



The Growth Of Free TV

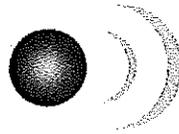
As Presented by Richard Schneider
President
Antennas Direct



Content

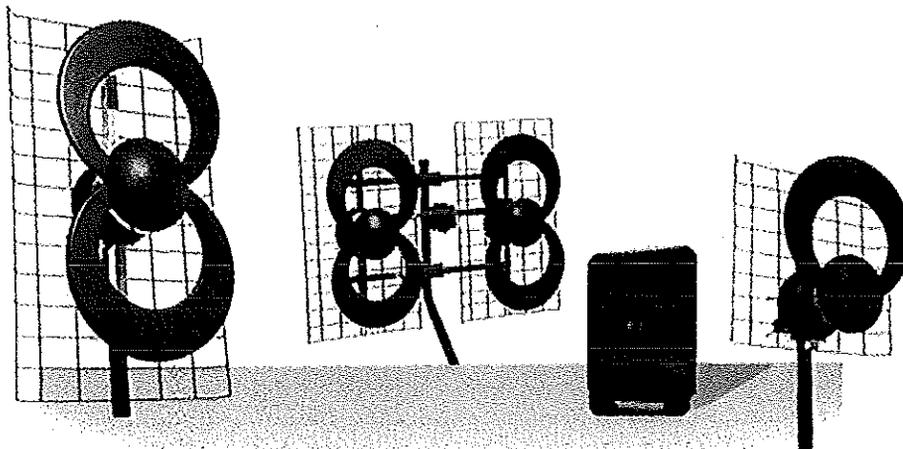
- What is Free TV?
- National and International Growth of Free TV
- Our Growth as a company
- Promotion of Free Local TV
 - NAB
 - Antennas Direct
- Need for Free Local TV
 - Public service
 - Economic interest
- Summary

Company Profile



ANTENNAS DIRECT

- Founded in 2003
- 7 years of consecutive profitability
- Dedicated Research and Development
- Portfolio of patented antenna designs
- “State of the Art” Laboratory
- 109% revenue CAGR since inception
- Growing sales on-line and at retail



Free TV

Free TV is very simply television as we new it in the past... broadcast over the air from your local television station.

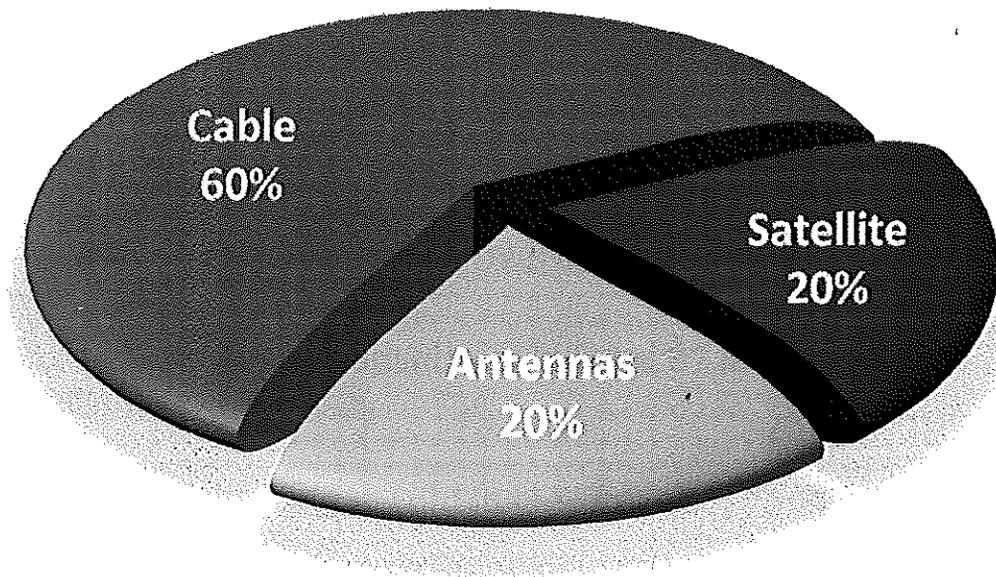
Unlike the past, broadcast television today is in HD, it delivers incredible quality of picture and it servers the viewers in more than ever before.

Lets look at how people get their TV...

Why Over-the-Air TV?

- Relatively low one-time cost (Converter box \$20 + Antenna as low as \$10)
- No recurring monthly fees (Cable and Satellite average \$87 per month, every month)
- More reliable than pay TV (weather, storms, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados, etc.)
- Best HDTV picture quality
 - Uncompressed over-the-air (OTA) signal vs. compressed Cable/Satellite signal
- Many markets now have over 50 channels over the air
 - Broadcasters are increasing number of multicasts
- Customers are using antennas to supplement or replace Pay TV

Current Primary Viewing Means



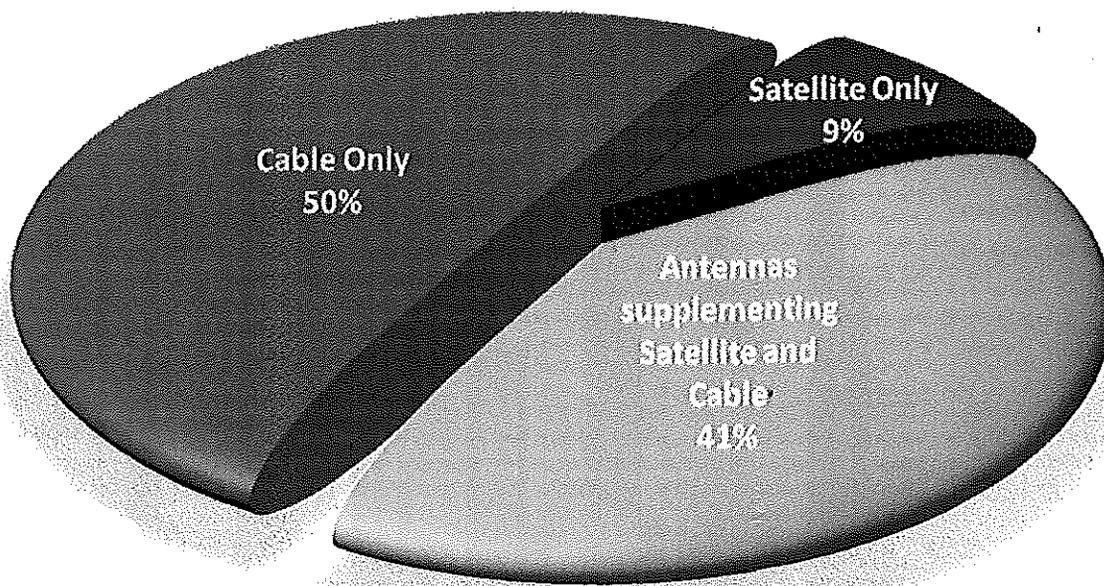
Source: General Accounting Office

Domestic OTA Antenna Market

- U.S. split between antenna, cable & satellite viewership
 - Antenna-only 21 Million TV households (20%)
 - Cable 64 Million TV households (60%)
 - Satellite 22 Million TV households (20%)
 - Plus 16% of cable & 58% of satellite subscribers use OTA as well
- 23 Million use OTA to complement cable/satellite for local broadcasts
- 65 Million requests for converter box coupons
- 2.1 to 2.7 TVs per household; in total 67 Million TV sets utilize antennas in the U.S.
- 4.4 Million antennas sold in U.S. in 2008; 2009 estimated at 5 - 7 Million
- Annual U.S. market of approximately \$250 Million

