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January 12, 2009

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: DTV Consumer Education Initiative; MB Docket No. 07-148**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The National Cable & Telecommunications Association, Inc. (“NCTA”) hereby submits its fourth report on the cable industry’s consumer education efforts in conjunction with broadcast stations’ transition to digital television (“DTV”) on February 17, 2009.

This report is submitted pursuant to the Commission’s Report and Order, released March 3, 2008, in the above-captioned proceeding instructing DTV.gov Transition Partners to report their consumer education efforts on a quarterly basis as a condition of continuing partner status.

Sincerely,

**/s/ Daniel L. Brenner**

Daniel L. Brenner

cc: Cathy Seidel, Chief, Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Pam Slipakoff, Chief of Staff, Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau

**FOURTH REPORT ON THE  
NATIONAL CABLE & TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION'S  
DTV CONSUMER EDUCATION EFFORTS**

The National Cable & Telecommunications Association (“NCTA”) hereby submits its fourth report on its consumer education activities in conjunction with the broadcasters’ transition to digital television (DTV). As a DTV.gov transition partner, NCTA provides the following update to the Commission on its activities since our last quarterly report, filed October 10, 2008. We incorporate by reference the cable industry’s ongoing DTV consumer education campaign and related activities discussed in the April 10, 2008, July 10, 2008 and October 10, 2008 reports.<sup>1</sup>

NCTA is the principal trade association representing the cable television industry in the United States. Its members include cable operators serving more than 90% of the nation’s cable television subscribers, as well as more than 200 cable programming networks, and suppliers of equipment and services to the industry. The cable industry is also the nation’s largest broadband provider of high speed Internet access through fiber optic technology deployed in its two-way interactive network.

**DTV Consumer Education PSAs**

As NCTA discussed in its previous reports, the cable industry committed in September 2007 to a nationwide consumer education campaign to alert all Americans about the digital transition and the tools available to help them manage the transition.<sup>2</sup> The cable industry’s 18-month multi-media consumer education campaign, *Get Ready for Digital TV*, has informed millions of cable customers and non-cable viewers about the broadcasters’ DTV transition and

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<sup>1</sup> See *In the Matter of DTV Consumer Education Initiative*, MB Docket No. 07-148, National Cable & Telecommunications Association Quarterly Reports, Apr. 10, 2008, July 10, 2008 and Oct. 10, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> See *e.g.*, NCTA News Release, Sept. 26, 2007.

ways to insure continued service to analog television sets after the transition. The major component of the campaign is the industry's \$200 million commitment to provide commercial advertising time through public service announcements (PSAs) about the digital transition to air through February 2009.

We are pleased to report that the cable industry has far exceeded its original commitment. Beginning in September 2007 through October 2008 (the most recent data), the value of the total airtime in which cable operators and programmers ran DTV PSAs equals more than \$241 million. This figure will increase when the November and December 2008 data is available and the industry expects to add additional airtime to the total between now and the transition date.<sup>3</sup>

As previously reported, NCTA developed eight unique PSAs in a variety of versions and lengths for its member cable operators and programming networks along with media plans for their use. And in an effort to reach a wider audience, several of these spots have been made available in both English and Spanish language versions.

In addition to running NCTA's ads, some NCTA member companies created their own PSAs appropriate for their individual audiences and customer demographics. For example, Mediacom taped a 30-second public service announcement on the DTV transition in Des Moines, Iowa featuring Congressmen Tom Latham and Leonard Boswell and U.S. Senator Charles Grassley. The spots started airing on cable networks on December 6, 2008 and are scheduled to run in all markets of the West Region through January 31, 2009. Senator Grassley's PSA is airing on the same schedule statewide.

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<sup>3</sup> The Cable and Telecommunications Association for Marketing (CTAM) surveys cable companies monthly to request reporting data on the number of times that PSAs on the digital transition have run and the commensurate commercial value of that time.

