



EMERGENCY: 911  
POLICE NON-EMERGENCY:  
890-3335  
CITY INFORMATION:  
996-3000  
(effective 9/15/08)  
CRIME PREVENTION:  
807-5433  
FIRE PREVENTION:  
831-6392  
TRASH RECYCLING  
831-6890  
UTILITY BILLING:  
890-3245  
CITY WEB SITE:  
<http://www.raleighnc.gov>

**NUMBERS TO REMEMBER**



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8/08

## GEAR UP FOR THE CONVERSION TO ALL-DIGITAL TELEVISION

After Feb. 17, 2009, full-power television stations will broadcast in digital only. In 1996, the U.S. Congress authorized the distribution of an additional broadcast channel to each broadcast TV station so that they could start a digital broadcast channel while simultaneously continuing their broadcast on an analog channel. Later, Congress mandated Feb. 17, 2009, as the last day for full-power television stations to broadcast in analog. The switch from analog to digital broadcast television is referred to as the digital TV (DTV) transition.

Digital broadcasting allows stations to offer improved picture and sound quality, and digital is much more efficient than analog. For example, rather than being limited to providing one analog program, a broadcaster is able to offer a super sharp "high definition" (HD) digital program or multiple "standard definition" (SD) digital programs simultaneously through a process called "multicasting." Multicasting allows broadcast stations to offer several channels of digital programming at the same time, using the same amount of spectrum required for one analog program. For example, while a station broadcasting in analog on channel 7 is able to offer viewers only one program, a station broadcasting in digital on channel 7 can offer viewers one digital program on channel 7-1, a second digital program on channel 7-2, a third digital program on channel 7-3, and so on. This means more programming choices for viewers. Further, DTV can provide interactive video and data services that are not possible with analog technology.

An important benefit of the switch to all-digital broadcasting is that it will free up parts of the valuable broadcast spectrum for public safety communications (such as police, fire departments, and rescue squads). Also, some of the spectrum will be auctioned to companies that will be able to provide consumers with more advanced wireless services (such as wireless broadband).

For viewers who have one or more televisions that receive free over-the-air programming (with a roof-top antenna or "rabbit ears" on the TV), the type of TV you own is very important. A digital television (a TV with an internal digital tuner) will allow you to continue to watch free over-the-air programming after Feb. 17, 2009. However, if you have an analog television, you will need a digital-to-analog converter box to continue to watch broadcast television on that set. This converter box also will enable you to see any additional multicast programming that your local stations are offering.

To help consumers with the DTV transition, the U.S. Government established the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), a part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, administers this program. Every U.S. household is eligible to receive up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, toward the purchase of eligible digital-to-analog converter boxes. The coupons may be used only for eligible converter boxes sold at participating consumer electronics retailers, and the coupons must be used at the time of purchase. (Please note that these coupons will expire 90 days after mailing). Manufacturers estimate that digital-to-analog converter boxes will sell from \$40 to \$70 each. This is a one-time cost. For more information on the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program or to request a coupon, visit the NTIA's Web site at [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov), or call 1-888-388-2009 (voice) or 1-877-530-2634 (TTY).

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Cable and satellite TV subscribers with analog TVs hooked up to their cable or satellite service should not be affected by the Feb. 17, 2009 cut-off date for full-power analog broadcasting, but should contact their provider to find out if anything is needed to be prepared for the February deadline.

There are many sources of information about the digital transition but one of the best is the federal government's Web site [www.dtv.gov](http://www.dtv.gov). It contains information on what DTV is, questions consumers should ask when purchasing new television sets, what programs are available in DTV, and much more. You can also get further information by calling 1-888-CALL-FCC.

## **SERVICE ANIMALS IN PLACES OF BUSINESS**

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Under the Federal Government's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), privately owned businesses that serve the public, such as restaurants, hotels, retail stores, taxicabs, theaters, concert halls, and sports facilities are prohibited from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. This includes allowing people with disabilities to bring their service animals into business premises in whatever areas customers are generally permitted.

Under North Carolina law, persons with seizure disorders or disabilities related to mobility, hearing or vision are entitled to the accommodations, advantages, facilities and rights for use of all public transportation and places of public accommodation listed in NCGS 168-4.3. This includes hotels, lodging places, resorts or places of amusement. Such persons have the right to be accompanied by a service animal in these places, except that the animal may not be required to occupy a seat. The person with the disability may not be required to pay an extra charge for the use of the service animal, but is liable for any damage done by the animal. Every such person with a disability also has the right to keep the service animal on any premises he or she leases, rents or uses.

Under North Carolina law, it is illegal to disguise an animal as a service animal. It is also illegal to deprive a person with a mobility, hearing, or visual disability or a person with a seizure disorder of the animal, or any other normal rights associated with the use of a service animal. Violations are a Class 3 misdemeanor.

### **What is a Service Animal?**

The ADA defines a service animal as any guide dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability. If the animal meets this definition, it is considered a service animal under the ADA, regardless of whether it has been licensed or certified by

a state or local government. Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the individual with a disability cannot perform. A "Seeing Eye" dog, used by some individuals who are blind, is the type of service animal with which most people are familiar. But there are other service animals that assist people with other types of disabilities in their day-to-day activities.

### **Some examples include**

- Alerting persons with hearing impairments to sounds;
- Alerting persons with epilepsy of an impending seizure;
- Pulling wheelchairs or carrying and picking up objects for persons with mobility impairments; and,
- Assisting persons with mobility impairments with balance.

If you have further questions about service animals or other requirements of the ADA, you may call the U.S. Department of Justice's toll-free ADA Information Line at 1-800-514-0301 (voice) or 1-800-514-0383 (TDD).

In addition, if you would like to receive an application for registration of your service animal, you may call the North Carolina Client Assistance Program at (919) 855-3600 or 1-800-215-7227 (voice or TYY) or write to 2806 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2806.

## **SERA LAUNCHES "SAVE RALEIGH HOMES" CAMPAIGN**

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In response to many individuals and families in our community facing difficult financial times due to job layoffs, increasing food and gas prices, and overwhelming adjustable rate mortgage payments, the Southeast Raleigh Assembly (SERA) is presenting a new campaign, "Save Raleigh Homes."

If you or someone you know needs answers about how to keep or protect your home, "Save Raleigh Homes" may be able to help --- before it is too late.

SERA knows that every situation is different. For some, this is the first time they will not be able to meet their monthly mortgage obligation. Others are already undergoing the foreclosure process. And some may be aware of increased expenses and decreased income or job loss in the not-to-distant future. "Save Raleigh Homes" can provide options, answers and solutions to help you protect your home --- and your future. To access reputable resources that can respond quickly to help protect your home, visit [www.SaveRaleighHomes.org](http://www.SaveRaleighHomes.org) or call toll free 1-877-900-2345 to learn how SERA can help.

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