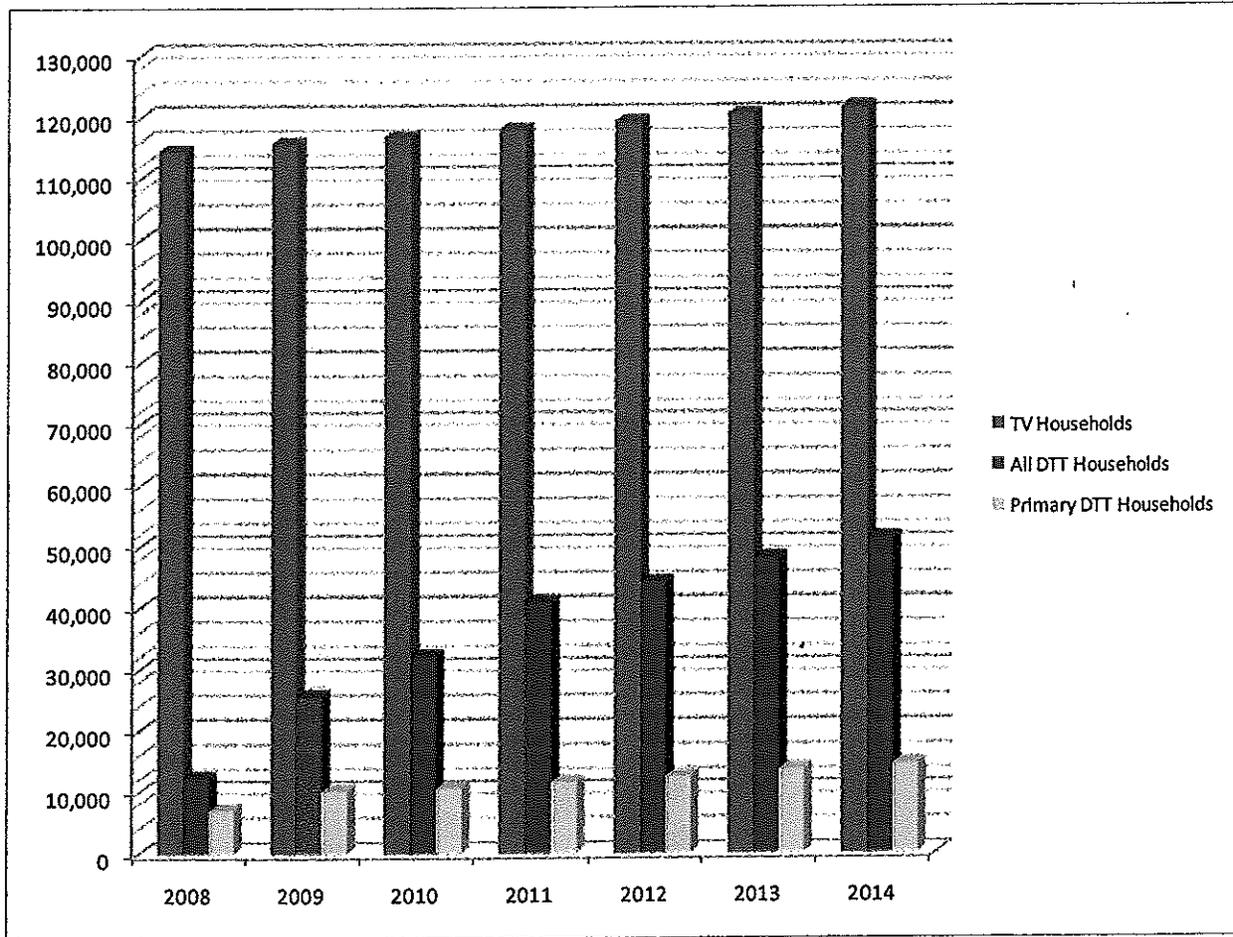
Source: General Accounting Office

Current Viewing Overlap



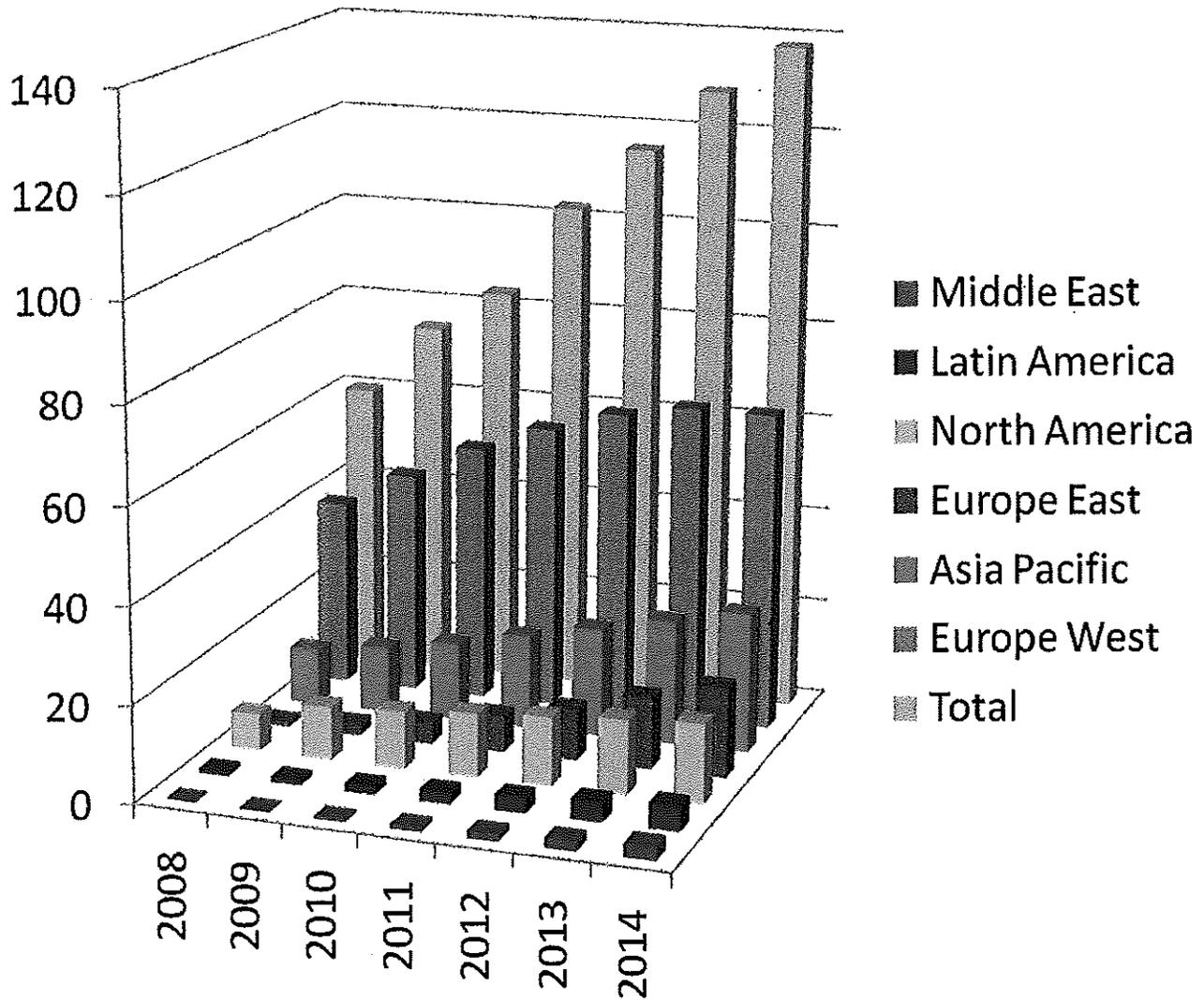
Source: General Accounting Office

Projected US Antenna Growth



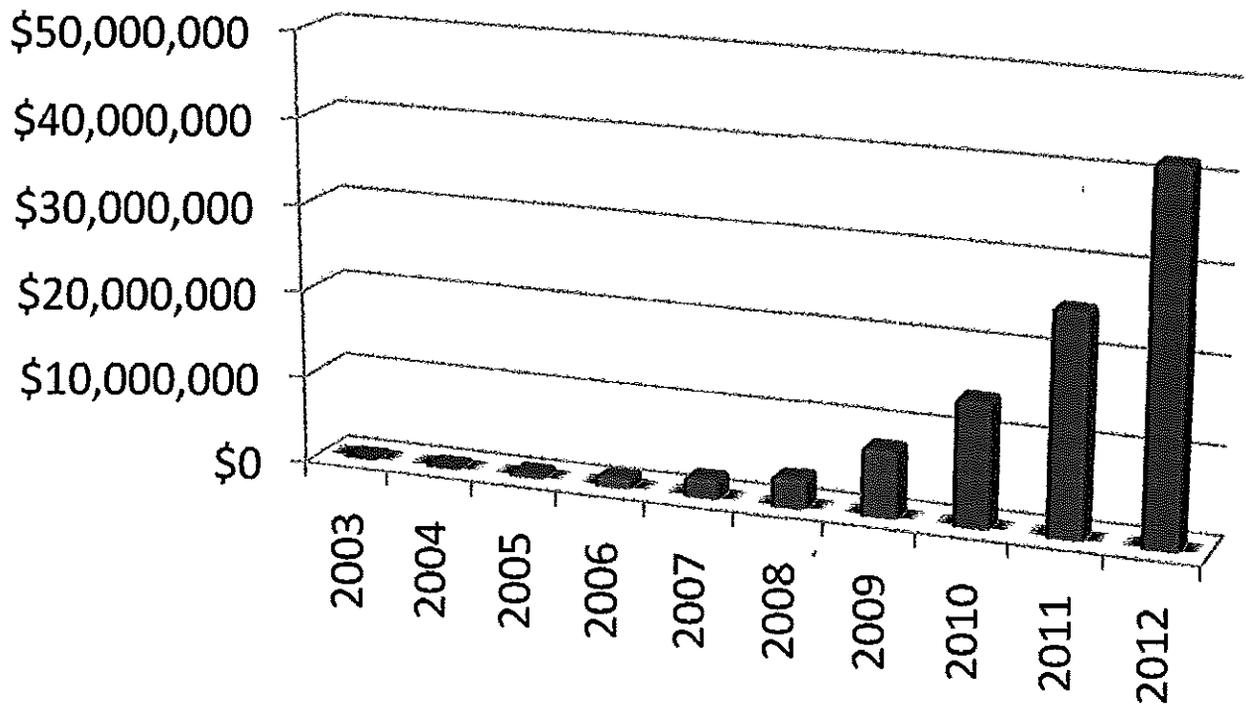
Source: Global OTA Trends
Informa UK Limited

Global Growth (In Millions)



Source: Global OTA Trends
Informa UK Limited

Antennas Direct Annual Sales



Inc.
500

St. Louis Business Journal
St. Louis' **FASTEST-GROWING** PRIVATE COMPANIES
2009 Award

Antennas Gaining in Popularity

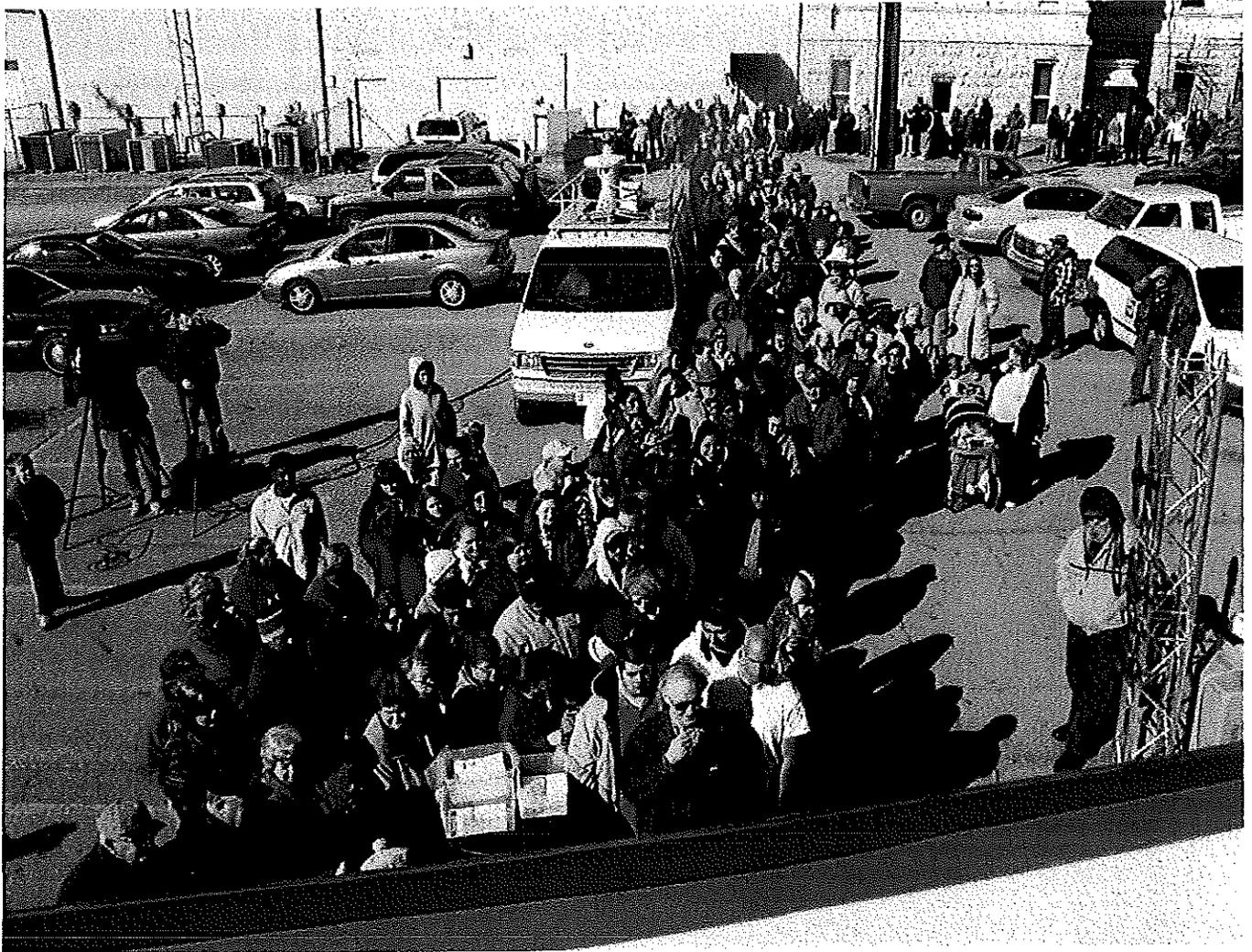
Grassroots Ground-Swell

In dozens of communities across the US

- As we entered the purely digital age of television last year, Antennas Direct visited 40 markets to help make consumers aware that they have an option to expensive cable and satellite fees.
- We traveled thousands of miles across the US to raise awareness with a press tour including giving away free antennas. The response was incredible. As television newscasters capture the events, we offered thousands of antennas to people who got our message and lined up for hours for a chance to get theirs.
- Local broadcasters, our allies in this effort, provided air time in advance of the events, during the events and following the events to make sure the word got out.
- These people can now enjoy Free Local TV

