



DTV News & Information

From The PBS DTV Transition Team

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WELCOME TO THE PBS DTV NEWS & INFORMATION NEWSLETTER, A WEEKLY DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION, INTERESTING NEWS, AND HELPFUL IDEAS FOR SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT THE DTV TRANSITION.

Individual Highlights:

- Industry News 1
- Helpful Links 2
- What's New 3
- Station Site
- Idea of the Month 4

2.5 Million ...



Estimated shortfall of converter boxes given current supply and anticipated demand.

-NTIA

Industry News

Headlines and Articles

TECH BITS: Some Stations Will Reach Fewer Viewers With Digital

Associated Press

Nearly a fifth of the nation's full-power television stations will no longer reach at least 2 percent of viewers now covered by their existing analog signals after they switch to digital broadcasts in February, federal regulators say.

The Federal Communications Commission report comes amid mounting concerns that some consumers who rely on analog-only television sets could lose some or all over-the-air broadcast channels following the Feb. 17 digital transition even if they have

purchased and hooked up digital converter boxes.

That's because many television stations will shift their broadcast footprints with the mandatory transition by changing transmitter locations, antenna patterns or power levels. The FCC is not requiring television stations to replicate their analog coverage.

Some viewers could also lose signals because of what's known as the digital "cliff effect." Unlike analog signals, digital broadcasts either come in clear or not at all, meaning that those on the fringes of analog coverage areas will lose that reception

entirely after the transition. Currently, they can still get fuzzy analog signals.

Some viewers may therefore need more powerful antennas-in addition to converter boxes-to continue receiving certain channels.

In a report released late Tuesday, the FCC said 319 of the nation's 1,749 full-power television stations, or 18 percent, will have a digital signal that reaches at least 2 percent fewer viewers than their current analog broadcasts.

Those numbers do not reflect viewers...[more.](#)



Helpful links:

- PBS
www.pbs.org/digitaltv/
- Affinity Group Coalition (AGC)
<http://www.ptv-agc.org/>
- National Telecommunications and Information Administration
<http://www.ntia.doc.gov>
- Digital Television Transition Coalition
<http://dtvtransition.org/>
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
www.DTV.gov
- National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)
www.DTVAnswers.com
- Digital TV Facts
<http://dtvfacts.com/>

See What We've Sent Out So Far

To read previous DTV newsletters and announcements, log onto Connect and click on Communicate | Promote → DTV Transition Resources or the Discussion Board for DTV Transition. Forward this newsletter and encourage those who haven't already—to sign up and receive the weekly DTV News & Information Newsletter right in their inbox. To subscribe, email dtv@pbs.org and write "subscribe" on the subject line.

Q&A With FCC Chairman Kevin Martin

Outgoing FCC chairman discusses the challenges heading into the Feb. 2009 DTV transition and the prospects for his proposals on program-access complaint rules and free broadband

By John Eggerton
Broadcasting & Cable

FCC Chairman Kevin Martin does not see much chance of tightening program-access complaint rules or getting his free broadband proposal out the door before he exits as chairman in mid-January.

He is more sanguine about the prospects for the

digital-television transition, though he concedes there will be challenges, including possibly running out of available money for DTV-to-analog converter boxes.

President-elect Barack Obama's transition team has reportedly pushed for a more concentrated and coordinated call center program to field viewers' calls around the time of the

Feb. 17, 2009, switch. Martin says broadcasters will need to step up—NAB already has announced a call center plan—but that funds they have requested from the FCC would be subject to government contracting rules.

Martin talked about that and more with *B&C* Washington Bureau Chief John Eggerton. Below is...[more](#).

Funds for Digital TV Switch Coupon Program May Run Short

By Ira Teinowitz
TVWEEK

In the clearest sign yet that the switch to digital television signals won't go off seamlessly, the Department of Commerce said the coupon program that funds signal converter boxes for consumers needs more money.

At the current pace of redemption, the \$1.5 billion the government set aside to

fund \$40 discount coupons may run \$250 million to \$330 million short, Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce Meredith Attwell Baker said in a letter last week to a congressional committee with oversight of the transition.

U.S. Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., who chairs the House Energy & Commerce Committee's telecom committee, had sought from Ms. Baker and

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Kevin Martin an appraisal of how preparation for the Feb. 17 switch is going.

