

WGCU-TV giving viewers more time to get ready for DTV

WGCU TV is delaying the shutdown of its analog transmitter to coincide with the new June 12, digital television transition date.

Although some of the commercial television stations in the Fort Myers/Naples area have announced that they will shut off their analog signal in February, WGCU (the local provider of PBS programming) is giving its viewers a few more months to get ready for the analog shut off.

Rick Johnson, general manager of WGCU Public Media, pointed to the public television audience in announcing his decision,

“Those segments of the population that are less likely to be DTV ready — children in disadvantaged households, the elderly, and those who receive their television signals through over-the-air antennas — are a significant and important segment of the WGCU

viewing audience,” Mr. Johnson said.

The federal government’s decision to postpone the nationwide DTV conversion is, in part, because of the delay many have had in receiving a government issued \$40 coupon to use to purchase a converter box.

“With the delay many have experienced in getting a converter box coupon, we know that some of our over-the-air viewers are not ready for us to turn off the analog signal.” Mr. Johnson said. “We want to ensure that those viewers are able to continue to receive the best that public television has to offer through the new transition date.”

WGCU will continue to broadcast DTV transition informational spots and programs. The station is also operating a DTV Hotline at 590-2501 to answer viewers’ questions. ■

Free tax prep service offered

Consumer Credit Counseling Service and the United Way of Lee, Hendry, and Glades have launched free tax preparation services for hard-working people and their families. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program provides free and confidential filing of tax returns by IRS certified volunteers starting in February 2009.

The services are targeted to families with children earning less than \$42,000 and individuals with no qualifying children earning less than \$16,000 during 2008. Individuals and families will be asked to provide the following to the tax preparers at the time of service:

- Valid Social Security numbers for taxpayer, spouse and qualifying children
- Correct birth dates for all family members
- All W-2 was and tax statements for 2008

- Form 1098-mortgage interest, property taxes, Form 1099-DIV,G, INT, MISC, Q, R, RRB, SSA for 2008 if appropriate

- Photo ID for signers (if filing jointly, both filers must be present to sign the return)

- 2007 tax return if available
- Child care EIN number
- Void check and/or savings account number for direct deposit (optional)

The Free Tax Preparation VITA sites open in February and will continue through April 15. The locations for VITA tax assistance are:

- Cape Coral United Way House
- Dunbar United Way House
- Harlem Heights United Way House
- Estero-San Carlos United Way House
- Lehigh Acres United Way House
- LaBelle United Way House

Appointments are required. Dial United Way 2-1-1 or 433-3900 to make an appointment. ■



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