

**Remarks of Sam Howe  
Executive Vice President, Time Warner Cable  
FCC En Banc Hearing on the DTV Transition  
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Chairman Copps, Commissioners Adelstein and McDowell, thank you for the opportunity to appear today. I am Sam Howe, an Executive Vice President for Time Warner Cable. We are the second largest cable multiple system operator, serving more than 14 million customers in 28 states, with multichannel video, broadband Internet access, digital phone, and other services. As a critical component of our services, we operate customer care call centers in all six of our operating regions that are staffed by nearly 14,000 agents.

I am here today to describe to you the creation of a unique call center initiative, established solely to help manage some of the millions of phone calls from American consumers likely to result as broadcast stations transition to digital and shut-off their analog signals. I have the privilege of managing the small, ad hoc, but elite team of customer care executives spanning both the cable and broadcasting industries committed to bringing to life this call center initiative.

We are engaged in this effort because we have answered the call of President Obama and others in his Administration. The Obama team challenged and worked with us in helping devise solutions that could address consumer confusion from the DTV Transition.

Mr. Chairman, thanks to your leadership and personal involvement, as well as the leadership of Commissioners Adelstein and McDowell, and wonderful collaboration of FCC staff at all levels, we now find ourselves involved in an exemplary public-private partnership. That partnership is working, in effect, to marry the resources we are providing from industry, to those that you and your teams have procured and are developing on the government side. When our work culminates – as it will just about a week from now – we will have in place a system in which consumers with questions about DTV transition issues can call a single toll-free number. They will receive some information from a simple, automated response unit. And they will be able to transfer quickly and easily to a live agent who will provide guidance and advice on any number of issues consumers may face as a result of the shut-off of those analog TV signals.

We think of our consumer response operation as a “DTV Trusted Advisor Hotline.” Live agents have been recruited and hired specially for this project by independent call center providers in locations across the country. They are being equipped with the best knowledge base we can provide, about DTV Transition issues and answers. And they are being trained to become “trusted advisors” to consumers who are likely to need a wide array of information, as the broadcasters in their cities and towns discontinue analog transmission in favor of new and better digital signals. We are working to ensure that the consumer experience in calling this hotline is seamless by providing to live agents – whether they sit on the “industry” or “government” side of the partnership – common training, scripting, and language.

You may be wondering why I, a cable industry representative, am sitting in front of you to discuss an initiative to help manage consumer issues for what is essentially a transition for broadcasters. First, cable is the principal purveyor of television to the majority of American households. Consequently, we have felt a strong responsibility to work closely with our colleagues in broadcasting and consumer electronics to help Americans prepare for this transition. We’re proud to be a leader – with others at this table – of the DTV Transition Coalition, which has worked to increase consumer awareness of the upcoming transition to nearly universal levels. Cable companies and cable programming services have provided more than 250-million-dollars in commercial airtime for public service advertising about the transition. Cable executives have appeared at countless community and civic meetings to answer consumer questions. We are collaborating with consumer groups at the national, regional, and local level to help Americans prepare. And we have strived to meet this Commission’s mandate to provide information on customer invoices about consumer options in light of the upcoming transition. In short, helping Americans navigate the broadcasters’ transition to digital has been a top priority for cable, for several years now.

Secondly, we as an industry are uniquely positioned to assist in this specialized call center effort. Our experience in interacting with consumers tens of millions of times each year has made it possible to quickly access and tap the kinds of resources required for this once-in-a-lifetime challenge. So when, in December, representatives of the incoming Obama Administration approached us with inquiries about how we might help to ease consumer confusion at the time of the transition, we were happy to offer up our knowledge and resources.

This project, which is being executed on a remarkably short timetable, is many layers deep and richly complex. So I'm happy to answer your questions today about our efforts, the progress we've made, and any other aspects of the DTV Trusted Advisor Hotline. Thank you once again for this opportunity.