Rep. Markey said it is apparent Congress will have to provide additional money for the changeover.

"The challenge posed by the DTV switch cannot be underestimated," he said.

While both Ms. Baker...[more](#)

TV Set Sales: No Big Boost From DTV Transition

By Todd Spangler
Multichannel News

TV manufacturers shouldn't be hoping to get an assist from procrastinators (or the clueless).

The Feb. 17, 2009, digital TV transition has already compelled most consumers who were going to upgrade their TV sets to do so, according to Paul Gagnon, DisplaySearch's director of North America TV market research.

DisplaySearch's 2009 fore-

cast factors in no more than a 2% lift in sales because of the DTV transition, when full-power TV stations must cease analog broadcasts.

"The digital TV transition in the U.S. has helped fuel the growth we've seen in the last few years," Gagnon said.

But the millions of people who aren't ready at this point—a number that is still north of 7 million households, according to Nielsen—probably will not run out and buy HDTV sets

come February, he predicted.

"These tend to be lower-income households which have the least buying power," Gagnon said, adding that late-acting consumers would be far more likely to buy digital-to-analog converters than brand-new TVs.

On the other hand, he said, while it's not his current expectation there's the chance that "we could see a flurry of panic buying" next February...[more](#).

What's New From PBS?

With less than 2 months to go until February 17, 2009, we want to remind you of all the available resources for your local DTV education and awareness campaign. PBS is committed to providing you tools you can use in your markets, outreach/partnership opportunities, and fostering communication with your peers in sharing of best practices.

CREATIVE RESOURCES

In the print category, the following are available from the DTV area on PBS Connect:

- Handouts in English, Spanish and large font versions
- Get Ready for Digital TV
- DTV Basics
- DTV Myths & Facts
- Converter Box How-To Guide
- DTV Buckslip
 - Version 1: DTV basics
 - Version 2: Converter box how-to
- DTV Print Ads
 - Full-page, Half-page
 - 2 color, 4 color

-“Get Ready for Digital TV” program publicity photos
-Images of DTV equipment

For your air and web, there are several spots, DTV tips and the 30-minute GET READY FOR DIGITAL TV special. Countdown spots for use starting January 1. A new daytime spot will be delivered in January.

Versions of the following spots that were fed September-December are available from Station Remote Control for station Web sites:

- Kevin and Norm DTV Countdown Spots
- Call-to-Action Spots featuring Kevin and Norm
- Spanish Language Spots featuring Maria
- DTV Tips & “Get Ready for Digital TV” program promos
- “Get Ready for Digital TV” full-length 30-minute TV program

Additional campaign resources include:

- A DTV PowerPoint Presentation for use at meetings and events
- DTV Pledge Message Points

-The ALA Partnership Toolkit for collaborative education events with your local library
-pbs.org/dtv, a site you can link visitors to for more DTV information and to watch “Get Ready for Digital TV” online

BEST PRACTICE SHARING

As more and more stations roll out their consumer education and outreach plans, we're building a solid base of learning. Ideas that are replicable and scalable are shared in a variety of communications opportunities to ensure that stations benefit from our collective best practices and strategic thinking.

Visit Connect under the Communicate|Promote section to find:

- Past issues of the biweekly PBS DTV News & Information E-Newsletter
- The DTV Transition Discussion Board for you to share ideas, ask questions and talk to other stations about your DTV campaign
- Links for previous DTV conference calls or webinars
- Details on upcoming conference calls

Did you know...

CONSUMERS ARE URGED TO APPLY FOR COUPONS BY TODAY!!

Although the digital transition takes place on February 17, 2009, consumers who want to participate in the TV Converter Box Coupon Program are urged to act now. Consumers that don't apply before the end of the year are at risk of losing their TV service.

NTIA urges consumers to: **APPLY** for their coupons *immediately*, **BUY** a converter box when the coupons arrive and **TRY** the converter box with their analog TV to address any potential technical issues before February 17, 2009. This 3 step process may take 6 weeks or more, so consumers who do not act by the end of the year may not be ready for the transition on February 17th.

Fact sheets explaining these three steps and the coupon application are available at www.DTV2009.gov. Simply click on the “Apply. Buy. Try.” logo in the center of the page. Limited printed copies are also available by contacting D'Neisha Simmons Jendayi at dneisha.simmonsjendayi@ketchum.com. Please [click here](#) to see quick outreach ideas.

Recommended Station Site

KIXE has already become a full power digital station and their website offers great insight on why the switch has happened and actions to take. I especially appreciate the attachments, including a digital call sheet that offers help at viewers' request, a guide on how to select a digital television and DTV transition myths and facts—
GREAT JOB!

KIXE is broadcasting in full power digital! Re-scan your digital channels!

North state public television station KIXE discontinued its traditional analog broadcast and became full power digital Friday August 22 at 6 PM.

Viewers with older television sets who rely on “rabbit ears” or an outside antenna to pick up KIXE’s programs will not receive the new digital or DTV signal unless they have purchased and installed a digital converter box.

With the full transition in place, it is important for people with converter boxes and new digital televisions to re-scan their channels. This is a function on your new digital devices which will allow the devices to find the digital channels for you.

Charter and Comcast cable TV customers and viewers who subscribe to a satellite service like DirectTV or Dish Network will not be affected. Similarly, viewers with TV sets featuring built-in digital tuners (typically manufactured in March 2007 or later), and those who have already set up a DTV converter box, will enjoy uninterrupted service.

During the two-week period beginning Aug. 18, viewers in outlying communities will experience intermittent outages while KIXE’s engineers convert the translators that deliver the public television station’s signal to parts of 10 counties.

Once that work is completed, the free over-the-air television—the way many viewers now receive their TV signal—will be broadcast as a DTV signal only.

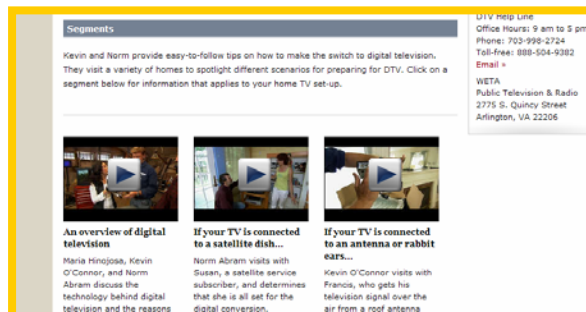
Viewers can expect crystal clear picture and sound—and be able to receive additional free broadcast TV channels, including KIXE’s current program schedule on Channel 9-2; CREATE, a PBS channel packed with how-to programs, on Channel 9-3; and a high-definition broadcast (from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.) on Channel 9-1.

To help with the transition to DTV, the federal government has established a coupon program to help with the purchase of the DTV converter boxes, which retail for about \$60 each.

Ideas of the Month

WETA.org is using the Get Ready for DTV video that PBS supplied to the system by making the 30-minute program available in whole, as well as in segments. We separated the program into segments so people can watch the part(s) that applies to them.

<http://www.weta.org/tv/dtv/getready>



On November 21st, WFUM in Michigan began to broadcast only in digital. They did their homework, followed all of the FCC rules and regulations, and additionally ran crawls every hour over the analog broadcast; as a result only received 4 phone calls after the shut-off. What did they overlook? Well, Wayne Henderson, WFUM's Director of Engineering and Operations, found out that a specific topic was not emphasized enough...some viewers completely lost their digital channel! Wayne has some great advice for stations to pass onto their viewers:

RESCAN.

For stations that must re-channelize their digital channel, you must get your viewers to rescan their digital TV's or Set Top Boxes (apart from the initial scan that is done during set-up). Viewers who do not rescan their channels after the station has changed their digital channel number will not be able to find the new digital channel. Wayne's idea for the month: include a text crawl during digital broadcasts to emphasize viewers' need to rescan. His suggestion would be to make an announcement such as the following: "Cable and Satellite viewers please ignore this message. Off-Air Viewers note WFUM's digital broadcast will cease on November 21 on this channel number. You must RESCAN your digital TV or Set Top Box to reacquire the new digital channel. Please read your operations manual for directions."

WFUM did mention this topic within special programming and within the FCC required termination notice, but this was insufficient notice and led to 15 calls a day for a week solid.

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Be more



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