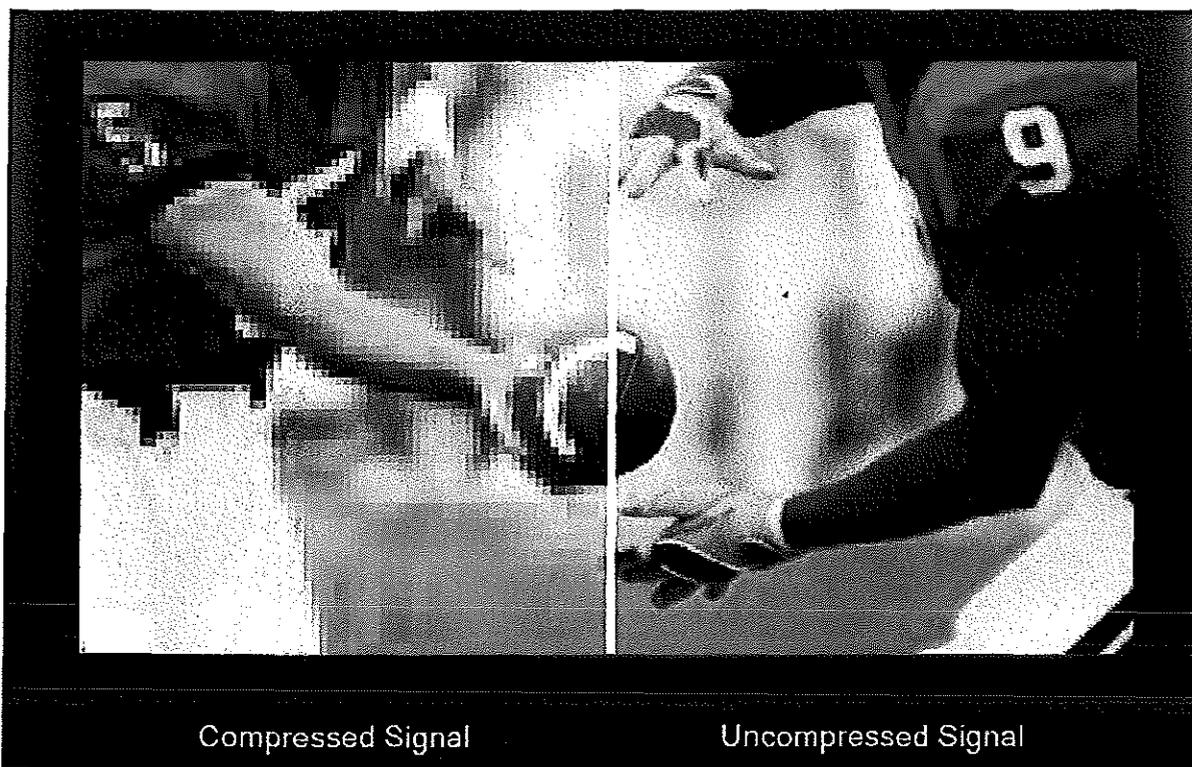






Antennas Vs. Satellite Or Cable Quality

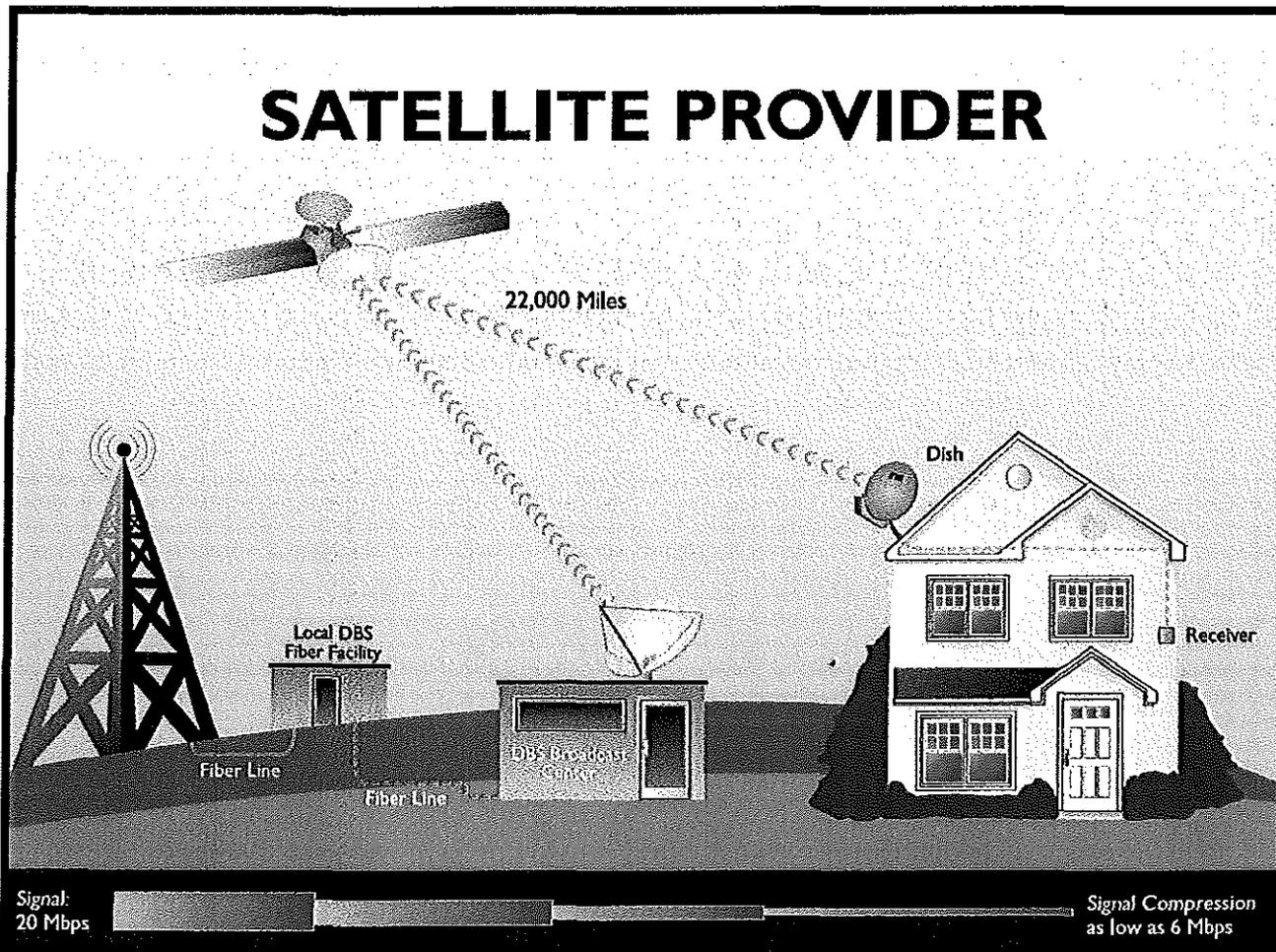
- Satellite and cable companies are delivering hundreds of channels to consumers through very finite means of delivery. To do this, they greatly compress the signals, to the point where even their HDTV signals are highly degraded.
- Antennas receive pure, virtually un-compressed signals over the airwaves. These un-compressed signals result in a picture that is dramatically sharper when compared to the same programming from satellite and cable.



