



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE
NEWS
WASHINGTON, DC 20230

**National
Telecommunications &
Information
Administration**

Commerce's NTIA Meeting and Expo Showcases Consumer Education Efforts for Digital TV Transition and Converter Box Coupon Program

Public, Private Education Efforts Pave the Way for Successful Transition

For Immediate Release: Sept. 25, 2007

Media Contact: Todd Sedmak, (202) 482-7002 or tsedmak@ntia.doc.gov

WASHINGTON--The Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) meeting and expo today showcased consumer education efforts by government, industry and advocates to inform all U.S. households about the digital television transition and the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program. Consumers may use converter boxes to continue using analog televisions for free, over-the-air broadcasts after February 17, 2009, when stations convert to all-digital signals.

"These partnerships with government, industry and advocacy groups are a critical step in ensuring that all U.S. households including seniors, rural and low-income residents, minorities, and the disabled, are informed about the digital transition," said John Kneuer, NTIA Administrator and Commerce's Assistant Secretary of Communication and Information. "These efforts will assist NTIA greatly in educating all consumers about the Converter Box Coupon Program."

Other Coupon Program and digital television transition efforts include:

- **NTIA** has certified two converter box models from Digital STREAM Technology Inc., as the first coupon-eligible converter boxes;
- **RadioShack**, with its 4,400 stores, intends to participate in the Coupon Program, to train its sales associates on the transition and the program, and to engage in consumer education efforts, both in its stores and on its website;
- The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging (AoA)** is working with NTIA on creative ways to distribute Coupon Program information to two million seniors served by the Home Delivered Meals Program and exploring existing avenues, such as the Elder Care Locator, the 800 number, radio programs, and newsletters to inform seniors in all 50 states and territories about the Coupon Program;
- The **Veterans Administration (VA)** will work with NTIA to ensure that digital transition information and Coupon Program applications are available in 155 VA hospitals and 1,000 clinics, and the VA will inform 240,000 VA employees; 1 million VA volunteers; and more than 1 million veterans not served by the VA about the transition;
- On February 17, 2008, **Retirement Living TV** will start its nationwide, mobile "Retired & Wired: RLTV Digital Tour" to educate seniors about the Coupon Program;

-- MORE --

- The 225,000 members of the **Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)** in nearly 7,000 chapters in 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico will partner with Best Buy Co., Inc., along with its Best Buy and Geek Squad brands, to help educate the elderly, rural residents and others about the Coupon Program;
- The **National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)**, the **National Cable & Telecommunications Association (NCTA)** and the **Consumer Education Association (CEA)** will provide public service announcements and consumer education, worth hundred of millions of dollars;
- The **U.S. Department of Agriculture** Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service will distribute Coupon Program information throughout every U.S. county;
- The **American Library Association's** 65,000 members will work with NTIA to inform the public and librarians about the digital transition and will work with librarians to post information about the Coupon Program at their libraries and on their Web sites;
- **NTIA, Panasonic Corporation, and the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center** are working together to provide information to the public in Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and the Filipino language, Tagalog. The Center will distribute information and will encourage the Cambodian-American, Laotian-American, and Vietnamese-American communities to use the Government's multilingual call center to apply for coupons;
- **Entravision Communications Corp.** will use their Spanish-language media assets including TV and radio stations, and outdoor billboards to reach nearly 70 percent of all U.S. Hispanics in 51 primary television station markets across the United States about the digital transition;
- The **Digital TV Transition Coalition**, which consists of more than 160 national organizations and industry partners, will work to ensure no consumer is left without broadcast television because of a lack of information about the transition.

Background:

The Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 requires full-power television stations to cease analog broadcasts and switch to digital after February 17, 2009. The Act also authorizes NTIA to create the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program.

Digital television provides consumers with a clearer picture, more programming and frees up much needed spectrum for advanced wireless broadband services and interoperable communications among emergency first responders.

By February 17, 2009, consumers receiving their programming "over the air" with an analog television will need to make one of three choices about how to watch TV after that date: (1) purchase a digital converter for their existing analog TV; (2) subscribe to and check with their cable or satellite providers; or (3) purchase a new television with a digital tuner.

All U.S. households may request up to two, \$40 coupons to be used toward the purchase of up to two, digital-to-analog converter boxes, starting January 1, 2008, by calling 1-888-DTV-2009.

For more information about the digital transition and the Coupon Program, go to www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon.