



COMMERCE NEWS

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Gutierrez Announces One Million Coupons Used for TV Converter Box Coupon Program *Nine Months Until February Transition to Digital Television*

WASHINGTON—U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez today issued the following statement announcing one million coupons have been used as part of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) TV Converter Box Coupon Program.

“The nation is nine months away from the historic February 17, 2009, digital television transition for all full-power broadcasters. I encourage all Americans who rely on an antenna for their television programs to learn about their options for the digital transition and to act on their decision.

“More than one million households have used coupons to purchase a certified converter box and are now able to watch digital television with a clearer picture and more programming choices.

“I encourage households who have ordered a coupon to use it to purchase an eligible converter box within the coupon’s 90-day expiration period.”

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 TV Converter Box Coupon Program, which is funded by the \$19 billion airwaves auction and not tax dollars.

The transition will offer consumers a clearer picture, more programming choices and free up the airwaves for better communications among emergency first responders and new telecommunications services.

By February 17, 2009, consumers need to look at each analog television set in their home that is not connected to cable, satellite, or other pay television service and make a decision:

- They may connect it to cable, satellite, or pay television service;
- They may replace it with a TV with a digital tuner, or
- They may keep it working with a TV converter box.

Some viewers watch programs over translators or other low power stations which may continue broadcasting analog signals after February 17, 2009. Those viewers may wish to select a converter box that will pass through analog signals.

Households may request two coupons, which are worth \$40 each and can be used toward the purchase of up to two, digital-to-analog converter boxes. Between now, and March 31, 2009, households can request two coupons while funding is available in one of four ways:

- Apply online at www.dtv2009.gov.
- Call the Coupon Program 24-hour hotline 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009), TTY 1-877-530-2634
- Mail a coupon application to: PO BOX 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000
- Fax a coupon application to 1-877-DTV-4ME2 (1-877-388-4632)

NTIA will provide consumers a list of eligible converters and participating retailers when coupons are mailed. Coupons expire 90 days after they are mailed, and only one coupon can be used to purchase each coupon-eligible converter box.

NTIA is responsible for the development of the domestic and international telecommunications policy of the Executive Branch.

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