

BroadcastEngineering.

FCC encourages broadcasters to test analog shutoff

Jun 23, 2008



Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein warns that despite the looming February 2009 deadline, 15 percent of all television sets remain analog-only.

FCC commissioner Jonathan Adelstein has encouraged television broadcasters to temporarily pull the plug on analog television. He said it's necessary to alert viewers to the real analog shutdown coming next February.

Speaking via satellite to the Promax/BDA New York conference last week, Adelstein noted that five stations have already done a "soft-analog shut-off exercise." Those stations are in Spokane, WA; Orlando, FL; Hartford, CT; Las Vegas; and Honolulu. He noted that viewers without a digital feed saw lots of static and an 800 number to call.

"The federal government has no plan, and no one is in charge of seeing how and when the transition occurs," Adelstein warned. Despite the February 2009 deadline, 15 percent of all television sets remain analog-only, representing 22 million households, with about 10 percent of those homes "completely unready for the digital transition," he noted.

The NAB agreed with Adelstein. Marcellus Alexander, an NAB vice president, encouraged broadcast stations to embrace trial analog shutoffs to dramatically underscore what American households will lose if they don't take steps to upgrade their analog sets. He called a soft shutoff test "a best practice initiative."
