

HD's coming; recycle old TVs

On Feb. 17, all full-power broadcast television stations in the United States (including your local news stations) will stop broadcasting on analog airwaves and begin broadcasting only in digital.

Digital broadcasting allows stations to offer improved picture and sound quality and additional channels. Converting to DTV will also free up airwaves in the scarce and valuable broadcast spectrum needed for public and safety services (police and fire departments, emergency rescue).

But what does this mean to you?

If you already have a television with a built-in digital tuner, you're all set. Not sure? Check your tel-

evision or its paperwork for the words "Integrated Digital Tuner," "Digital Tuner Built-In," "Digital Receiver," "Digital Tuner," "DTV," "ATSC," or "HDTV" (High Definition television) which indicate you are digital-ready.

If you have an older analog television, you have three choices:

- Connect your TV to a digital-to-analog converter box.

- Buy a digital TV (one with a built-in digital tuner).

- Subscribe to a service such as cable or satellite TV.

If you elect to keep your older set, the U.S. government is offering each U.S. household up to two \$40 coupons to apply toward the purchase of digital-to-



analog converter boxes. While costs of converter boxes vary, it is a one-time cost. To apply for your coupons, visit www.DTV2009.gov, or call 1-888-388-2009, TTY 877-530-2634, or Spanish TTY 1-866-495-1161.

If you buy a new digital-ready TV, treat your old set with the respect it deserves. Older TV sets with cathode ray tubes (CRTs) contain mercury and other chemicals that are harmful when released into the environment. They can poison

water and contaminate the ground, causing illness and birth defects in humans, and killing wildlife.

Recycle your old set at a household hazardous waste / e-waste drop off, or donate it. Visit www.svswa.org (under "household toxics") or call 831-775-3000 for information about recycling electronics.

Any choice you make, remember to make it by Feb. 17 so you don't miss one single episode of "Meet the Press" or the chance to see one of your neighbors on "Cops."

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