

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS . 11465 WEST CIVIC CENTER DRIVE . AVONDALE, AZ 85323

WORK SESSION
October 20, 2008
6:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR ROGERS

1 ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK

2 DIGITAL TELEVISION CONVERSION

Staff will inform Council as to the Federal Communication Commission direction regarding the transition from analog television signal format to digital, no action required.

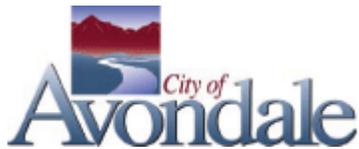
3 ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carmen Martinez".

Carmen Martinez
City Clerk

Any individual with a qualified disability may request a reasonable accommodation by contacting the City Clerk at 623-333-1200 at least 48 hours prior to the council meeting.



CITY COUNCIL REPORT

SUBJECT:
Digital Television Conversion

MEETING DATE:
October 20, 2008

TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Kevin Hinderleider, IT Director (623)333-5007
THROUGH: Charlie McClendon, City Manager

PURPOSE:

This item is presented for informational purposes to inform Council as to the Federal Communications Commission direction regarding the transition from analog television signal format to digital, no action required.

BACKGROUND:

On February 17, 2009, federal law requires that all full-power television broadcast stations stop broadcasting in analog format and broadcast only in digital format. Congress mandated the conversion to all-digital television broadcasting, also known as the digital television (DTV) transition, because all-digital broadcasting will free up frequencies for public safety communications (such as police, fire, and emergency rescue). Also, digital is a more efficient transmission technology that allows broadcast stations to offer improved picture and sound quality, as well as offer more programming options for consumers through multiple broadcast streams (multicasting). In addition, some of the freed up frequencies will be used for advanced commercial wireless services for consumers.

DISCUSSION:

For residents who receive only free over-the-air television programming, the type of TV owned, either a digital TV or an analog TV, is very important. Consumers who receive only free over-the-air television may view digital programming through a TV set with a built-in digital tuner (integrated DTV) or a digital-ready monitor with a separate digital tuner set-top box. (Both of these digital television types are referred to as a DTV). The only additional equipment required to view over-the-air digital programming with a DTV is a regular antenna, either on the roof or a smaller version on the TV such as "rabbit ears."

Consumers who have an analog television, will have to purchase a digital-to-analog set-top converter box to attach to their TV set to be able to view over-the-air digital programming (see "What About My Analog TV?" below).

How Do I Know Whether I Own a DTV?

As of March 1, 2007, all television receivers shipped in interstate commerce or imported into the United States must contain a digital tuner. In addition, effective May 25, 2007, the Commission required sellers of television receiving equipment that does not include a digital tuner to disclose at the point-of-sale that such devices include only an analog tuner, and therefore will require a digital-to-analog converter box to receive over-the-air broadcast television after the transition date. Retailers must inform consumers by prominently displaying the following text if they are selling TV equipment with only an analog tuner:

This television receiver has only an analog broadcast tuner and will require a converter box after February 17, 2009, to receive over-the-air broadcasts with an antenna because of the Nation's transition to digital broadcasting. Analog-only TVs should continue to work as before with cable and satellite TV services, gaming consoles, VCRs, DVD players, and similar products. For more information, call the Federal Communications Commission at 1-888-225-5322 (TTY: 1-888-835-5322) or visit the Commission's digital television website at: www.dtv.gov.

Therefore, after May 25, 2007, all television equipment being sold should contain a digital tuner, or should be identified at the point-of-sale as not having one. Be sure to look for this label if you are purchasing a new TV.

As for how to determine whether your television equipment purchased prior to May 25, 2007 is a DTV, many DTVs and digital television equipment will have labels or markings on them, or statements in the informational materials that came with them, to indicate that they contain digital tuners. These labels or markings may contain the words "Integrated Digital Tuner" or "Digital Tuner Built-In." "Receiver" may be substituted for "Tuner," and "DTV," "ATSC," or "HDTV" (high definition television) may be substituted for "Digital." If your television equipment contains any of these labels or markings, you should be able to view digital over-the-air programming without the need for a digital-to-analog converter box. (Remember, you do not need an HDTV to view free over-the-air digital programming. As long as your television equipment contains a digital tuner, you can view over-the-air digital. An HDTV is only necessary if you want to view digital programming in "high definition.")

You should also check the manual or any other materials that came with your television equipment in order to determine whether it contains a digital tuner.

If your television set is labeled as a "Digital Monitor" or "HDTV Monitor," or as "Digital Ready" or "HDTV Ready," this does not mean it actually contains a digital tuner. Thus, you still will likely need a separate set-top box which contains a tuner in order to view programs in the new digital TV transmission standard (which includes HDTV formats) on such a set.

Over-the-air digital set-top boxes can be purchased at retail stores. Cable and satellite TV providers also sell or lease digital set-top boxes for their specific services. (Note: the digital set-top box described here is not the same as the NTIA program digital-to-analog converter box, described below, used to convert free over-the-air digital broadcasts for viewing on an analog TV set.)

If your television set is labeled as "analog" or "NTSC," but is NOT labeled as containing a digital tuner, it contains an analog tuner only.

If you cannot determine whether your television set or other television equipment contains a digital tuner, you are advised to check your equipment for the manufacturer name and model number, and then contact your consumer electronics retailer, or the manufacturer, to determine whether it contains a digital tuner. This information also may be available online through the manufacturer's website.

Because most broadcast stations in all U.S. television markets are already broadcasting in digital, consumers are further advised to contact their local broadcast stations to determine the channel numbers on which the stations are broadcasting digital programming. Consumers should then ensure that their televisions are set up to receive over-the-air programming (as distinguished from the signals of a paid provider such as cable or satellite TV service), and then tune to the over-the-air digital channels to see if they can receive the digital broadcast programming.

What About My Analog TV? Will It Still Work?

After February 17, 2009, you will be able to receive and view over-the-air digital programming with an analog TV only by purchasing a digital-to-analog set-top converter box. Between January 1, 2008, and March 31, 2009, all U.S. households will be able to request up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, to be used toward the future purchase of eligible digital-to-analog converter boxes. Eligible converter boxes are for the conversion of over-the-air digital television signals, and therefore are not intended for analog TVs connected to a paid provider such as cable or satellite TV service.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is administering the coupon program. (Please note that these coupons will expire 90 days after mailing). For more information, visit the NTIA website at www.dtv2009.gov. The Commission's DTV website, www.dtv.gov, also provides information for consumers on the upcoming digital-to-analog converter box coupon program.

To update Council on the FCC's direction Shana Greenberg Barehand will present the information and be available for comments.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is for informational purposes to inform Council as to the Federal Communication Commission direction regarding the transition from analog television signal format to digital, no action required.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Click to download](#)

No Attachments Available