

Surveys: More than 2M households unready for DTV

by PETER SVENSSON
AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK—More than 2 million households saw their major broadcast TV channels disappear into a fuzz of static when analog service ended June 12.

That is nearly half the number that were unready in February, when most analog TV broadcasts were originally scheduled to be turned off. The shutdown was delayed for four months at the behest of the Obama administration.

Research firm SmithGeiger LLC said last June 12 that about 2.2 million households were still unprepared around the beginning of June. Sponsored by the National Association of Broadcasters, it surveyed 948 households that relied on antennas and found that 1 in 8 had not connected a digital TV or digital converter box.

Nielsen Co., which measures TV ratings with the help of a wide panel of households, put the number of unready homes at 2.8 million, or 2.5 percent of the total television market, as of June 7. In February, the number was 5.8 million.

"We know some viewers will wait until the very last minute, or even after June 12, until they take action," said Paul Karpowicz, second vice chair of the television board of the NAB.

Requests for \$40 converter box coupons from the government have spiked this week, according to the Department of Commerce. Last June 8 alone, it received requests for 179,000 coupons,

nearly twice the daily rate it saw a month ago. However, those coupons won't get to viewers by Friday. It takes nine business days. Without the government discount, converter boxes generally cost between \$40 and \$60.

Nielsen said minority households are less likely to be prepared, as are households consisting of people under age 35. Households with people older than 55 are far more likely to be prepared than the average.

The Albuquerque-Santa Fe area continues to be the nation's least ready market in the Nielsen survey, with 7.6 percent of TV households still unprepared.

Nielsen does not survey Puerto Rico, which is also believed to have many unready households. Both the Caribbean island and New Mexico have relatively few households connected to cable. Households that have all their sets connected to cable or satellite service are unaffected by the analog broadcast shutdown.

Both the Nielsen and SmithGeiger surveys count households as unprepared even if they have taken some steps toward getting digital signals, like ordering a converter box coupon.

Stations will start cutting their analog signals June 12, but many waited until the evening. Nearly half of all US stations have already ended analog transmissions, though most big-city stations have held off until June 12. ■

Filipina's quick rise on the US Navy ranks

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she was assigned to her first ship in the supply department on the USS Acadia, one of the first ships to accept women.

At the time, she was only one of three Filipinas on board, an environment laced with sexual discrimination. "Males were scared of working with women due to (a climate of) sexual harassment phobia," says the 5'2, 110 lb Filipina.

She attended medical school during her off hours and was promoted to hospital corpsman third class within a few months.

She attributes her success to her mother, Helen Mamaril. I've always been focused. My mom gave me good training throughout my life."

By 1992, she was working in San Diego, married to a hospital corpsman chief and caring for their first child. After graduating from Surgical Technician School she was assigned to boot camp with the US Marines, since the Marines do not have their own medical unit.

She continued to overcome racial stereotypes, even among her subordinates. "Here I am, this Asian woman leading them, and you can feel it's not going

well with them. I think I was the first Filipina to be with the Marines even in the operating room."

Five years later she was nominated Senior Sailor of the Year while working at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. In January 2003 she was deployed overseas for Iraqi Freedom in Northern Kuwait. Her surgical company was in charge of evacuating the Marines, Army, sailors, and civilians.

"Nothing can prepare you when you see a Marine in a body bag because you're still a human being. You don't see that every day. That was really a totally humbling experience." Besides death and suffering, there were other additional unknowns such as the phobia of chemical biological warfare.

Those six months took a toll on her. She returned to San Diego and worked as leading chief, petty officer in the Intensive Care Unit and Critical Care Unit but she was a different person this time.

Maria says she didn't get the needed time and counseling to help her decompress and deal with her depression. "I had trauma from the war and I had to figure myself out again."

Debate for Calif lawmakers: Budget or blueberries?

by JULIET WILLIAMS
AP Writer

SACRAMENTO— What budget crisis?

As California faces what one official this week called a complete meltdown of state government, some lawmakers have their minds on other matters.

Like creating a blueberry commission. Or standing up for pomegranate juice. And, in what passes for health reform in the nation's most populous state, ensuring that the name tags of medical workers are in 18-point font.

Those are among the hundreds of bills being debated in the California Legislature as the state faces a \$24.3 billion deficit and the prospect of running out of cash by late July.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has urged lawmakers to act swiftly so the state can pass a budget before the fiscal crisis deepens. He's proposed eliminating health care for 1 million low-income children and the program that helps welfare recipients find work. Billions of dollars are expected to be cut from education, 5,000 state workers face layoffs and many of the others face furloughs and salary rollbacks that amount to a 15 percent pay cut.

So lawmakers' attention to less pressing issues earned a rebuke from the Republican governor, who has backed the idea of converting the Legislature to part-time status.

"They would probably concentrate more on the serious work and not some of the bills that come down ... for creating a blueberry commission and so on. There would not be time for that," he recently told the editorial board of The Sacramento Bee.