In October 2008, over twenty cable networks produced DTV transition ads, which began airing in the top ten and many smaller cable companies last fall. These spots explain the impact of the transition on cable customers and how they can be sure all TV sets in the home will work after February 17, 2009. The spots also encourage customers to help their friends and family with over-the-air TV sets prepare for the switchover to digital. The cable network ads feature recognizable talent to reach a wide variety of customer demographic segments, including Hispanic, African American, baby boomer and other age groups, and family targets.

### **Other Consumer Education Initiatives**

In the last quarter of 2008, NCTA and its member companies continued to engage in a variety of public outreach and marketing activities launched under the *Get Ready for Digital TV* banner or through individual companies' own DTV education programs. Those companies that are DTV.gov partners file separate reports on their particular consumer education activities.

NCTA's web content about the transition, available in both English and Spanish, ([www.GetReadyForDigitalTV.com](http://www.GetReadyForDigitalTV.com) and [www.preparateparatvdigital.com](http://www.preparateparatvdigital.com)) has received more than 59,000 unique visitors to date and these visitors have viewed more than 138,000 pages. These websites provide links to government and other industry sites containing DTV information. The association's communications "toolkit", which is comprised of brochures and bill stuffers, messages for digital cable boxes, on-screen scrolls and telephone on-hold announcements, and other informational resources, has been widely used by our companies for DTV messaging. The toolkit was initially distributed in December 2007, and was updated and redistributed several times in 2008.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See [www.ncta.com/dtvtransitionindustrytoolkit](http://www.ncta.com/dtvtransitionindustrytoolkit).

As previously reported, NCTA partnered with the Cable & Telecommunications Association for Marketing (CTAM) to use their marketing and research expertise in cable's DTV consumer education initiatives.<sup>5</sup> Last fall, CTAM created additional programming that has been used by cable operators in local origination and on-demand services. CTAM also continued to conduct original research to track the levels of awareness (and most of the major cable operators have conducted research among consumers within their service areas as well). CTAM's research data has been shared with DTV Transition Coalition, the consortium of broadcast, cable, satellite, consumer electronics industries and other interested groups, to assist their efforts.

Retirement Living Television's two-minute video, produced last fall for cable on demand and online platforms, has been well-received, especially in educating the elderly about how to manage unconnected or "secondary" TV sets. In fact, many cable companies, both large and small, have targeted senior citizens with DTV education and support. For example, in November 2008, Midcontinent's customer service support team in Sioux Falls, South Dakota conducted a training session at a community center for older adults. Suddenlink technicians in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Missouri are helping nursing home residents, who do not subscribe to cable or satellite television, to hook up their converter boxes.

On December 17 and 18, 2008, the cable industry conducted another national radio news media tour to inform consumers about the options to prepare for the transition. Steve Effros, a cable industry veteran and DTV subject matter expert, gave 16 live interviews in major markets, including New York, Boston, Seattle and Dallas, and two national interviews. Mr. Effros did 17

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<sup>5</sup> See *In the Matter of DTV Consumer Education Initiative*, Further Notice, MB Docket No. 07-148, Comments of NCTA, July 27, 2008; First Quarterly DTV.gov Partner Report, April 10, 2008; Second Quarterly Report, July 10, 2008.

live interviews in major markets in September 2008, and a syndicated taped version aired more than 50 times around the country.

CTAM's syndicated DTV education column, which is aimed at smaller market newspapers and journals across the U.S., has garnered more than 48 million print media impressions since mid-September 2008. A second column was distributed in mid- October and has received more than 1.4 million print media impressions thus far.

As noted above, an array of company-specific DTV activities continued throughout the last quarter of 2008. For example, in November 2008, Suddenlink interviewed Commissioners Michael Copps and Robert McDowell about the DTV transition. As part of Suddenlink's Community Connections TV public affairs programming, Commissioner Copps' interview ran in numerous Suddenlink markets in December and Commissioner McDowell's interview will run throughout January 2009. Suddenlink is providing DVDs of these programs to libraries and senior centers in their markets. Many cable companies continue to promote awareness about the transition in news releases, monthly newsletters and other informational messages in their service areas.

