

I am a rural user of satellite television, and have been for years, even prior to the small dishes that were introduced in 1994. With the advent of satellite TV I now have the same, if not more viewing capability than my counterparts in metropolitan areas. Cable to many is not an option, and in small rural towns the cable is extremely limited from a channel selection and quality standpoint. Satellite TV has been our entertainment and information savior.

Television is about to enter a new era, one that will rival the change from 'black and white' to 'color'. This marvelous event is High Definition Television (HDTV), HDTV sets are now affordable, and getting cheaper all the time. If I lived in a metropolitan area, like Indianapolis, I would be able to receive FREE the local network HDTV programming as all of the local stations have their digital transmitters running. Since I live in a rural area, the only way I will ever be able to get HDTV pictures is via satellite. I really don't care about 'local' channels as I do not live close enough to any area where 'local' news from a broadcaster matters. I am interested in receiving network programming in HDTV, and THIS MERGER between DirecTv and Dish Network will eventually provide the channel capacity to deliver HDTV signals to rural America. In addition, high speed internet and other two way services are important which will happen only with additional capacity.

ALL television will eventually be HDTV. I started as a second class citizen because broadcaster's policy has always been to 'throw up a signal' and let the consumer fend for himself. Snowy picture, too bad. Ghosts, too bad. Now, for years I have enjoyed television that is equal to or in many cases better than what people in the cities enjoy. However, with HDTV available NOW, which everyone in the industry knows requires considerably more bandwidth, I am about to be turned back into that second class citizen.

I am not interested in the spec