



# NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.  
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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## **VAST MAJORITY OF WILMINGTON, NC RESIDENTS WERE AWARE OF THE EARLY DIGITAL TELEVISION TRANSITION IN THEIR VIEWING AREA**

Washington, D.C. – Based on consumer calls received by the Federal Communications Commission on the first day after the digital television (DTV) transition in the five-county Wilmington television market, the vast majority of the 400,000 television viewers impacted by the change were aware of the transition and seemed to be prepared for it.

FCC Chairman Kevin J. Martin said, “The results of the digital television switch in Wilmington shows that the collective efforts of the Commission, the community and industry to inform viewers of the early transition in this local market were effective.” Chairman Martin noted, “The vast majority of Wilmington-area viewers were aware of the transition and more than 28,000 converter box coupons were redeemed.”

“While we believe that the transition in Wilmington is going smoothly, the measure of success in Wilmington is what is going to happen next February, and what we are able to learn from this experience and how we apply those lessons as we move this effort across the country,” Chairman Martin said.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and its local partners are providing assistance to Wilmington-area residents who call the Commission’s toll-free DTV Transition helpline - **1-877-388-0908**. In addition to the call center, Chairman Martin has assembled teams of Commission engineers and outreach staff to assist Wilmington-area callers with their individual questions and needs.

The 400,000 viewers in the Wilmington area represent an estimated 180,000 households, of which nearly 14,000 receive free over-the-air television programming with roof-top antennas or “rabbit-ears.” During the first day of the transition, approximately 800 (797) area residents or *less than one-half of one percent of area homes* called the FCC helpline asking questions and seeking help with the switch-over to digital television. On September 9, the second day of the transition, the number of calls decreased by almost 50 percent from the first day to 424.

Based on calls to the FCC helpline through the first day, most consumers were aware of and ready for the transition. The Commission’s helpline received just 23 calls from consumers who said they were not aware of the switch to digital television and/or did not know the date of the transition.

Chairman Martin directed his team of engineers and outreach staff to identify and understand the problems viewers were facing and work to resolve them to the extent possible. These FCC teams are already working to assist residents in resolving their problems. A significant number of consumers who called the helpline with converter box, reception or other technical issues have already had their issues resolved.

Specifically, more than 160 calls were from viewers who had initial difficulty in setting up their converter boxes properly. For example, consumers had difficulty understanding the instructions for setting up the converter box and scanning for channels. Seventy-five of these consumers were successfully guided through the installation process by call-takers and were able to view channels after re-scanning their televisions.

Of the total number of calls to the helpline, 178 were by viewers who were experiencing problems with their television reception or had other technical issues. We were able to resolve reception and other technical issues for 22 of the 178 consumers by explaining where the broadcasters' new digital channels are located, helping them re-scan channels, and/or by assisting them with re-positioning or adjusting their antennas. We are continuing to work with these viewers to understand and resolve their issues.

A significant number of calls (232) were related to the viewer's inability to locate the Wilmington NBC affiliate. Prior to the digital switch, the Wilmington NBC affiliate signal was available to viewers outside the television market as far south as Myrtle Beach, SC and as far north as Raleigh, NC. The Wilmington NBC affiliate's new coverage area does not include these out of market communities. Some of these complaints were from these viewers who will continue to receive their local NBC affiliates in Myrtle Beach and Raleigh. The Commission is continuing to work with those residents who have unresolved reception problems.

The early switch to digital in Wilmington is helping the Commission to identify, understand and resolve problems such as those experienced by consumers calling the FCC helpline and will ultimately better prepare us for the national DTV transition in February 2009.

The following is an overview and analysis of the consumer calls received by the FCC on the first day of the DTV Transition in Wilmington, NC. A breakdown of the second day will be provided shortly.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>CONSUMERS WHO WERE NOT AWARE OF THE TRANSITION</b>	
They were not aware of the switch to DTV	9
They were unaware of the correct transition date	5
They did not think the stations they watch would switch to digital	9
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>CONSUMERS WHO WERE AWARE BUT DID NOT ACT</b>	
They forgot to upgrade	24
They were unable to attain assistance to upgrade	4
They relied on another member of their household to upgrade	3
They waited too long to buy or set up a digital set or a converter box	31
They were out of town or too busy or knew they could do it later	5
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>67</b>

<b>CONSUMERS WHO HAD PROBLEMS WITH THE CONVERTER BOX COUPON PROGRAM</b>	
A coupon did not arrive in time	27
Wanted coupon or had not received coupon from NTIA	59
The retail store was out of boxes	1
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>CONSUMERS WHO HAD INITIAL DIFFICULTY WITH THEIR CONVERTER BOXES</b>	
Setting up converter boxes was too hard	27
They didn't understand the instructions for the digital set or the converter box	34
Their converter box "didn't work"	100
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>CONSUMERS WHO HAD RECEPTION AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS</b>	
Their antenna didn't work or they have no antenna or their antenna wasn't connected	33
Problem with channel or call sign	85
Weak or spotty signal	60
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>CONSUMERS COMPLAINING ABOUT NOT RECEIVING WILMINGTON SIGNALS</b>	
Problem with channel or call sign	232
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>232</b>
<b>OTHER PROBLEMS</b>	
Satellite subscribers to Dish Network or Direct TV – did not subscribe to local package	22
They thought all their sets were hooked up to cable or satellite	14
They were waiting for cable or satellite installation	6
Wanted DTV consumer information sent to them	7
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>797</b>

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