

E-Scrap News
P.O. Box 42270
Portland, OR 97242-0270
(503) 233-1305; 233-1356 (fax)
www.resource-recycling.com
info@resource-recycling.com

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The arrival of digital broadcast TV to be preceded by two-year PR campaign

A broad coalition of government agencies, telecom companies and civil rights groups are coming together to educate consumers about the upcoming transition to a digital broadcast television signal from the current analog signal.

The DTV Transition Coalition (Washington) campaign was unveiled a day after Democratic Rep. John Dingell, Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, issued statements about a possible delay to the switch.

The Digital TV Transition Bill, signed into law in 2006, set a February 17, 2009 deadline for U.S. broadcasters to end transmission of analog television signals, which will affect an estimated 20 million U.S. households that depend on over-the-air telecasts. Those households will have to either purchase a new television capable to receive the digital signal, or purchase a set-top box that would translate the signal for older televisions. The 2006 law also mandates the creation of a federal coupon program to issue vouchers good for discounts on the set-top conversion boxes to help offset the cost for some consumers.

The transition is expected to have a massive impact on the electronics recycling industry because of the expected volume of obsolete televisions entering the waste stream following the signal switch.

The education campaign will be across all media, including television ads that will begin to run in early spring of 2008, promoting the voucher program and informing citizens about the signal switch. More details can be found online at www.dtvtransition.org.