

MARCH 31 LAST DAY.

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Thursday

# Atlanta's Channel 36 Going Off Air

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Atlanta Journal TV-Radio Editor

Atlanta's WATL, Channel 36, is in its final week of broadcasting.

Frank Minner Jr., president of the parent U.S. Communications Corp., said in Atlanta Wednesday that lack of revenue had forced the corporation

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to take the station and one other, San Francisco's KEMO-TV, off the air effective at the close of the day on March 31.

The moves, however, may turn out to be temporary ones, Minner added, as USC has asked the Federal Communications Commission to allow his company to retain the stations' licenses, with the hopes of returning to operation in early fall. The FCC has granted such requests by stations in the past.

WATL has been broadcasting since August 1969 from its Briarcliff Road station, and KEMO had operated since April 1968.

MINNER SAID in his announcement that advertising revenues "have not kept pace with projections. We need not

restate the economic conditions in our industry which contributed to this problem. What is clear to us is that UHF was hurt the most and the earliest.

"WATL could have stayed on the air," Minner continued, "by drastic reductions in the broadcast day, but USC management felt that such approaches were not desirable."

Advertisers have taken a "wait-and-see" attitude on UHF, he continued, while the FCC "struggles to formulate CATV (cable television) regulations."

THE ATLANTA station had tried a number of methods to gain viewers, including a Humphrey Bogart film festival, picking up syndicated shows canceled on the major

networks, and the telecasts of "Now Explosion," a music show aimed at the younger generation.

Also, the station gained substantially this past winter by airing a series of Georgia Tech "away" basketball games, and had scored by telecasting two movies each evening which were hits from recent years.

Unfortunately, all of these maneuvers fell short of obtaining the necessary revenue for the station to remain on the air.

Minner said that a number of "key employes" from the two affected stations would be absorbed by USC stations in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. "We are most regretful that we cannot retain everyone," Minner concluded.

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