Finally, NCTA continues to work with members of the DTV Transition Coalition to ensure up-to-date, consistent messaging and coordination in consumer education efforts, particularly as the transition date gets closer.

### **Outreach to Community and Grassroots Organizations**

Since September 2007, NCTA has worked with a variety of consumer and public interest groups, minority and grassroots organizations to help spread the word about the transition to their members and constituencies. As described below, NCTA has provided financial support and in-kind contributions of educational materials in both print and video formats. In the

summer of 2008, the industry stepped up its outreach to a broader base of civic and civil rights organizations.

NCTA's outreach effort recognizes that a significant number of Americans – including low-income groups – are at risk of losing television when analog over-the-air transmissions are terminated. The association established relationships with a wide variety of community-based groups and organizations, providing more than \$875,000 in grants to assist them with DTV transition education.

As with other consumer education efforts, the objective is to raise consumer and viewer awareness about the transition; educate consumers about their options for making the transition; and inform consumers about the availability of the government's DTV converter coupon program.

The 20 grant proposals funded by NCTA were evaluated on the basis of the organization's ability to reach consumers at greatest risk, including senior citizens, foreign-language speakers, minorities, rural residents, and the disabled. NCTA provided grantees with template communications materials, including flyers and fact sheets, tailored to each organization. The materials have been translated into several languages including Spanish, traditional and simplified Chinese, Hmong, Vietnamese, Korean, Laotian, and Khmer.

In addition, over the last several months, NCTA trained staff in each organization in the technical aspects of the transition and how to best use the educational materials. Many groups have, in turn, incorporated NCTA materials into their own publications, online content, educational programs and media forums.

Collectively these groups have reached hundreds of thousands of at-risk consumers with information about the transition through community and town hall meetings, conference

sessions, door-to-door canvassing, exhibits at state fairs and farm meetings, gatherings at places of worship, and advertising in community media outlets.

The following is a list of the organizations that have received cable support for their DTV transition efforts: AARP; the A. Philip Randolph Institute; the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now; American Association of People with Disabilities; American Corn Growers Association; Asian American Justice Center; Clergy Strategic Alliances; the Hispanic Federation; Labor Council for Latin American Advancement; Leadership Conference on Civil Rights; League of United Latin American Citizens; the Latino Coalition; League of Rural Voters; NAACP; National Association of Latin Elected and Appointed Officials; National Council of La Raza; National Black Caucus of State Legislators; National Black Church Initiative; National Coalition of Latino Clergy and Christian Leaders; and the Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

NCTA will continue to work with these and other organizations in the weeks leading up to the transition date.

### **Monthly Customer Bill Notices**

Finally, as the Commission is aware, the cable industry's voluntary consumer education campaign is bolstered by the FCC regulation requiring cable operators to provide monthly notices about the DTV transition in every customer's bill.<sup>6</sup> The detailed monthly notices alert customers about the cessation of analog broadcasting and the use of converter box equipment that may be needed for analog sets that are not connected to cable service in order to ensure continued viewing. They also provide information on government and cable company websites and toll-free telephone numbers where consumers may obtain information about the transition

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<sup>6</sup> See *In the Matter of DTV Consumer Education Initiative*, Further Notice, Report and Order, MB Docket No. 07-148, rel. March 3, 2008, at ¶¶ 1, 5. See 47 C.F.R. § 76.1630.

and the digital-to-analog converter box program. The notices, which started April 30, 2008, are inserted in all paper and electronic bills and will continue through March 2009.

### **CONCLUSION**

As the conversion from analog to digital broadcasting approaches, the cable industry's efforts over the last sixteen months to educate cable and non-cable viewers about the transition through various means demonstrates the industry's commitment to doing all that it can to help make this a successful milestone in our nation's history. NCTA and its member companies will continue to work with government, industry and other organizations to get over the finish line with a favorable outcome for all consumers.

Respectfully submitted,

**/s/ Daniel L. Brenner**

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