

The DTV Conversion has Finally Ended, or Has it?

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For many broadcasters, DTV conversion has been a process that has occupied our business lives for several years now. February 17 was the end-all day for conversion, but then the delay occurred for most of us. The new date, June 12, has finally come and gone and all full-power broadcasters in the State of Michigan have now converted to Digital television. The conversion is finally over. . . or is it?

If our goal was to shut down our analog signals, the answer is, "yes." If our goal was to achieve maximum digital penetration, the answer is, "probably." If our goal is to educate the public so that all households can maximize the technology, may I suggest, "no." Many households subscribe only to basic cable and are watching this through their beautiful new HDTV units. Yet many of these homes are watching our broadcast stations on a down-converted analog signal and not using the HD tuners to watch our stations in high-def over-the-air.

Many newer sets have the ability to integrate high-def signals through the digital tuner in the set along with basic cable from their provider, but owners simply are not aware of this, or do not know how to set up or re-scan their HDTV units.

I know we can all do more and we will not be fully converted until all sets in the home receive our broadcast signals. I also know that our audience will not understand and accept the entire purpose of this transition until each household has the opportunity to enjoy our programming at its very best, the way it is now intended to be enjoyed.