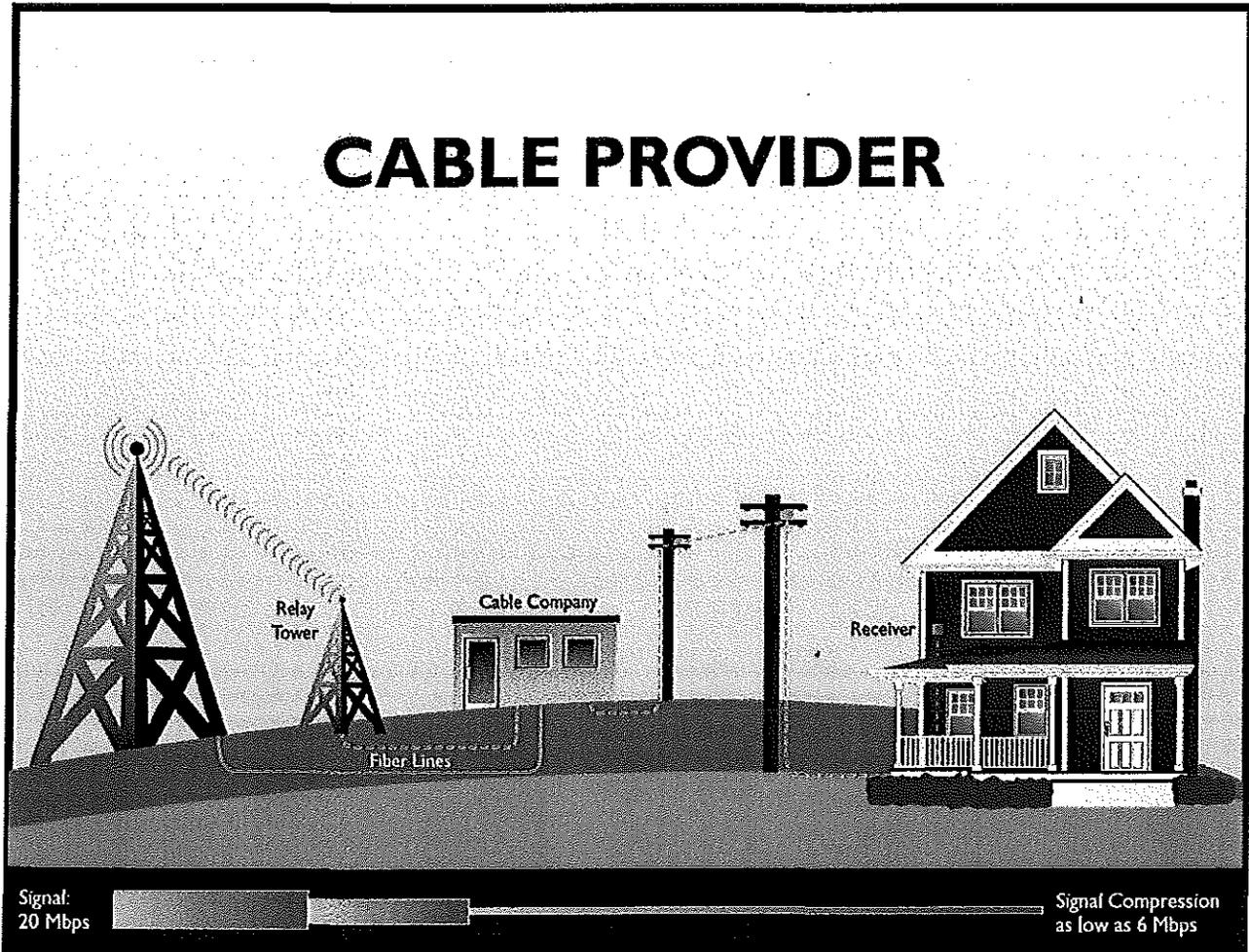
Close up of Satellite/Cable Signal

Close up of Antenna Signal

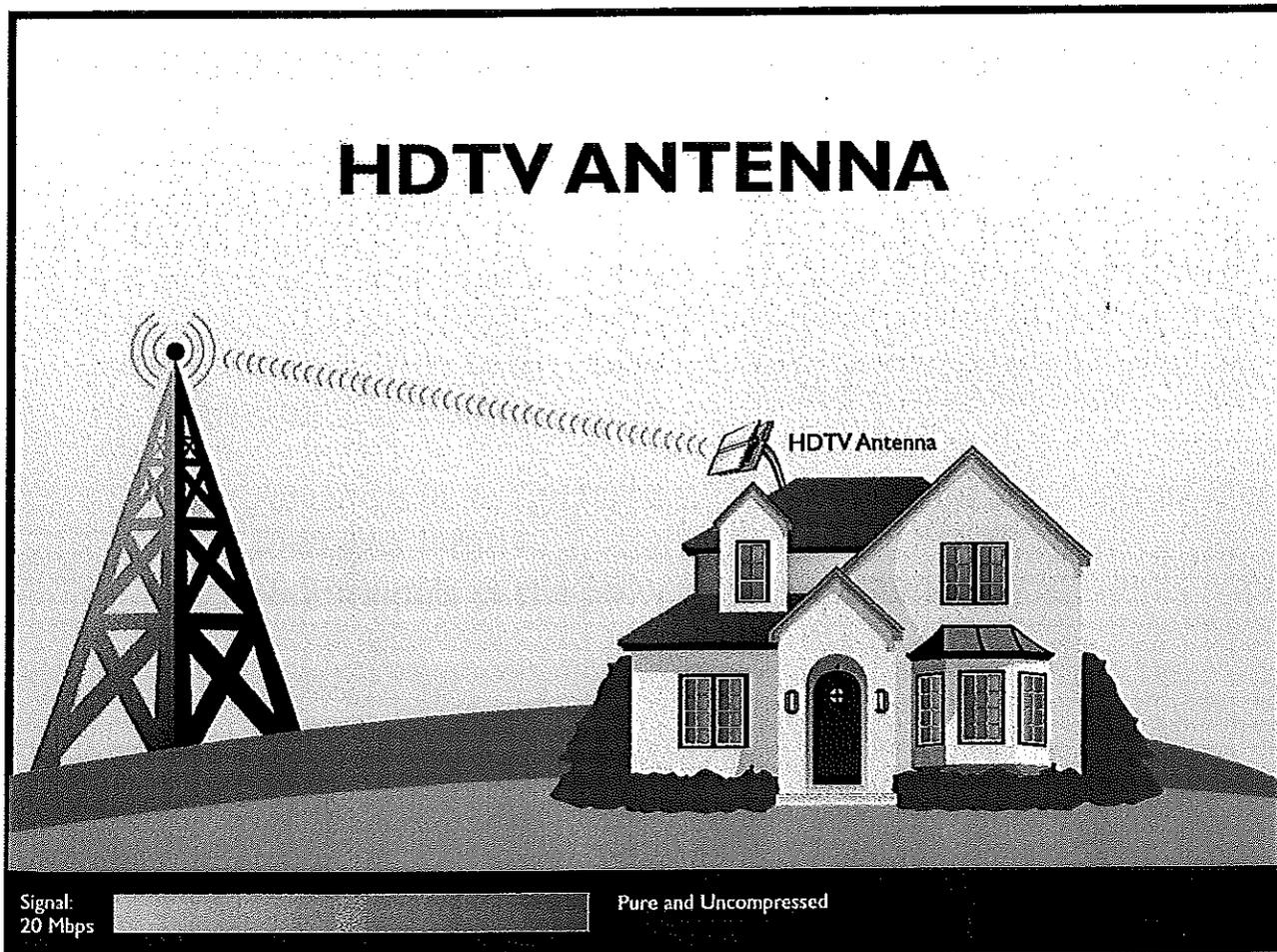
SATELLITE PROVIDER



CABLE PROVIDER



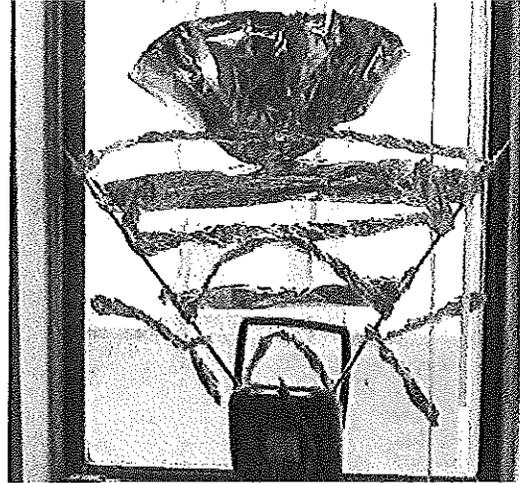
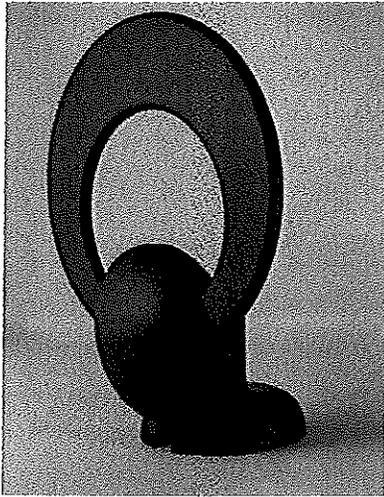
HDTV ANTENNA



