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Thursday, Oct. 09, 2008

## Merced Sun-Star Tip List: It will be the end of rabbit ears, but TV's analog-to-digital conversion can be smooth

The idiot box is going digital.

And if you're like me, you're about as prepared for the transition as my parents were for their first cell phone (10 years later they still don't know how to check their voice mail).

I like to consider myself technologically savvy -- heck, I just checked my e-mail and updated my MySpace page from my cell phone. But as the clock ticks down on the final days of analog, I feel like the guy in the grocery store buying 15 cases of bottled water the day before Y2K.

What's going to happen to my TV?

What if it doesn't work?

What do I do with my old one if I get a new one?

Let's start with the history.

According to the Federal Communication Commissions Web site dedicated to the digital transition -- [www.dtv.gov](http://www.dtv.gov) -- U.S. Congress mandated that Feb. 17, 2009, would be the last day for full-power television stations to broadcast in analog. That means it could be lights out for "Grey's Anatomy" if your television isn't ready for the revolution.

My television is old, so I fear it may be in the danger zone. There are no liquid crystals, just rear projection. It's not flat, it's more portly. It's certainly not high definition; in fact, sometimes it reverts to black and white without explanation.

But believe it or not, my 25-inch box is safe -- it has an internal digital tuner.



October 9, 2008

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According to the FCC site, televisions without an internal digital tuner that receive analog signals from rabbit ears or rooftop antennas

will be the big losers come Feb. 17.

But even for those people who are attached to their set for one reason or another -- I still remember the TV I had when I fell in love with Winnie from "The Wonder Years" -- all hope isn't lost. Digital-to-analog converter boxes are available, and the government is offering up to two coupons per household, each for a \$40 discount.

For more information on the TV Converter Box Coupon Program, visit [www.dtv.gov](http://www.dtv.gov), or call (888) 388-2009.

If you're not sure how to check whether your television has a digital tuner, the FCC says the box or the packaging materials will usually have markings with one of these words:

Integrated digital tuner

Digital tuner built-in

Digital receiver

Digital tuner

DTV

ATSC

HDTV

If you find any of those on the label, your television will survive the transition.

But what if it's time to step up into the Digital Age? What do you do with your old chunky television set?

The answer is at [www.aslrecycling.com/greenspots.php](http://www.aslrecycling.com/greenspots.php).

ASL Recycling acts as a state-authorized collector and recycler of electronic waste. Punch in your ZIP code into the locator, and it will point you to the nearest recycling location.

Casey's Moving Systems in Atwater is a free drop-off location for electronic waste. All proceeds it gets from the program go to the Special Olympics and the California Moving and Storage scholarship fund.

"We are geared up for (the transition)," says owner Jay Casey, adding that it has several locations that will allow the company to shift resources as needed. And, he said, "for the people that don't have the means to drop it off we can pick it up for a small fee."

To contact Casey's Moving Systems, call (209) 357-3384.

WHAT'S HAPPENING? After Feb. 19, 2009, televisions without an internal digital tuner or digital-to-analog converter box won't receive broadcast signals.

WHO IS INVOLVED: Federal Communications Commission, [www.dtv.gov](http://www.dtv.gov).

WHAT'S BEING DONE: Converter boxes are available with coupons from the government. Local recycling centers offer free drop off.

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### Tip off the tip list!


If you see something broken or in need of repair in your neighborhood, call the Sun-Star Tip List reporter, Tom Price, with your tips at (209) 385-2482 or e-mail [tprice@mercedsunstar.com](mailto:tprice@mercedsunstar.com).

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### Help & Info

**I just did the switch with DDT901 from Circuit City, I now get 16 channels, some are Spanish. A very cool RTN out of Fresno, all the old shows. All for free. :: 10/09/08 7:31am**

- billandmandy 

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