

WHAT IS DIGITAL TELEVISION?

Digital television (DTV) is a new way of broadcasting, and one that is transforming our television viewing experience. Images and sound are captured using digital technology, which can deliver a movie-quality experience. It also allows for multicasting (broadcasting more than one channel at a time) and interactive capabilities. In particular, digital pictures will be free from the "ghosts" and "snow" that can affect analog transmissions. That means better quality, more choices, and more control over your television. Digital television comes in two levels of quality:

- **Standard Definition TV (SDTV)** - SDTV is the basic quality level of display and resolution for both analog and digital. SDTV may be transmitted in a traditional (4:3) or widescreen (16:9) format.
- **High-Definition TV (HDTV)** - HDTV in widescreen format (16:9) provides the highest resolution and picture quality of all digital broadcast formats. Combined with digitally enhanced sound technology, HDTV sets new standards for sound and picture quality in television. (Note: HDTV and digital TV are not the same thing -- HDTV is one format of digital TV.)

WHY ARE WE SWITCHING TO DIGITAL TELEVISION?

The U.S. government has mandated a conversion to digital TV to free up parts of the scarce and valuable broadcast airwaves. Those portions of the airwaves will be used for other important services, such as advanced wireless and public safety services (for example, police, fire departments, and rescue squads.)

For consumers, digital TV allows television stations to provide several program streams, or "multicasts," on what today is one broadcast channel. In addition, converting to digital TV will also significantly improve the quality of TV picture and sound.

WHEN IS THE FULL TRANSITION TO DIGITAL?

The date set by Congress for final transition to digital is February 17, 2009. After that date, television stations across the United States will only broadcast digital signals.

CAN I GET DIGITAL TV TODAY?

Yes. Consumers can get DTV today in three ways: 1) by connecting a special receiver - a set-top box - to their existing analog TV to decode over-the-air digital signals, 2) by subscribing to a digital service through their cable or satellite company, or 3) by purchasing a new digital television set with a built-in digital receiver.

However, while analog televisions can receive SDTV digital channels through cable or with a set-top box, they cannot show high definition programs. To see high-definition television a digital television set supporting HDTV is required.

WILL MY ANALOG TELEVISION STILL WORK AFTER THE TRANSITION?

Analog TVs will continue to work with cable, satellite, VCRs, DVD players, camcorders, video game consoles and other devices for many years. However, after 2/17/2009, they will not be able to receive over-the-air television unless a special set-top box receiver is added.

WHERE DO I FIND THE MN CHANNEL ON DIGITAL TELEVISION?

The MN Channel airs full-time (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) on digital channel 17-2 in the greater Twin Cities area. In addition, it can be seen on Comcast Cable channel 243, Time-Warner Cable channels 234 and 1024, and Mediacom Cable channel 102.

“The Best of the MN Channel” also airs on analog channel **tpt17** on Saturdays (7pm – midnight) and Sundays (6pm – midnight.)

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE MN CHANNEL AFTER THE 2/17/09 CONVERSION?

After 2/17/09, analog channel **tpt 17** will no longer broadcast as it does today. Rather, everyone will access the MN Channel through the full time, statewide digital channel (17-2 in the Twin Cities).

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DIGITAL CONVERSION?

For more information on digital television, visit our website, www.tpt.org/DTV , and click on “Digital TV Schedule” near the bottom of the first column.

The government has also set up a website, <http://www.dtv.gov/index.html>, to help consumers understand all the facts behind this transition.

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Digital & Cable Statewide Coverage

education

MINNESOTA PUBLIC TELEVISION ASSOCIATION (MPTA)

The MPTA includes the six organizations providing PBS television services to the residents of Minnesota. Effective February 2008, all members of MPTA are broadcasting the digital MN Channel program service. Partner programs can be accessed through over-the-air digital or cable channels as follows:

arts

Minneapolis/St. Paul Area - Twin Cities Public Television

Broadcast: Channel 17-2

Cable: Comcast channel 202 in Minneapolis and channel 243 in St. Paul; Mediacom channel 102

business

cultures

Duluth/Superior Area - WDSE

Broadcast: Channel 8-4

Cable: Duluth - Charter channel 396

environment

Appleton Area - Pioneer Public Television

Broadcast: West Central Minnesota channel 10-3 or Southeastern Minnesota channel 20-3

faith

Austin/Rochester Area - KSMQ

Broadcast: Channel 15-4

health

Bemidji/Brainerd Area - Lakeland Public Television

Broadcast: Bemidji channel 9-6 or Brainerd Lakes channel 22-6

Cable: Lakeland - Paul Bunyan channel 334

history

Fargo/Moorhead Area - Prairie Public Television

Broadcast: Fargo KCGE Crookston/East Grand Forks area channel 16-3 and KFME Moorhead/Fergus Falls area channel 13-3

politics

Cable in Other Minnesota Cities

Cambridge - U.S. Cable channel 55

Eveleth / Chisholm - Mediacom channel 13

Fergus Falls - Charter channel 18

Grand Rapids - Itasca Community Television channel 7

Hibbing - Range TV Cable & Broadband channel 24

Mankato - Charter channel 12

Marshall - Charter channel 19

Rural Wood Lake - U.S. Cable channel 47

Rural Waseca - U.S. Cable channel 6

Thief River Falls - Sjoberg's Inc. channel 34

Willmar - Charter channel 19

science

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