



# COMMERCE NEWS

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## **Commerce's NTIA to Mail \$40 Coupons Next Week for TV Converter Box Coupon Program**

### **9,700 Retailers Ready in all 50 States, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to Accept Coupons**

WASHINGTON—Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), which runs the TV Converter Box Coupon Program, will begin mailing \$40 coupons to consumers next week--one year from the date of the digital television transition—to be used to purchase eligible TV converter boxes. Converter boxes are needed to keep analog televisions that rely on an antenna working when full-power television stations convert to all-digital signals on February 17, 2009.

“The Department of Commerce is pleased that the first coupons will be going out to households nationwide as planned,” said Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez. “When consumers convert to digital television, they will experience the benefits of a clearer picture and more programming.”

More than 9,700 retailer locations will be participating in the program at the outset, including locations in all 50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Participating stores will have completed certification in the Coupon Program, will have converter boxes for sale, will have employees trained, and will be prepared to redeem coupons. NTIA will provide consumers a list of eligible converters and nearby participating retailers, such as Best Buy, Circuit City, RadioShack, Wal-Mart and other local retailers, within the coupon mailer. This information, along with any updates, also will be available at [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov).

NTIA has certified more than 615 retailers representing more than 16,475 outlets nationwide, to participate in the program. Certified retailers become participating retailers once they have converters for sale, employees trained, and can redeem coupons.

“NTIA has been working very closely with manufacturers and retailers to be ready in anticipation of this day,” said Acting NTIA Administrator Meredith Baker. “Consumers can expect to receive their coupons soon and should do their research on the converter box model that's best for them, and purchase it before the coupon expires in 90 days.”

The digital transition not only offers consumers a clearer television picture, and more programming choices but also frees up the nation's airwaves for better communications among emergency first responders.

A PDF version of the TV Converter Box Coupon can be found at [www.ntia.doc.gov](http://www.ntia.doc.gov).

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**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 Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to create the TV Converter Box Coupon Program.

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](http://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 encourages the voluntary participation of consumer electronics retailers. The application deadline to become a certified retailer is March 31, 2008. Consumer electronics retailers interested in participating in the program should go to [www.ntiadtvtv.gov](http://www.ntiadtvtv.gov) or call 1-866-296-1107 for additional information and to sign up as a participating retailer.

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