

**Statement
Of**

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Federal Communications Commission**

FCC En Banc Hearing

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Thank you Mr. Chairman and Commissioners for allowing me to provide a report on the FCC's DTV outreach efforts. As you know, FCC staff in the field and here at FCC headquarters have been working with NTIA, other governmental entities, and community-based organizations throughout the country, as well as industry stakeholders such as the National Association of Broadcasters, the National Cable and Telecommunications Association, the Consumer Electronics Association, and the Consumer Electronics Retailers Coalition to help prepare consumers for the digital television transition. By early next week, FCC staff will have conducted outreach in each of the 210 Nielsen Designated Market Areas throughout the country plus Puerto Rico. In these communities, FCC staff has been educating consumers and establishing partnerships with broadcasters, local officials, consumer-based organizations and others. These collective efforts have resulted in consumer awareness of the transition increasing from 64% in December of 2007 to 93% in September of 2008 (as reported by Consumers Union on October 15, 2008). I must start by thanking each and every FCC employee who has contributed to this effort.

However, as we all realize, more work remains. Under Chairman Copps' leadership over the past two weeks, we have focused on integrating all of our various outreach efforts.

First, we are integrating our own internal FCC outreach efforts with those of the FCC contract award winners and NTIA grantees. The chart you see identifies the 12 entities that were awarded FCC contracts to perform DTV outreach assistance for consumers. In a moment, you will hear from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A), who will tell you more about what they are doing under their NTIA grants. We are making sure FCC field staff are aware of and working with the entities who are providing services in their areas, and that they are coordinating efforts to maximize hands-on assistance for consumers.

Second, we are integrating our internal outreach efforts with the FCC Call Center. You will hear later from Andrew Martin about specific actions taken with our Call Center over the past few weeks to expand and enhance its capabilities. Integrating our enhanced Call Center with our outreach efforts will allow us to further benefit consumers by quickly providing them with the resources they may need to successfully complete the transition.

We know there are consumers who will need assistance at the local level. Some will need hands-on assistance with instructions on how to connect and operate their converter box or to answer specific questions in person. Others will need in-home assistance to install the converter box in their home and provide help with reception issues. We are compiling information that will be accessible to our Call Center Agents as well as our on the ground field staff, that includes the names, locations, and contact information for every entity that has been identified as providing walk-in help center services as well as those that are providing in-home installation assistance for consumers. This way, when our Call Center Agents answer a call from a consumer who needs hands-on help, they can go into the system, type in the consumer's zip code, and have access to referral information for the consumer. Similarly, the same information will be available to our field staff conducting outreach, so that they too can refer consumers to these organizations and locations where this important hands-on assistance will be available.

In addition to integrating our resources to more effectively and efficiently provide assistance to consumers, we are proactively identifying the DMAs where more staff coverage may be necessary. We are identifying these markets by using data such as numbers and percentages of over-the-air

households in a DMA, the latest coupon request and redemption rates for a DMA, industry surveys, data we are developing regarding the DMAs where signal loss is an issue, as well as our first-hand knowledge of the DMAs through our boots-on-the-ground efforts. We will compare these markets with the information we receive on when stations will be completing their transitions so that we may prioritize and adequately staff each market, particularly around the time when its stations will be shutting down analog transmissions. Additionally, in order to supplement our existing efforts, we are actively engaged in recruiting local governments, libraries, fire departments, faith-based organizations and other community-based organizations to establish their own DTV transition walk-in help center and/or provide in-home installation assistance to members of their community who will need that extra help.

We also know that with the new legislation that was passed by Congress yesterday, our messaging will have to shift to be more locally targeted, particularly with regards to the date or dates that stations in each market complete their transition. The focus of our messaging has evolved over the last 90 days from “it’s coming, how you may be impacted, and what you can do to be prepared” to “it’s here – act now, what you can do to

troubleshoot potential problems, and here's where local help is available.”

This will continue to be our focus.

In addition, because many of the reception issues experienced by consumers can be specific to each station, and may depend on variables such as a station's facility build-out schedule, the location of its transmission tower or towers vis-à-vis viewers, any changes in the station's signal coverage, and variations in terrain, we are working with local stations and encouraging them to develop and disseminate station-specific messaging to their viewers.

Conclusion

As we all realize, the DTV transition is approaching at full speed. With vulnerable consumers at risk of being left behind if they fail or are unable to act, it is all of our jobs to assist in a unified and combined effort. We encourage consumers to act now, to either prepare themselves for the transition or assist others in their community who need help. We encourage volunteer organizations with a local presence to establish walk-in help centers to assist consumers apply for coupons, learn how to install a converter box, and get questions answered. Similarly, we encourage trusted sources in communities to provide in-home installation assistance for those

who need it. We will continue to be engaged in educating consumers and incorporating partners into our activities to ensure that all consumers are aware of the transition, and are able to do what is necessary in order to be prepared. Thank you.