, isn't willing to pay. "Based on experience, in this market," says Canova, "reporters make from \$35,000 to over \$100,000—with the average about \$60,000 to \$90,000."

That's higher than you'll find listed in the salary table—and reflects the fact that comparatively few major market news directors filled in the salary portion of the RTNDF/Ball State University Survey, and fewer still listed the high-end reporters or anchors.

Reporter salaries in most of our phone sample markets started around the low to mid 20s: Bakersfield, Cedar Rapids, Anchorage, Albuquerque. Jackson, Mississippi, was a bit lower and Buffalo, New York, a bit higher. Almost all of those newsrooms have at least some of their reporters making in the 30s, some higher.

In many cases, especially in smaller markets and at the lower end of the pay scale, reporters also make substantial overtime not reflected in the survey data.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Photographers in most of our sample markets started in the high teens: Bakersfield, Cedar Rapids, Knoxville, Jackson. They started a touch higher, around \$20,000, in Anchorage, and in the low 20s in Albuquerque and Buffalo. Minneapolis-St. Paul averages in the mid 30s to mid 40s.

All these salaries (and the figures in the table) are deceptively low. At most of these stations, photographers make lots of money in overtime, frequently 20 to 25 percent of their total pay. So add at least \$3,000 to \$5,000 to the pay, and in some cases overtime alone could get over \$10,000 a year. KRQETV in Albuquerque is an exception, where Jim Loy switched his photographers to a four-day week. He said he had to add a photographer, but it's cut down on overtime.

RADIO

Across a variety of market sizes and geography, salaries at our sample radio stations were remarkably compressed—although almost all said 1994 brought raises of around 4 percent.

Morgan Holm, news director at Oregon Public Radio in Portland, says his reporters start around \$18,000—although under a new, revised salary structure, experienced reporters will be able to make nearly \$30,000. That's a much higher top end

(continued on page 18)

This insert will have you feeling better right away.

It's Good Living, a tri-weekly insert from Syndicated Segments, and though it's intended to help your viewers lead better, more rewarding lives, it also makes news directors feel better about ratings and viewer loyalty. So if you've been looking for a segment that'll make you feel perkier in record time, give us a call. It's already working for WAGA-TV in Atlanta, KXAN-TV in Austin and 13 other major markets.

For more information, call Scott Slaughter at Syndicated Segments. (512) 322-3280.



"...Interesting to the viewer...and it has legs!"
Loren Tobia KMTV, Omaha, Nebraska

