

NET's KRNE/Merriman to Go Off the Air for DTV Transition Tower & Antenna Work

LINCOLN, Neb. (July 31, 2008) -- NET Radio listeners of 91.5 FM and NET Television viewers of analog channel 12 or digital channel 17 will temporarily lose all over-the-air broadcast service beginning Sept. 1 to enable crews to prepare KRNE/Merriman for the upcoming digital transition. Cable and satellite viewers will not be affected. NET Radio listeners with computers can listen online at netNebraska.org/radio. NET Radio listeners in the Chadron area will be able to listen to NET Radio broadcasts at 91.9 FM.

KRNE/Merriman is the first transmitter in the state to be affected by the shutdowns required for NET's early digital transition. The work is planned to begin Sept. 1 and, if all goes well, could be completed by Sept. 19. NET engineers caution that these dates are estimates that may be affected by weather conditions or other delays. NET Television analog and digital signals, as well as NET Radio, will return temporarily when the tower work is completed.

However, since the analog television signal for the KRNE/Merriman is scheduled to shut off permanently on Oct. 14 -- to be replaced by the digital signal -- a significant delay in completing the work will effectively mean that the analog signal shut off on Sept. 1 will be the permanent shut-off for NET Television's analog signal in those areas. NET Television strongly encourages over-the-air viewers in this transmitter area to prepare for that contingency by acquiring and hooking-up analog-to-digital converter boxes or digital televisions in order to be prepared to receive a digital signal.

NET Television's digital signal will be available on channel 17 from approximately Oct. 14 - 21, after which it will be moved permanently to channel 12.

All television stations are required by federal law to stop broadcasting in analog as of Feb. 17, 2009. Most, including NET Television, are already broadcasting in digital and will simply turn off the analog signal on that date. With nine transmitters and numerous translators throughout the state, NET Television faces a much more complicated task. NET's early start date became necessary to schedule tower crews and the trained technicians who can install and/or convert transmitters to digital. Because of the national deadline, these specialists are in great demand and the least disruptive schedules were not available.

The upcoming digital transition will affect viewers across the country who receive free, over-the-air television signals through a rooftop antenna or rabbit ears connected to an analog TV set. To watch television after the transition, viewers will need to: 1) attach a set-top converter box to an existing TV and antenna; 2) purchase a new DTV or HDTV; or 3) subscribe to a paid service. For more information about all options, including converter boxes and the federal coupon program to defray costs, go to netNebraska.org/dtv or call the NET Call Center at 800-868-1868.

One benefit of the more efficient DTV process is that NET Television will be able to broadcast three digital channels in the same bandwidth previously used for a single analog program. In addition to NET1 (and NET-HD for those with high-definition televisions), digital viewers will also be able to receive NET2/PBS World, with live coverage of the Nebraska Unicameral as well as national and local news, public affairs, history and science programs, and NET3/Create, which features popular how-to, travel and lifestyle series.

NET1, NET2, NET3 and NET-HD are part of NET Television. NET Television and NET Radio are services of NET. For complete program schedules, visit NET's Web site at netNebraska.org/. For DTV information go to netNebraska.org/dtv.

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NET Television:

NET1 is Nebraska's first public television broadcast service and includes PBS and award-winning, locally produced public television programming; **NET2** offers live coverage of the Nebraska Unicameral and other news, public affairs, history and science programs; **NET3** is a 24-hour channel featuring the most popular how-to, travel and lifestyle series; and **NET-HD** presents high-definition digital broadcast programming displayed in a wide-screen format.