Among the more eyebrow-raising bills pending in the state

Legislature are ones that would:

- Ensure that juice sold as "pomegranate" is 100 percent pomegranate.

- Instruct 9th and 10th graders about the value of organ donation.

- Ban toy cigarette lighters.
- Require day cares to serve only healthy food to children.

Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, a Democrat from San Francisco, is the author of the name-tag bill and another that would establish a commission to promote California's growing blueberry industry. The commission's \$1.2 million annual budget would come from a surcharge on blueberries.

A spokeswoman for Ma declined to comment on the bills. In a written statement, Ma said the Legislature is working on measures to improve education, increase access to health care and keep jobs in the state. She did not mention blueberries.

Even some blueberry growers were skeptical of a commission, whose duties would include marketing and promotion.

"My blueberries promote themselves," said Suzanne Hasenplug of Patrick's Mountain Grown Fresh Berry Farm in Camino.

She doesn't oppose such a commission, but said the state faces more serious issues.

The leader of the state Senate, President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, said he understands the perception that some of the bills are not as urgent as the budget crisis.

"But at the same time, this is a body of 120 members, and the members are entitled to bring forward their ideas," said Steinberg, a Democrat from Sacramento. "I would hate to see the day where any leader or any system said to

people, 'You can't introduce the following idea.' This is democracy."

Legislative leaders said they are holding daily hearings on how to close the budget deficit, even if individual lawmakers are promoting their own bills.

They note that nearly all bills with multimillion-dollar price tags are off the table this year.

In a typical year, California lawmakers introduce about 2,800 bills and approve about a third of them, slightly ahead of the national average, said Brenda Erickson of the National Conference of State Legislatures. There also are limits: 40 bills per lawmaker per session in the Assembly and 50 per lawmaker per session in the Senate, which Steinberg cut to 40 this year because of the budget crisis. That's far short of the five-bill per lawmaker limit in Colorado, but stricter than most states, Erickson said.

How many bills Schwarzenegger will eventually sign into law is unclear. Last fall, he rejected about a third of the bills sent to him.

Time is not on the Legislature's side. Last June 10, state Controller John Chiang said tax revenue in May was \$827 million below projections. California, he said, was "less than 50 days away from a meltdown of state government."

Schwarzenegger could use his authority to call lawmakers into a special session that would prevent them from taking up any items unrelated to the budget. But he has expressed confidence negotiations will speed up as the financial deadlines draw near.

"I know they will speed up and they will take this seriously," Schwarzenegger said. ■

Despite the challenges, she was able to earn a BA degree in Health Care. "You have to channel your tension into something positive, through therapy and exercise."

In 2007, she earned an MA Degree in Security Administration. During that same year, she was deployed to the Arabian Seas twice, first on the USS Nimitz Aircraft Carrier followed by Aircraft Carrier Westpac, as the first Asian and Filipina.

As master chief and mother of two, Maria still loves working with patients and mentoring the

next generation of new recruits. "It's really a big change for them (Filipinos and women) to see someone like them at the very top". She says the road that she took benefited her in the end and can open the door for others.

She agrees that a lot has changed in the military: mandated policies prohibiting sexual harassment and post-traumatic stress treatment programs have long been implemented.

As for her father? He's very proud of his daughter. ■

U.S. Census Bureau News Los Angeles Regional Census Center 9301 Corbin Avenue, Suite 1000 Northridge, California 91324

Managers Being Recruited for 2010 Census Tagalog-Speaking Managers Sought for 19 counties

Northridge, CA

The Los Angeles Regional Census Center is actively recruiting managers for 27 Local Census Offices. 26 will be located in Southern California, and one in Honolulu, Hawaii. With the exception of the U.S. military, the nationwide recruiting effort for the decennial census is the largest peace time hiring of temporary federal employees.

In the fall of 2009, these 27 Local Census Offices will open to direct Field Operations for the region's population count on Census Day, April 1, 2010. These offices will be located in strategic areas of southern California and on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. Managers' salaries range from \$19.25 to \$29.00 per hour depending on location and position.

The current focus and priority is on recruiting and testing to fill six key management positions for each Local Census Office before the openings in the Fall, 2009. The positions are: Local Census Office Manager, Assistant Manager for Field Operations, Assistant Manager for Administration, Assistant Manager for Recruiting, Assistant Manager for Quality Assurance, and Assistant Manager for Technology.

Testing will be ongoing in Local Census Office cities and their surrounding areas. To reserve a seat for testing, please call (866) 861-2010, enter zero: "0" and your zip code.

New offices will open in the counties of Los Angeles, San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Fresno, Santa Barbara, and Honolulu, Hawaii.

For more information on Census 2010 jobs in the Los Angeles Region, please visit

www.census.gov/losangeles.

Click on the link for "Regional Employment."



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