

Making Life Easier

Viewers Urged To Prep For 2009's Transition To DTV

(NAPSA)—It's important for TV viewers without a cable or satellite subscription to tune in to a few tips if they want to have uninterrupted television service through 2009.

Experts in Digital Television (DTV) say people who receive TV through an antenna may lose reception entirely if they don't take certain actions before the end of the year. Doing so could better prepare them for a changeover taking place after midnight on February 17, when all full-power TV stations will stop broadcasting in analog (the type of signal currently used) and start broadcasting exclusively in digital.

Viewers who want to continue receiving free TV service without buying a new set will need a digital converter box, which allows analog TVs to receive digital broadcasts. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the federal agency that is offering every household in America two coupons to offset the cost of the converters, is asking people to "apply, buy and try" now.

Consumers are encouraged to apply for a \$40 DTV converter box coupon either online (DTV2009.gov) or over the phone (1-888-DTV-2009), buy the box as soon as they receive the coupon and try it with their TV set as soon as they make their purchase.

This should give people time to follow all the installation and channel-scanning instructions and make antenna adjustments, if needed.

John Boland, PBS chief content officer, agrees with this advice. "For most people, making the transition to digital TV will be



As of February 2009, older TVs will need more than an antenna to receive a broadcast signal.

straightforward, but we've already heard from viewers who have had problems installing their boxes or found that they had reception issues," said Boland. "We strongly recommend that everyone take steps now to avoid missing the switchover deadline and losing access to broadcast service."

Boland added that PBS is offering a wide variety of resources to help viewers make the switch, including a 30-minute program from "This Old House" entitled "Get Ready for Digital TV" that is airing on PBS stations through February.

The program, along with video DTV tips, can be seen on YouTube and on PBS' informative DTV Web site, pbs.org/dtv, which also features how-to guidance for making the switch to DTV, downloadable fact sheets in English and Spanish, and more.

Viewers without access to the Internet can call 1-888-CALL-FCC or their local PBS station for DTV information and advice.