WORKPLACE UPDATE



gives you

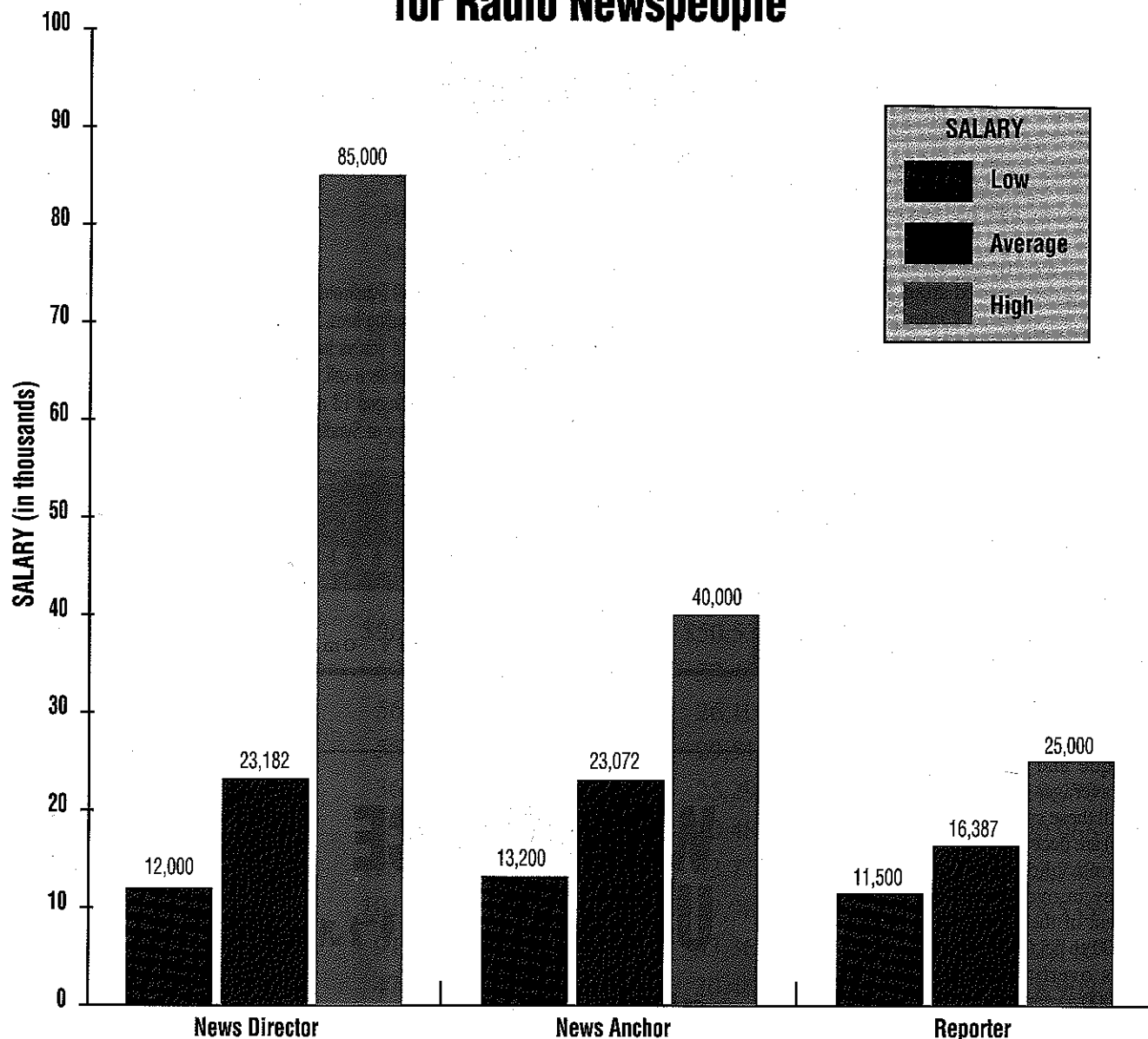
News About Work That Works For You!

Workplace Update is a free, fact-filled monthly newsletter covering the latest workplace trends and issues that affect your viewing audience.

Reserve your copy by calling the
Labor Institute of Public Affairs
at 202-637-5334 or 1-800-242-8646.



High, Low and Average Salaries for Radio Newspeople



(continued from page 17)

than most of the others, but the starting pay is pretty much exactly what Bill McClement pays at WWNCAM (country) and WKSF FM (country) in Asheville. And it's a hair under what Jeff O'Dell pays. O'Dell is news director at KFFX FM (rock), KVOE AM (adult contemporary), and KVOE FM (country) in Emporia, Kansas. "Over \$20,000," he says. "Just barely." Of course, that's about the pay a radio news director in Emporia makes, too.

Mark Mauney, the sales manager at KCON AM (adult contemporary) in Conway, Arkansas, says the news director there makes in the low 20s. Everyone at

the station has a role in news, according to Mauney. "The sports director handles some beats, the general manager handles some beats, and I (Mauney) handle business news and public service."

In Baton Rouge, news director Kevin Meeks at WGGZ FM (oldies) says a typical news director makes about \$25,000.

Bill Rossi, news director at WGIR AM (news/talk) and FM (rock) in Manchester, New Hampshire, says his average newscaster (he has a staff of eight, including three in sports) makes about \$25,000, with a news director making about \$30,000.

