



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMERCE**  
**NEWS**  
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**National  
Telecommunications &  
Information  
Administration**

## **Wilmington, N.C., on Track for Sept. 8 Digital Television Transition**

### **36,000 Households Request 67,000 TV Converter Box Coupons**

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WASHINGTON—As Wilmington prepares to be the first market to transition from analog to digital television on September 8, the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced today that more than 36,000 Wilmington households have requested 67,000 coupons and redeemed 25,000 from the TV Converter Box Coupon Program. More than 17,000 of these households rely on television with an antenna, according to coupon applications.

“Wilmington shows that consumers who prepare and plan ahead will be ready for the digital television transition, and will enjoy a clear picture and more programming,” said Acting NTIA Administrator Meredith Baker. “I encourage households nationwide that need to order and redeem coupons to do it now.”

Wilmington will be the first market in the nation to transition to digital television, as a Federal Communication Commission test. On September 8 at Noon, the following stations will cease analog broadcasting and switch to digital: WWAY (ABC), WSFX-TV (FOX), WECT (NBC), WILM-LP (CBS), and W51CW (Trinity Broadcasting).

Consumers receiving free, over-the-air television on analog televisions will need to act to ensure their televisions continue to work when full power television stations go all-digital. Viewers of over-the-air television need to look at each analog set in their home that is not connected to cable, satellite, or other pay television service and make a timely decision. They can connect their television to cable, satellite, or pay television service; they can replace it with a digital TV; or they may keep it working with a TV converter box.

For consumers choosing the converter box option, the TV Converter Box Coupon Program permits all households to request up to two coupons—each worth \$40—toward the purchase of certified converter boxes. Coupons may be requested until March 31, 2009, or while supplies last. Consumers can purchase a converter box at one of the more than 28,000 participating local, phone or online retailers. Coupon applications can take several weeks to process and mail so consumers opting to purchase a converter box should act now, and should call stores before shopping to ensure the desired converter box is available. Converter boxes generally cost between \$45 and \$80.

**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 authorizes Commerce's NTIA to create the TV Converter Box Coupon Program, which is funded by the \$19 billion airwaves auction and not tax dollars.

Digital broadcast television offers consumers a clearer picture, more programming choices and will free up the airwaves for better communications among emergency first responders and new telecommunications services.

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.

Consumers may apply for coupons online at [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov), by phone at 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009), via fax at 1-877-DTV-4ME2 (1-877-388-4632) or by mail to P.O. BOX 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000. Deaf or hard of hearing callers may dial 1-877-530-2634 (English TTY) or 1-866-495-1161 (Spanish TTY). Consumers will receive a list of eligible converter boxes and participating retailers with their coupons. Coupons expire 90 days after they are mailed, and only one coupon can be used to purchase each coupon-eligible converter box.

For more information about the Coupon Program, please visit [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov) and for questions about the DTV transition, go to [www.dtv.gov](http://www.dtv.gov) or call 1-888-CALL-FCC.

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

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