Signal:
20 Mbps

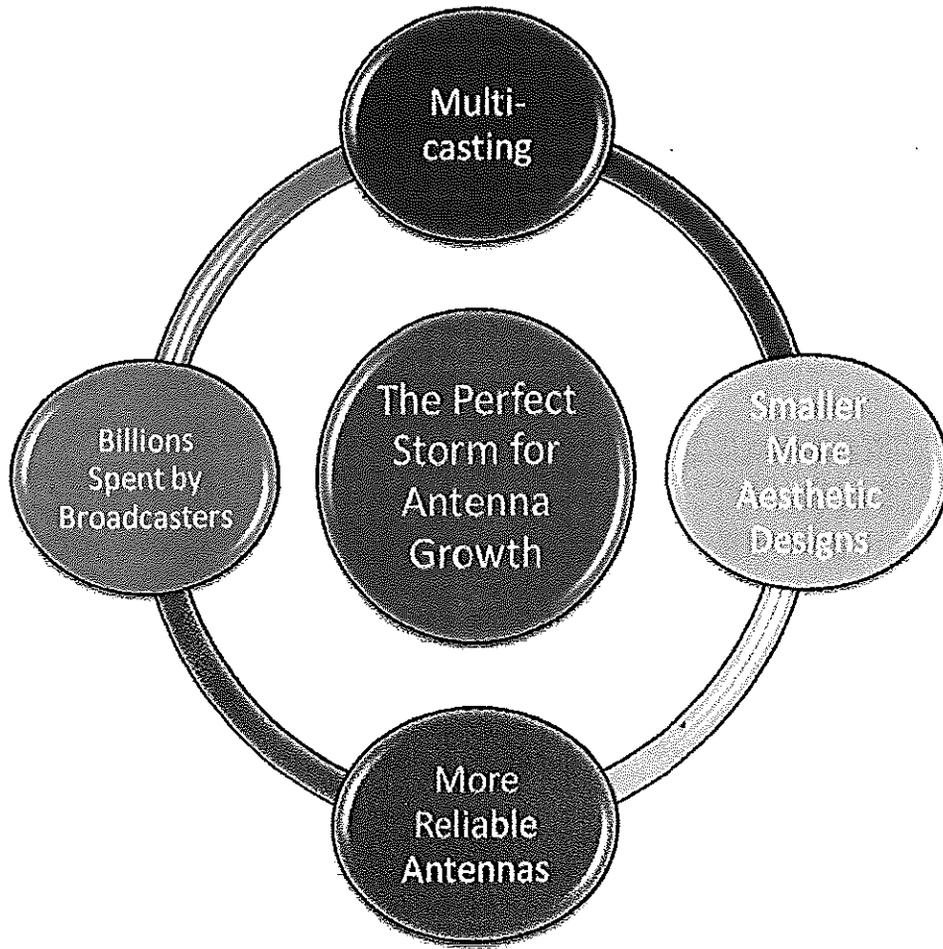
Pure and Uncompressed

Advantages Over The Old Rabbit Ears



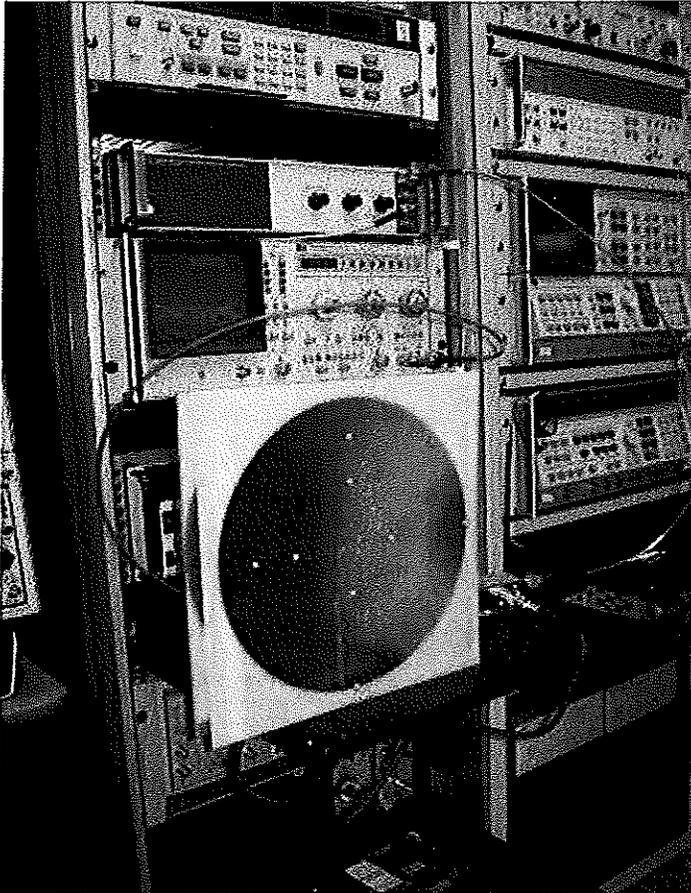
- Advances in design has enables us to create antennas smaller than ever before
- New models 5x the power 35% the volume

The Perfect Storm



Research & Development

Antennas Direct leads the way in research and development of OTA antennas



- Significant patented IP
- Staff of engineers
- RF laboratory
- Peer reviewed
- Rapid prototyping capability

Future initiatives include:

- “Smart” antenna development
- Improvement in performance of existing designs
- Expansion on Micron line
- Adaptation to international markets
- Suite of smart antennas

How We Go To Market



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DIRECT**
Antennas for the HD revolution™

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FREE SHIPPING ON EVERY ORDER

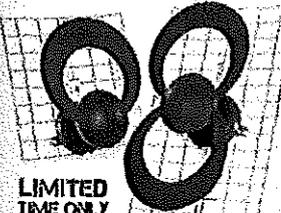
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Location
Frequency
Style

JANUARY DEALS

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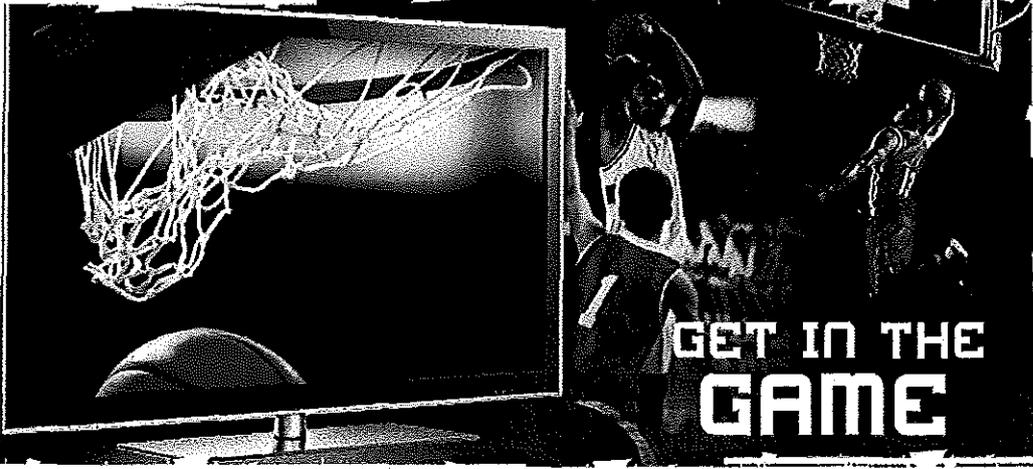


LIMITED
TIME ONLY

ANTENNAS BLOG

HPR Features Antennas Direct About Basic TV Coverage
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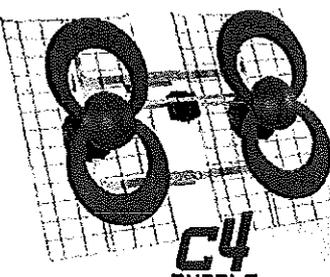
ModSynergy.com Reviews Our ClearStream4 Long Range HDTV Antenna
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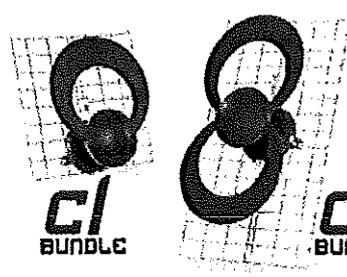
Buy DIRECT and Save a Bundle! Exclusive Savings from Antennas Direct



C4
BUNDLE

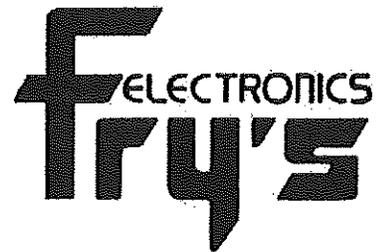


C1
BUNDLE



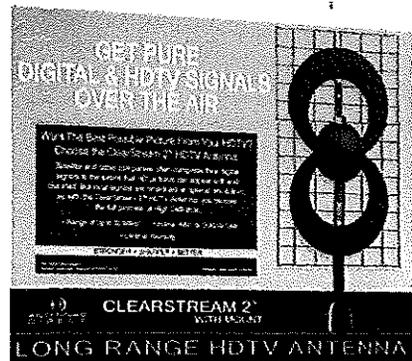
C2
BUNDLE

One Of The Hottest "New" Products At Retail



Consumer demand has all of these retailers expanding their offering of antennas.

