

FCC Commissioner Tate Will Hold Digital TV Forum on U of M Campus

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The University of Memphis will be the site of a public forum by the Federal Communications Commission on Friday, September 19, to discuss the impending change of television broadcasts from analog to digital. The forum will be held in the Panhellenic Ballroom from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

The Panhellenic Building is located at 384 Patterson Street, on the western edge of the U of M campus, just south of the FedEx Institute of Technology. Nearby on-campus parking is available in the parking garage on Innovation Drive, just off Central Avenue, adjacent to the Fogelman Executive Center and the FedEx Institute.

Speaking for the FCC will be Tennessee native and FCC Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate. Following her remarks, the session will be opened up for questions from members of the audience.

Partnering with the FCC in its local public awareness initiative is the U of M's Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change, named for Memphian and former FCC Commission Benjamin Hooks. The FCC specifically asked to partner with the Hooks Institute because of Hooks' significant involvement with broadcasting when he was an FCC commissioner.

The date of the transition from analog to digital broadcasting is set for February 17, 2009. At that time, homeowners' external antennae and set-top 'rabbit ears' will no longer be able to pick up the broadcast signal, unless a conversion device is connected to the television set. Cable and satellite dish customers will not be affected by the change.

Because a significant percentage of the American public continues to rely on rabbit ears or external antennae for their television reception, the FCC is undertaking a massive public information campaign to make people aware of the transition and to inform them what they need to do in order to be able to continue to receive broadcast television signals.

In addition to public events such as the one at the University of Memphis, public service announcements on television stations, and articles and advertisements in print media, the FCC has also established a Web site with the information: www.DTV.gov