

STATEMENT OF JANE E. MAGO
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL COUNSEL
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

BEFORE THE
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OPEN MEETING ON THE
DIGITAL TELEVISION TRANSITION

June 3, 2009

Chairman Copps, Commissioners Adelstein and McDowell. I'm Jane Mago, Executive Vice President and General Counsel of the National Association of Broadcasters. Thank you for this opportunity today to report on broadcaster efforts toward a smooth transition to digital television for America's broadcasters and consumers.

With the June 12 deadline nearly upon us, continuing our strong public-private partnership through the finish line is especially critical. We thank you for your leadership and continued vigilance on this issue.

As you know, our joint efforts, including broadcasters' \$1.2 billion consumer education campaign, on-the-ground initiatives, coalition-building, and extensive on-air and online messaging, have produced stunning results. Today, national awareness of the DTV transition is nearly universal at 98 percent. Compare that to NAB's first DTV poll in 2005, which reported only 25 percent awareness among TV households. It is very clear that awareness started climbing in earnest after the broadcast industry launched its campaign in late 2006, and in particular since the start of our massive on-air campaign in the fall of 2007.

Importantly, our most recent information shows that nearly 89 percent of over-the-air reliant households have taken some action to get ready, with 82 percent fully prepared for the transition. And we are encouraged that the gap in awareness and preparedness among African-Americans, Hispanics, the elderly and the general population has closed. Broadcasters will continue to work with the Commission and other stakeholders to assist and inform the final remaining unprepared households.

Achieving such high levels of consumer readiness in advance of June 12 is the direct result of a major group effort that involves each member of this panel. My colleagues here represent a diversity of organizations in the DTV Transition Coalition, which has grown to 241 members nationally. CEA, LCCR, MSTV and NCTA have all played vital roles in spreading the word and helping viewers prepare for this historic switch.

Soft Test

Touching briefly on the May 21 national shut off test, I note that NAB collaborated closely with the FCC and state broadcast associations on this effort. Local stations around the country in more than 125 markets participated, including all major networks. Judging by the number and content of calls made to the FCC's helpline, the test was successful in compelling viewers to act and served as a necessary trial run for the national call center.

On the following day, May 22, America's broadcasters kicked off a massive on-air campaign signaling to viewers that just three weeks remain until the transition deadline. This new series of DTV countdown television spots,

which NAB produced and distributed, is airing on full-power stations that have not yet gone all-digital. NAB also provided a new 30 second spot that walks viewers through the process of upgrading to DTV, which we will show you now [RUN 30-SEC HOW-TO SPOT].

Of course, broadcasters will continue airing news stories and messages that highlight the importance of antennas, rescanning for channels, offer tips for installing converter boxes and signal loss where applicable. Through NAB's innovative partnerships, these informative DTV spots are running on television screens in gas stations, auto service centers, grocery stores and airplanes, reaching millions of consumers on the go.

Additionally, NAB has made available to stations an updated half-hour educational program covering the basics of the transition and our DTV "nightlight" video, which will serve as the only analog programming in certain markets after June 12. Both of these programs are available in English and in Spanish, and are captioned.

Besides television spots, we are also using radio to get the message out. NAB has produced a new set of radio spots for stations that urge viewers who have lost reception due to the switch to call 888-CALL-FCC for assistance. We also plan to include this number in live copy for DJs to read on the air as well.

FCC Coordination

Local broadcasters are also partnering with the FCC to promote DTV walk-in centers by airing PSAs produced by the FCC and covering walk-in center activities in news programs.

And our state broadcasters and many, many FCC officials have done a tremendous job coordinating out in the field. For example, Bob Fisher of the Nevada Broadcasters Association, and the Commission's Karen Beverly have covered practically every corner of the state, spreading the word about the DTV transition in areas heavily served by translators, and to rural, tribal and Hispanic populations.

And in Ohio, WKYC-TV in Cleveland has featured FCC East Central Region Coordinator Bill Cline during an Indians baseball game this spring. Broadcasting from the announcer's booth, he explained to viewers how to apply for converter box coupons and get ready for the transition.

Despite all of our coordinated efforts, we know that challenges lie ahead and we are preparing. In fact, NAB's pollster is currently in the field conducting a final DTV study, which we expect will provide useful insight into eleventh-hour activities regarding the transition. These survey results will be available next week.

Scanning and Antennas

Based on our current research, we are specifically focused on 2 important issues: scanning and antennas. First is the issue of scanning and rescanning. Once consumers began taking action to upgrade their TV sets, NAB began incorporating these messages into our television spots and other educational materials. We created Web pages on rescanning on DTVAnswers.com, an NAB site that explains all aspects of the transition and receives thousands of site visits daily. In updating our 30-minute education program and "nightlight" video, we

reserved an entire section to address rescanning in greater detail. We also released spots urging viewers to test their equipment early and to help family and friends who might have technical problems.

Second is the issue of antennas. Anticipating early on that some consumers may need new antennas to maximize their digital reception, NAB joined with CEA to promote AntennaWeb.org, a popular site that helps viewers determine which outdoor antenna is best for them using their local address and zip code. We have produced multiple television spots that alert viewers to getting the right antenna and directing them to online resources for help.

Our half-hour program heavily promotes both AntennaWeb.org and DTVAnswers.com, which we believe are the most consumer-friendly sites out there on troubleshooting DTV. Because some stations are moving to different frequency bands, local broadcasters are educating their viewers on getting the proper UHF or VHF antenna.

Our research also shows that progress is being made to ensure that seniors get the help they need to hook up their converter boxes and benefit fully from the transition. Organizations like AARP and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging have done an exceptional job of informing seniors of their options. The FCC's in-home assistance initiatives will certainly help to alleviate these problems.

In closing, we anticipate that for myriad reasons, there will be a group of people who will not upgrade to DTV before June 12 – this is inevitable. But thanks to our combined efforts over the past two years, they will have known

about it. Whether they choose to get ready before or after the deadline, American viewers will experience the benefits of free digital television: crystal-clear pictures, phenomenal sound and more channels and services than ever before.

Thank you for inviting me to appear today, and I am happy to answer any questions you might have on the DTV transition.