Pallet Displays

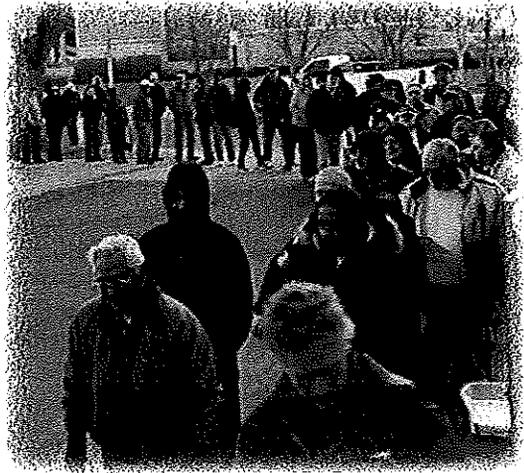


Public Need for a Free Alternative



Public Need

- In these tough economic times, the public needs a way to access TV without being forced to pay the high cost of Cable and Satellite.
- The programming that is currently being broadcast over the air is full of important information, vital to the community.
- Without Free TV, we'd live in communities where those who couldn't afford to pay, would not get news information, weather or national disaster alerts, and programs that represent various religious viewpoints and cultural diversity.
- Local broadcasters are also a part of the effort to provide broad community-interest content free over the air. In many instances, broadcasters are offering HDTV free to the community.
- This is a well established system of providing for the public need... free... and with exceptional quality of both technology and programming.



Up-Grading to Free TV

Allocation of Bandwidth

- As the FCC discusses the allocation of bandwidth in respect to our national system of free, over the air broadcasts should be protected as tens of millions of Americans rely on this vital source of communications.
- Our sense (and our sales) indicate that the market is exploding, not stagnant or shrinking. Rabbit ears, as we've reinvented them, are alive and well.
- Please know the facts about the size, the growth trends, and the importance of OTA to all Americans, particularly lower income and minorities. There is a lot of misleading data and information being put out that seeks to diminish and discount the vital role this unique asset provides to tens of millions of Americans.
- There are numerous opportunities to provide greater capacity to mobile carriers by encouraging more efficient use and higher capacity utilization of the bandwidth currently allocated to them.
- An inventory assessment of current bandwidth utilization would be a key learning in future discussions about additional allocations.

Conclusion

- We're excited about the future of over the air TV. We're very committed to keeping Free TV available and growing.
- We're grateful to the NAB & MSTV for arranging this important meeting.
- We hope that as you consider the importance of Free TV for communities all across America, you'll take into consideration the responsibility to the public that broadcasters have always taken to heart.
- We thank you for your time and hope that you'll continue to support a system that allows average Americans the free alternative to television that they've traditionally enjoyed.

n p r

After Digital Switch, Basic TV Offers Cable Alternative

By Catherine Welch

February 27, 2010



Mac, left, Veronica and Petra Humphrey watch the PBS children's channel on their parents' high definition television.

Just before summer 2009's switch from analog to digital cable, TV viewers were inundated with commercials from cable companies. They urged viewers to subscribe to cable in order to get a clear picture and plenty of channels.

But it turns out that — for the price of an antenna — over-the-air television offers plenty of different programs.

The Secret In The Attic

Thanks to the digital signals, Elizabeth and Philip Humphrey's three children can watch *Elmo*, *Arthur* and other favorites on one of three digital channels broadcast by North Carolina's PBS station.

Trapped inside on a cold, gray morning, the Humphreys' three children stand perfectly still in front of the TV, all eyes glued on *Elmo*.

The family also gets the additional digital channels offered by their commercial network affiliates too — which gives them about 12 channels to choose from, depending on where they point their antenna.

Phillip Humphrey climbs up into the attic, pushing past boxes of Christmas junk to where he mounted his new antenna.

"Basically it looks like a 2 1/2-by-2 1/2 square piece of welded wire fabric," Humphrey says.

The antenna is attached to the rafters and connected to the Humphreys' brand new high-definition television set downstairs. For the one-time cost of the set and the \$75 antenna, the Humphreys have found an alternative to monthly cable bills. Viewers with old-fashioned TVs can also receive the same plethora of channels, as long as they have a digital converter box.

After Transition, Many Stick To Basic Stations

There are times that you may miss out on some cultural conversations about a particular show. But we've found if it's something that continues to pique our interest, that now you can watch it on the Internet, you can rent it on Netflix.

- Elizabeth Humphrey, on not having cable

"And what happened on the way to the [TV] graveyard is people started realizing they're extremely surprised at the picture quality you can get over the air," says Richard Schneider,

who owns Antennas Direct in St. Louis. "And in many cases the resolution is in fact significantly higher than you can get off of satellite or cable."

Digital television also boosted the number of over-the-air choices.

"I think the broadcast-only environment is much richer than it was two years ago," says Pat McDonough, senior vice president of planning policy and analysis at Nielsen Media Research.

Some critics say local affiliates are squandering the extra channels they got as they began to adapt to HDTV.

But McDonough says the ways they're repeating shows is, in some cases, kind of creative.

"We are seeing some of them time-shifting their programming," she says, "So that I air my news at 6 o'clock and I can put it on again at 8 o'clock on my second digital channel while I'm airing my network prime programs."

McDonough says that without cable or satellite, the average national viewer can pick up around 30 channels. In Los Angeles, they can get a whopping 70 channels. McDonough says the number of homes getting only over-the-air television didn't change much between 2008 and 2009. It's roughly 11 million households. And she says it's not just viewers who can't afford cable.

"Five percent of the broadcast-only homes have income of over \$100,000," McDonough says. "So clearly they have the means to afford cable and satellite but they've elected not to purchase it."

'You Can Watch It On The Internet'

The Humphreys, for example, use their computers and television to catch their favorite shows. Elizabeth Humphrey admits that while they might miss some of the hot new cable shows, they're getting most of what they want.

"There are times that you may miss out on some cultural conversations about a particular show," she says. "But we've found if it's something that continues to pique our interest, that now you can watch it on the Internet, you can rent it on Netflix. You can find other ways to get into the conversation."

This sounds like it could be a problem for cable providers.

"We don't really view it as a threat," says Maureen Huff, senior director of public relations for Time Warner Cable.

Huff says subscription numbers for cable television, Internet and phone services have stayed strong in the face of more over-the-air channels and the crummy economy.

"Traditionally cable tends to be sort of recession-resistant," Huff says. "People spend more time at home with their families in a recession; they're spending less money going out. And so cable companies such as ours tend to do okay."

Huff acknowledges that families who've made the choice to go without cable, such as the Humphreys, are out there. But young Veronica and Mac have seen what they're missing at their friends' houses.

"I wish I had *SpongeBob*," Mac says.

Even their father has some cable cravings.

"Well, okay, *The Daily Show* would be nice to see," he says.

But that, too, is available online.

Los Angeles Times

BUSINESS

Rabbit ears make comeback in digital TV era

Southland viewers are finding they can get nearly three times as many channels as they once could with an antenna. And best of all, they're free.

By David Sarno
December 25, 2009



On a recent winter night, while neighbors strung their Baldwin Park homes with Christmas lights, the Lams and their three children sat in front of a television set with rabbit ears sprouting out of the top.

Wait a second -- rabbit ears? Is this 1950?

No, it's almost 2010, and the Lams are a modern Los Angeles family that, like many in the region, are rediscovering the convenience -- and economics -- of the old-fashioned TV antenna.

In the wake of the transition to digital television, Southland viewers are finding they can get nearly three times as many channels as they once could with an antenna. And rather than the erratic, fuzzy reception of yesteryear, today's rabbit ears are capable of delivering a surprisingly clear high-definition picture.

Best of all, it's free, said Nancy Lam, the mother of the family.

"I've saved a lot of money by getting rid of cable," Lam said. "We only had to purchase the antenna one time, and now we have it forever, instead of paying every single month."

In these penny-pinching times, watching TV over the airwaves is becoming an increasingly attractive option for many households, particularly among the Los Angeles region's minority communities.

