

UNC's "Last Battle Plan for DTV"

- by Diane Lucas

UNC-TV has provided an array of consumer education activities for the upcoming digital transition. Below is a summary of these activities, undertaken during 2008.

UNC-TV has produced a half-hour **North Carolina Now** special about the digital transition that was broadcast on Monday, February 18, 2008, from 7:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. In addition, UNC-TV has produced a number of additional DTV education segments for **North Carolina Now**. These have included:

- A five minute, 55 second feature story on the Wilmington, NC, early transition aired on Wednesday, June 4, 2008, during the 7:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. broadcast;
- A three minute, six second feature story on digital converter boxes aired on Wednesday, July 9, during the 7:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. broadcast;
- A five minute, 55 second feature story on the Wilmington, NC, early transition aired on Tuesday, August 12, between 7:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.;
- A five-minute feature story on the actual Wilmington digital conversion aired on Tuesday, September 9, between 7:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.

In addition, UNC-TV has produced a **North Carolina People** interview with FCC Chairman Kevin Martin, discussing the digital transition and the early analog turn off in Wilmington, NC. This program aired on Friday, September 5, from 9:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., and repeated on Sunday, September 7, at 5:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

UNC-TV also has produced live monthly DTV call-in shows titled "**Digital TV: Are You Getting It,**" providing information about the DTV coupon program, digital antennas, digital set top boxes, and other subjects related to the transition. These shows have included a panel, which answered live viewer phone calls and emails on the air, and have provided features about DTV topics. These shows were broadcast on the dates and times listed below:

- Tuesday, June 3, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. – 222 calls and 76 emails were received and answered;
- Wednesday, July 9, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. – 344 calls and 77 emails were received and answered;
- Tuesday, August 12, from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. – 835 calls and 26 emails were received and answered;
- Tuesday, September 30, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. – 939 calls and 67 emails were received and answered;
- Wednesday, October 29, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. – 644 calls were received and answered (email totals are unavailable for this broadcast)
- Monday, November 10, from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. – 609 calls and 38 emails were received and answered.
- Wednesday, January 7, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. – 646 calls from the general public and 69 calls from people needing more information after a soft shut-off test

during the program indicated they were not prepared for the analog turn-off.
Number of emails is not available yet.

- Wednesday, February 11, from 8 – 9 p.m. – date for our next live program, and we'll add more if the analog shut off date is moved.

UNC-TV also has contracted with our retired engineer, Wayne Estabrooks, to provide answers to technical DTV questions that come in to our Viewer Services staff. Even before our most recent “Digital TV: Are You Getting It?” program, Wayne recently had a backlog of over 150 emails and calls to get to and answer from people who are contacting UNC-TV about mostly digital reception problems.

UNC-TV has provided 60-second DTV education spots, currently broadcasting more than 180 seconds per day and 22.5 minutes per month between 6 p.m. and midnight .

UNC-TV has aired **DTV 411**, a national half-hour program with details about the analog-to-digital television transition, on Sunday, April 20, at 10:37 p.m. to 11 p.m.; on Wednesday, June 4, at 2:00 a.m. to 2:23 a.m., and on Friday, June 27, at 3:30 a.m. to 3:53 a.m. Also, a PBS program featuring *This Old House*'s Kevin and Norm talking about the analog-to-digital transition, titled **Get Ready for Digital TV**, was aired on Tuesday, November 11, from 10:30 p.m. to 11 p.m., and on Monday, November 17, from 10:30 p.m. to 11 p.m.

In addition, a section of the UNC-TV website at www.unctv.org is devoted to the DTV transition, and provides information and links on the DTV coupon program, how to watch DTV, UNC-TV's digital channels, how to select a DTV set, information on the DTV converter box, and contact addresses to get further information on the Web, by phone, or by mail. Kip's DTV Tips is UNC-TV's blog devoted to interaction and education about digital television (DTV). Featuring contributions from UNC-TV's Director of New Technologies, Kip Campbell and other DTV experts, this online resource on our website provides details about digital television conversion, what the DTV transition means for you and related technology topics, as well as a forum to discuss this new technology. The website also facilitates the process by which people can book a DTV speaking engagement from our UNC-TV Speakers Bureau.

To date, 18 speeches about the DTV transition have been provided this year to approximately 590 people. Groups requesting speeches have included senior centers, Kiwanis Clubs, libraries, and other organizations interested in knowing more about UNC-TV and the analog-to-digital transition. In addition, DTV information has been provided by UNC-TV's Ready To Learn staff at 52 workshops attended by 2,081 adults, and at 11 community events reaching 3,929 adults.

UNC-TV also has included DTV flyers in over 2,100 thank you letters sent to contributors and volunteers, and the DTV flyers were given to 21 UNC-TV tour groups totaling 319 people.

DTV information and flyers also were handed out to hundreds of people at the UNC-TV booths at the North Carolina Mountain State Fair and the NC State Fair.

UNC-TV also has run DTV transition ad in seven local magazines.

An online DTV quiz also has been created to assure that all staff members have a basic level of understanding about the analog-to-digital transition. This quiz provided information about the DTV questions and the quiz questions, then provided feedback on the answers employees provided to the questions.

UNC-TV plans to provide a phone bank of staff members and volunteers to answer viewer calls about the analog shutoff on the two days following the shutoff, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. During this time, few if any of our engineers will be available to help because of the difficulty of ending analog broadcasts and changing over to our final DTV channel assignments for all of our stations.