Holm at Oregon Public Radio says he's in roughly the low 30s, but he figures the

average in the market is closer to \$40,000.

That's a little less than Joanne Rice makes as news director and morning show co-host at WLVE FM, Miami, Florida. She's the whole news department at the jazz and light-rock station. Like many morning newspeople, Rice straddles a line between news and entertainment, but, she says, "They put me in the news category (for salary) because they make less. That's frustrating." Rice says she saw about a 4 percent raise in 1994. "You know what they say here, they pay us in sunshine. But you can't take that to the bank."

The numbers make it sound like television and radio had similar financial years

in 1994, but that's not the way it sounded one on one with news directors.

Most news directors in television talked of recent or planned expansion; most radio news directors talked about hanging on or planned cutbacks. Even if they didn't personally experience a cutback, they saw it in the market.

Kevin Meeks at WGGZ FM in Baton Rouge, figures that the way things are going, he better "consider a change of career, maybe government PR or something like that." He says he can point out five or six people in Baton Rouge who have moved recently from media to government.

Dick Jacobson, news director at KSOP AM-FM (country) in Salt Lake City, remembers that when he started in 1979, they had two full-timers and an occasional part-timer doing 24 newscasts a day. Now he's the entire news department, doing six newscasts a day. He's been there long enough to feel a sense of security, but he also notes that if the station is sold or changes management, "all that could change." Would he stay in the market? "There aren't many radio news jobs available here. I'd look elsewhere, I guess. After 16 years, I don't know what else I'd do."

Bill McClement just went through an ownership change at WWNC AM in Asheville. In his case, it meant the first raise he (or any of the staff) had seen in the last four years. "We can maintain what we do," McClement says, "crossing our fingers, hanging on. But when we offer jobs to people, they laugh at the salary. But we started for a lot less."

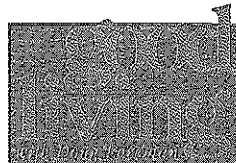
Jeff O'Dell in Emporia, Kansas, was more upbeat, seeing news as a critical part of radio programming that differentiates one station from the next. But he seemed to be that lone voice in the wilderness.

Bill Rossi, news director at WGIRAM-FM in Manchester, says he's glad his kids didn't go into radio. "I would not come into this business today if I were a kid—with pay at poverty level. I'm 62, I'm going to retire and move to Florida." ■

Bob Papper is associate professor of telecommunications at Ball State University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news. Andrew Sharma, Ph.D., is assistant professor of Telecommunications at Ball State University and has extensive industry and research experience. This research was supported by the Department of Telecommunications at Ball State University and the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation.

It'll make you feel great. Even if you never watch it.

Good Living is a tri-weekly insert from Syndicated Segments that'll help your viewers understand wellness and live better. But the viewer loyalty it produces will have *you* feeling great, even if you never watch a single segment. It's working for WEEK-TV in Peoria, KMOL-TV in San Antonio as well as 13 other major markets. Get it working for you, and start feeling better right away. For more information, call Scott Slaughter at Syndicated Segments. (512) 322-3280.



"...Doug Foreman (Good Living's host) is a down-to-earth guy who gives common sense advise..."

Bud McEntee WAGA-TV, Atlanta

The RIAS Berlin Commission & the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation

☞ *Announce* ☞

the 1995 \$10,000 Radio and Television Awards &
Production Grants for Reporting on German/American Issues

☞ *Awards: Deadline November 1, 1995.*

Eligible stories must have aired between 9/1/94-10/31/95 and dealt with any aspect of German/American relationships in politics, economics, social issues, cultural developments or current events.

☞ *Production Grants: Proposals accepted on an ongoing basis.* Financial support is available for long-form programming dealing with past, present or future aspects of the German/American relationship.

For Application Information, contact:

Pat Seaman, Program Coordinator, (301) 977-7210
or RTNDF, German/American Exchange Program, (202) 659-6510.