

June 3, 2009 FCC Agenda Meeting

Remarks of Catherine W. Seidel

Chief Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Commissioners for allowing me this opportunity to report on the FCC's DTV outreach efforts and plans for the nine days remaining before the June 12th transition, and the days after.

As you know, the FCC has visited every state and every DMA in the country to educate consumers and help them prepare for the transition. Initially, these efforts were aimed at building awareness, answering the question of why the transition is taking place, and helping consumers apply for converter box coupons. Over time, we added more focus on converter box demonstrations and installations. As a result of consumer experiences on February 17th, we then added emphasis on scanning and rescanning one's converter box, and on adjusting one's antenna. And, in recent months, we have been stressing more and more the need for consumers to take action – and to act NOW.

Well the time is nearly here. We are focusing our remaining outreach efforts on reaching those people who are not yet prepared and who need our help in making the transition. And, with time of the essence we are going to

places where we know consumers in the most at-risk constituencies will be, and helping them there. So, for example we have been attending church suppers, barbeques and bingo nights. We've been conducting events outside the entrance to amusement parks, roller rinks and at soccer games. We've been reaching consumers at ethnic festivals including Cinco de Mayo as well as through numerous street fairs. As you will soon hear, FCC staff members have been going to VA hospitals around the country. FCC representatives have conducted outreach at various tribal community centers and at various tribal events. As you will hear in a moment, we also have two tribal events coming up next week – one with the Cherokee nation in Oklahoma and one at Pine Ridge in South Dakota.

We have been conducting converter box demonstrations at shopping malls, retail locations and grocery stores, especially in the areas having a high number of consumers in the more at-risk constituency groups. We continue to work with various civic organizations including the Boys and Girls Clubs, Rotary Clubs, and Kiwanis and we continue to work with the Salvation Army. We have also visited a number of low income housing complexes to help sign consumers up for coupons and demonstrate how to install their converter boxes. And, recognizing that some consumers who sign up now may not receive their coupons in time to purchase and install

their converter box, at our events we are also encouraging coupon donations. That way, consumers who truly need the \$40 assistance, can benefit from one of those donated coupons, without having to wait approximately 9 days to receive the coupon in the mail and run the risk of being without television for some period of time.

Now, I would like to show you a video of three of our FCC employees who have been conducting DTV outreach and assisting consumers around the country, Alma Hughes, Ceci Seppings, and Shana Barehand. I know our time today is limited, otherwise I would have many, many more FCC staff members sharing their experiences as well. It is truly a dedicated and impressive team of FCC staff who have been working on this initiative for weeks, months, and in some cases, years.

Following the stories shared by the three FCC staff members, you will see a video of some firefighters who are working with the FCC to install converter boxes for consumers in their homes, and at the same time, checking the consumer's smoke detectors. To date, we have 57 fire departments serving 194 different zip codes who have signed on to assist with this effort. We expect more departments to sign up in the coming days, and are thankful for our partnership with the International Association of

Fire Chiefs in this regard. Through their commitment, the commitment of our Americorps volunteers, the work of our FCC contractors performing in-home assistance and walk-in centers, and the support of our own FCC staff, we are trying to ensure that consumers will have access to the help they need to take the necessary action. [SHOW VIDEO CLIPS]

One cannot help but be moved by the enthusiasm and commitment conveyed in these videos. And, we know that our work won't be over on June 12th. We will continue to provide assistance to consumers after this date, through our FCC toll free number, through contractors continuing to provide in-home installation assistance and walk-in centers, and through continued work in the field as warranted.

The breadth of our efforts has spanned the country. From Fairbanks, Alaska to Portland, Maine. From Fargo, North Dakota to Laredo, Texas. From Salinas, California, to Miami, Florida – and so many small towns and major urban areas in between, FCC staff have been doing their part to help consumers prepare for the transition. And, we will continue to do so after June 12th for consumers who, for whatever reason, fail to act by then and still need assistance. Thank you again for the opportunity to report to you today and thank each of you for your continued support.