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KASRA Members:

Following is an article on the coming change in TV transmission after February 17, 2009. This government program is meant to smooth the transition to the new arrangement in 2009. We will send you additional information shortly.

Evo for KASRA

Get ready for Digital TV:

$40 coupons to help consumers with transition

On Jan. 1, 1954, NBC broadcast the first coast-to-coast color television program showing the Tournament of Roses Parade. More than fifty years later, the greatest advance in television will happen when full-power television broadcasters switch from analog to all-digital broadcasting after February 17, 2009.

To assist households with the transition, the federal government created the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program. The program will help the public continue receiving free, over-the-air television after February 17, 2009.

Why is television going from the current television broadcast technology to digital? The Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 requires broadcasters to switch from analog to all-digital broadcasting after February 17, 2009. Digital television provides a clearer picture and more programming but also does it more efficiently, using less of the airwaves.

Digital broadcasting will free up some of the nation's airwaves for firefighters and police to better communicate during emergencies and will allow consumers access to next-generation wireless services.

What is the significance of the February 17, 2009 digital TV transition date?

If households receive television programs free, over the air using "rabbit ears" or a rooftop antenna, they must take action to continue to receive their television service after February 17, 2009.

By February 17, 2009, "over-the-air" television viewers will need to either purchase a new device, called a digital-to-analog converter box; subscribe to cable or satellite service; or purchase a television with a digital tuner to watch TV after that date.

How can the public obtain a $40 coupon toward purchasing an eligible converter?

All households in the United States and its territories are eligible to request coupons on a first-come-first-served basis. A maximum of two, $40 coupons per household will be allowed to help offset the cost of a converter, which is expected to cost between $50 and $70 when it hits the market in 2008.

Consumers may call 1-888-388-2009 (1-888-DTV-2009) between January 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009, or go to www.dtv2009.gov to request coupons. Coupons will expire after 90 days. Where can the public buy a coupon-eligible converter?

Coupon-eligible converters will be available in stores and online where televisions and other consumer electronics products are purchased. The government will provide a list of eligible converters and participating retailers online and when coupons are mailed to consumers.

What can the public do to help with the digital TV transition?

Become informed about the digital TV transition and tell others. Details about the Coupon Program can be found at www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon and for information about the entire digital TV transition, go to www.dtv.gov.

What else can the public do to plan for the transition?

Now is the time to identify any televisions in your home that receive free,

over-the-air programming through an antenna. Take a quiz to see what options are available for your household at http://www.dtvtransition.org/. The public also should help friends, parents or other family members who may have difficulty making this determination on their own so no one is left without television service after February 17, 2009.

Other organizations wanting to work with the U.S. Department of Commerce to educate the public about the digital transition, may call (202) 482-9114. Working together, we can make the digital transition a success for all Americans.