

Remarks of Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate
NTIA Federal Government Partners Meeting
Monday, December 8, 2008

Good Morning. Thank you, Assistant Secretary Baker, and NTIA for hosting this event. The last time I was with you, I was asking for your agency's assistance in educating Americans regarding the launch of one of the nation's most revolutionary technological advancements—the digital television transition. That was long before the millions of PSAs, or the unveiling of NTIA's coupon program or the thousands of outreach visits to local communities we've made. Since then, statistics show that 90% and in many areas over 90% of Americans are now aware of the Transition—which is good news since we are now just 71 days away!

My colleagues at the FCC and I have committed our personal time and effort to travel across the country holding town hall meetings and public forums at broadcast stations, senior centers, and retail stores. During my travels, I have also reached out to state and local officials, mayors and governors, and many of your state counterparts. From over 1,000 seniors at Mayor Daly's Annual Seniors Conference in Chicago to small groups such as college students in Auburn, Alabama, we have focused a great deal of effort on specific outreach to constituencies who rely most on over the air

television for their news, information, and emergency alerts. That is why your help is so critical, as many of you touch Americans most at risk.

My colleagues at the Commission have been from Alaska to Miami to our tribal lands. In addition to the Commissioners, the FCC staff has held over 8,000 outreach events and distribution visits across the country. Our National DTV Task Force continues to target specific segments of the population most at risk during the DTV transition—from low-income communities, to non-English-speakers, to individuals with disabilities. We have educational materials available in 20 languages, as well as Braille and large print. And we have a 3-part video series for the hearing impaired.

I want to thank NTIA, which has been an invaluable partner throughout the Transition. Your efficient administration of the coupon program has allowed millions of Americans to access new digital programming today without the expense of a new television or pay TV service---even more important in these serious economic times. I continue to remind citizens everywhere I go to “apply, buy, and try” – and not wait til February 17!

Let me take a moment to express our gratitude to the broadcasters and citizens in Wilmington, North Carolina, who completed their digital transition five months early on September 8. The FCC learned many

valuable lessons from this early transition. And we continue to update our FAQ and other website information as we encounter problems and try and provide solutions. We encourage more broadcasters to utilize soft tests so that with each we take note of the concerns and complaints that result, and use these experiences to better respond to the challenges of the digital transition.

We are also thankful for the more than \$1 billion donated by NAB and NCTA. I can hardly turn on your television these days without seeing a PSA, crawl, or ad for the DTV Transition! Thanks to those who have literally saturated the American airwaves with this vitally important message.

I think that as we approach the last two months before this historic and truly revolutionary Transition, it is important to remember why we are undertaking this massive effort. The DTV Transition is about far more than movie-quality picture and sound, and incredible new free program offerings. The Transition is about more efficient use of spectrum, more new wireless devices, and about saving lives by making spectrum available for public safety officials in times of crisis—such as a natural disaster or terrorist attack. We appreciate and thank you. And we need your continued

assistance for the next 71 days—so that we ensure no American is left in the dark on February 17!