

## **WBA Holds DTV Awareness News Conference**

The majority of Wisconsin's television stations were represented at your WBA's DTV Awareness News Conference, which was held in the rotunda of the State Capitol on Tuesday, January 29. Wisconsin's Public Television stations and WisconsinEye were also in attendance.

WBA President Michelle Vetterkind kicked off the News Conference by sharing the following remarks:

“Good afternoon! I thank you for joining us here today. The purpose of this news conference is to make sure that everyone in Wisconsin is aware of the upcoming transition to digital television. A federal law passed by Congress in 2006 will have a significant impact on the way 23% of Wisconsin households view television, starting in 2009. Television will change dramatically on February 17, 2009, when all full-power television stations across the country complete the federally mandated transition from analog to digital television (DTV) broadcasting. And while consumers have much to gain - including more free channels and the crystal clear pictures and sound of digital - the 23% of Wisconsin households that receive television through antennas risk losing television reception unless they take easy steps to upgrade. You can make the switch to DTV by following one of three easy steps by February 17, 2009. One - You may purchase a DTV converter box that plugs into your existing analog set. A converter box will enable you to receive free television reception, and the boxes = will be available in the near future. The Federal Government will be providing \$40 coupons that you may use toward the purchase of these boxes.’ Two - You may purchase a new television set with a built-in digital tuner. And three - You may subscribe to cable, satellite, or a television company service provider to continue using your analog TV set. The Converter boxes are incredibly simple and user-friendly. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has created a voucher program for consumers who need a converter box. As of January 1, 2008, each household is eligible to apply for two \$40 coupons to be used towards the purchase of new converter boxes, which are expected to cost between 50 and 70 dollars each. Let’s talk about the amazing response already to the DTV coupon program. NTIA reported that it processed requests for 2.7 million coupons in the first 8 days of operation. Wisconsin is ahead of the curve in that almost 79,000 of those requests have come from Wisconsin alone. If you have not yet ordered your coupon, visit [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov) or call 1-888-DTV-2009 to start the process. Wisconsin Broadcasters are taking the DTV transition very seriously, and television stations across the country and throughout Wisconsin are meeting the challenges of the transition head on. Our television stations in Wisconsin have spent millions of dollars updating their equipment and infrastructure to prepare for the transition. In fact, over 98 percent of fullpower television stations in Wisconsin are already broadcasting in digital. Let me tell you about a few of the many ways your Wisconsin Broadcasters are helping consumers learn more about making the easy transition to digital. We have launched [WisconsinHDBroadcasting.com](http://WisconsinHDBroadcasting.com) - a “Wisconsin-specific” consumer-oriented website which addresses questions on the transition to DTV. We will be holding regional DTV Awareness meetings around the state of Wisconsin throughout March to educate

community leaders on how they can help us get the word out to consumers on the DTV Transition. We will also be hosting a DTV Booth at the Wisconsin State Fair this summer, as well as other Wisconsin events. The National Association of Broadcasters has established a 697 million dollar campaign to show broadcasters' commitment to educating the public on this transition which includes many initiatives your Wisconsin Broadcasters will be taking part in, including running DTV action spots, crawls, 30 minute educational programs, and placing banner ads on our websites. In addition, over 30 Wisconsin Television Broadcasters have joined a DTV Speakers Bureau, whereby participants travel around the state and provide presentations on the DTV transition to service clubs, retirement centers, schools, libraries and many other venues. I believe that we have an exciting challenge ahead of us. Wisconsin Broadcasters are working together to reach Wisconsin's citizens with our message to ensure a successful transition to digital for all full-power television stations on February 17, 2009."

Vetterkind then introduced WBA Chairman of the Board Doug Kiel, Vice Chairman and CEO of Journal Broadcast Group and President of Journal Communications. Doug highlighted the significant role broadcasters play in providing local content and being there for the public in times of crisis, in addition to the many other services broadcasters provide. The news conference concluded with Leonard Charles, Director of Engineering for Television Wisconsin, who provided a demonstration of how simple it is to hook up the converter box, along with views of the analog signal (with and without the converter box) vs. digital signal. Vetterkind, Kiel, and Charles provided many individual interviews to the stations in attendance and fielded questions from legislators throughout the afternoon (WBA provided all legislators with a personalized DTV Awareness Constituent kit during our State Legislative Day the week prior). In addition, all reporters in attendance were provided with a DTV Awareness News Kit.