

FCC Open Commission Meeting
on Digital Television Transition
June 3, 2009

**Panel 1: FCC and NTIA Reports on the Status of the DTV Transition and
Prospects for June 12, 2009**

Opening Remarks

Julius P. Knapp
Chief, Office of Engineering and Technology

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. I am pleased to report on some of the steps we have taken to help address DTV reception issues and other technical matters.

The Commission's DTV mapping tool, which is available on the Commission's web site has been a smash success, enabling consumers to type in their address or zip code and obtain a list of the stations available at their location. We've promoted the use of the DTV mapping tool in various FCC publications and have trained our consumer and mediation specialists on how to use the mapping tool.

Many consumers are concerned about whether they may need a new antenna, and if so, what guidance can we provide about the antennas they may need. We reached out to a number of major antenna manufacturers and spoke with industry technical experts to get a better grasp on antenna issues. I'd like to particularly credit Jonathan Levy and Sonal Mittal of the Office of Strategic Planning for taking the initiative on this project.

There were several lessons learned from this effort. We cannot underscore enough that most consumers will need an antenna that is designed for both VHF and UHF reception. We had previously assumed that most consumers would have a VHF antenna, but might not have a UHF antenna. We've learned that some consumers, thinking that all DTV signals would be on UHF channels, purchased UHF-only antennas. When stations transitioned to their final VHF channels, some consumers found that they did not have an antenna capable of receiving them.

We've also gained insight into the fact that there is a wide variation in the performance of antennas. Some antennas that are listed as VHF/UHF exhibit weak performance in receiving the VHF channels.

In light of this information, we are updating our frequently asked questions and Consumer Information Guide on antennas. One of the points we emphasize is that consumers should consult with their retailer for guidance on the antenna that best meets their needs.

To assist retailers, we've added guidance to our web site on how they can use the DTV mapping tool to assist consumers select the right antenna for their exact location. We've also added information for antenna manufacturers to help them ensure that the right kinds of antennas get to the right areas. I'd like to recognize John Gabrysch and Alison Neplokh for of the Media Bureau their work on this project.

We are also in the process of updating the more detailed maps that are available on the web site that compare digital and analog TV coverage. The original maps, which were published last December, were based on a snapshot of the facilities that were authorized as of October 3, 2008. The new maps are based on a snapshot of the facilities that were authorized as of April 30, 2009. We have created maps showing what coverage will look like on June 13 - - in other words the day after the transition - - as well as maps showing what coverage will look like when each station completes its authorized maximized facilities. The new maps will be available on our web site shortly.

Lastly, we have conveyed the message that people will need to rescan their DTV converter boxes and TV sets that use an antenna on the day of the transition, as well as the day afterwards when all the stations have settled into their final channels. Many of the stations will be moving from one radio frequency channel to another, and if you don't rescan, you are going to be missing the channels that have moved.

Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, in anything as technically complex as the DTV transition there are bound to be some problems. We have put together a team of engineers from the Media Bureau and the Office of Engineering and Technology who will be standing ready on the day of the transition and beyond to diagnose and help resolve whatever technical problems may arise.

This concludes my presentation and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.