

# Former CNN exec to launch California news channel

By JENNIE L. PHIPPS

Longtime CNN veteran Ed Turner is about to launch a mini-version in California.

The new venture, California News Service—a 24-hour cable news channel based in Sacramento—won't have any business connection with CNN, but Mr. Turner, 65, hopes the philosophy and approach will be similar.

Mr. Turner (no relation to Ted Turner) said his new operation will focus on government and politics, including covering

legislative sessions, governor's news conferences and similar events. "Not a single TV station in California has a bureau in Sacramento," said Mr. Turner, who insists this is a niche waiting to be filled.

Besides government, he intends to cover local and state business and any other topic with substance that has implications for California. He's going to have a bureau in Washington and offer reports from the Pacific Rim and Latin America.

"I call what we're going to do 'news for grown-ups,' with a lot of analysis and other aspects of news that aren't touched

by local TV," Mr. Turner said.

The city of Sacramento is leasing CNS an empty building across the street from the state Capitol that was once a Woolworth's dime store, and CNS is installing a state-of-the-art digital facility. Potentially, the network will be able to telecast 16 signals. Initially, Mr. Turner wants to start with zoned coverage in Northern, Southern and Central California. He intends to simulcast in Spanish. There also will be a radio service and a specialty hotel service reaching California's 400,000 hotel rooms.

Mr. Turner anticipates the operation will require \$45 million to get up and running, although he's convinced that advertising will provide revenues from the first day. Financing for the venture hasn't been solidified, but Mr. Turner said he expects to be able to make an announcement by the end of the year. The challenge, he said, is explaining to potential investors why the money must be available all at once.

"Investors would like to provide it in bursts of \$5 [million] or \$10 million, but the start-up is what's really expensive," he said.

CNS hopes to hire 100 people initially—many of them former CNN executives, including CNS Chairman Ken Chamberlain, a former CNN bureau chief. Ted Kavanau, who helped launch CNN's Headline News, will head the CNS news operation. Business operations will be run by Bill Shaw, a business executive with Turner Broadcasting.

Mr. Turner helped found CNN in 1980. He left CNN a year ago.#