Although the number of households with antennas in the U.S. fell slightly in the last year, nearly 20,000 Asian American homes in the region began using rabbit ears, and 8,000 African Americans switched to over-the-air TV, according to the media research firm Nielsen Co.

Nearly a quarter of Latino households with televisions, or about 440,000 homes, already tune in with an antenna -- the most of any demographic group in the area.

About 11% of U.S. households -- or about 13 million homes -- watch over-the-air broadcasts.

But watching TV over the airwaves has begun to appeal to a broader audience.

"It's the best-kept secret around here," said Mike Mahan, who recently installed a pair of antennas in the attic of his Ladera Ranch home and dropped his cable subscription. "I just got tired of paying for hundreds of channels I don't watch."

With antennas that can cost as little as a dollar, most Los Angeles viewers can now pick up close to 70 channels, up from around 26 before the federally mandated digital switch-over last summer. Nearly a dozen of the digital channels are broadcast in high definition.

Having upgraded to the more sophisticated digital technology, stations are able to slice their broadcast spectrum into a number of subchannels, such as KNBC-TV Channel 4's 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4.

Many of the new channels are aimed at the region's ethnic communities, giving rise to a growing selection of news, entertainment and educational programming for Latino, Asian and Eastern European viewers.

In Los Angeles, more than 30 over-the-air channels are available in English, including stations featuring movies, dramas and children's programs. Major networks including ABC, CBS and NBC beam out daytime and prime-time shows -- and professional sports -- in resolution with clarity that may shock viewers expecting the hazy broadcast signals they remember from childhood.

"Everyone who does it says the picture quality is actually better than what you're getting through cable," said Patricia McDonough, a senior vice president at Nielsen.

As more viewers tune in to the newly reenergized possibilities of broadcast

television, manufacturers say they can't make antennas fast enough.

"Our sales are going through the roof," said Richard Schneider, president of Antennas Direct, a St. Louis manufacturer of the devices.

Schneider said that sales had nearly tripled since the switch-over, and that he had to add a new assembly line in his factory to meet the demand. The company produces nearly 100,000 antennas every month, thousands of which are sold in the Los Angeles area, he said.

Viewers are also finding they can combine broadcast television with the growing array of movie and TV programming available online.

Mahan of Ladera Ranch dropped his subscription to Cox Cable last year in favor of a pair of high-end antennas and an Internet connection that lets him watch movies through Netflix and TV shows through video websites such as Hulu .com. He even rigged up a device that can record shows directly off the antenna.

But cable companies contend that over-the-air broadcasts are less reliable and that the signal can be easily interrupted or weakened, depending on where a home is. Homes near hills, for instance, may have trouble receiving all the channels available in a given area.

"There are always risks involved with

going over the air or using an antenna to receive a digital picture, mainly because digital airwaves are not as forgiving as analog airwaves and are always subject to interference," said Darryl Ryan, a spokesman for Time Warner Cable Inc.

In addition, many popular cable-only channels, including ESPN and CNN, are not yet available over the air. However, at least one Silicon Valley start-up has been experimenting with piping cable and satellite programs onto the airwaves in Los Angeles. Sezmi Corp. expects to roll out its service in major U.S. markets early next year. It plans to charge users about \$25 a month for a service that offers a selection of broadcast, cable and Internet programming.

To watch broadcast TV, viewers must have both an antenna and a television capable of processing the digital signal. Those with pre-digital televisions can purchase a converter box for \$30 to \$50 that will enable the antenna to work with their TV set.

The cost of antennas varies according to their size and complexity, and can range from less than \$5 for small, indoor rabbit ears to nearly \$200 for a larger outdoor antenna that will receive more channels and clearer signals. Finding the right antenna, and the best location for it, may involve some trial and error.

The best evidence that the broadcast audience is growing may be the

flowering of new local channels, said Francis X. Wilkinson, general manager of KJLA-TV, an L.A. station.

KJLA has divided its broadcast spectrum into nine digital sub-channels, 57.1-57.9. It carries three channels in Spanish, three in Vietnamese, and one each in Korean and Armenian. (The remaining sub-channel is a shopping network devoted to jewelry.) As with other broadcast stations, several of KJLA's sub-channels are available via an antenna but not through cable.

"Nobody really expected the plethora of stations and choices that people would have over the air," Wilkinson said. "It's been a tremendous plus for everyone."

In February, the Lams plan to watch local Chinese New Year festivities on Little Saigon TV (Channel 44.4). With their two swimmer sons practicing for the Junior Olympics and a daughter headed for college, the Lams haven't had as much family TV time as they once did.

But when they do gather to watch the festivities, they'll be using rabbit ears that don't look any different from what viewers may have used six decades earlier, perhaps even in price. Instead of shelling out \$30 for a new antenna, the Lams got theirs at a 99-cents store.

"The cheapest one was super clear," Lam said.

david.sarno@latimes.com

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Newsweek

Monday, February 19, 2007

Prick Up Your Rabbit Ears

The antenna, that relic of the pre-cable age, gets an afterlife thanks to high definition TV.

Johnnie L. Roberts
Of Newsweek

Feb. 19, 2007 issue - When cable TV arrived in the '70s, rabbit ears seemed destined to go the way of the polyester pantsuit. So, too, the clunky outdoor antenna, a rooftop fixture that once upon a time signaled the rise of television in American life. But a funny thing happened on the way to the analog dust heap: it turns out that a new generation of rabbit ears and antennas can receive high-definition television broadcasts. And it's free.

The irony is marvelous. Pushed into obsolescence by the technological advances of cable and satellite, antennas are re-emerging thanks to one of the most promising high-tech services of the digital age. High-def channels can be plucked out of thin air by antennas just like regular broadcast signals—no cable, no satellite dish, no monthly bill, no waiting for the cable man. It's like the old days, except this time antennas (which cost between \$18 and \$150) may offer the clearest picture. "More than 90 percent of our customers say they want the antennas for high-def," says Jerry Chapman, owner of online dealer SolidSignal.com, which ships "thousands of antennas." The downside—and it's a big one—is that antennas can only pick up the broadcast networks, not cable channels like ESPN or HBO.

Still, antenna makers are enjoying a warm reception. Companies like Terrestrial Digital of St. Louis, Winegard of Burlington, Iowa, and Audiovox of Hauppauge, N.Y., are watching sales soar. Terrestrial Digital's sales have doubled annually since its launch in 2003, to \$1.4 million last year, says founder Richard Schneider. The company is "a hobby spiraled out of control," he says, noting that he got his start essentially selling homemade antennas out of the back of his truck. "People thought I was

selling drugs," Schneider says. "Nerds were showing up in my driveway." Winegard believes more consumers would embrace antennas if they only knew high-def can be delivered via the anachronism. "Our biggest focus right now is on consumer education," says Aaron Engberg, manager of "off-air" sales.

“Antennas provide the best of high-def pictures.”

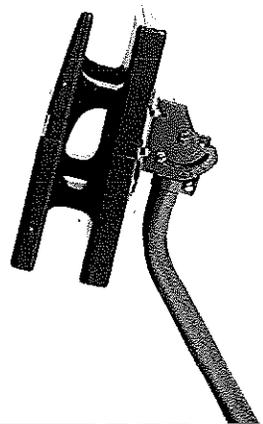
A corporate clash in televisionland has helped give antenna sales a boost. The dispute involves cable giant Charter Communications and broadcaster Belo Corp., which owns TV stations in several cities. In January, Belo said that unless Charter agreed to pay extra for the high-def signals Belo provides, it would bar the cable operator from redistributing any HD programming that originates from its stations. In cities like St. Louis, where Belo owns the CBS affiliate, that meant viewers wouldn't get the Super Bowl in high-def—as horrifying a prospect to many Bears and Colts fans as running out of beer and chips. Enter Terrestrial Digital's Schneider, announcing an antenna giveaway in St. Louis. "The best HD for no monthly fee," Terrestrial Digital declared in local radio ads, touting a free antenna for the first 200 customers. "It was bedlam," Schneider told NEWSWEEK. "We had lines stretched around the block." The Super Bowl was—believe it—saved by rabbit ears.

In truth, today's antennas don't much resemble rabbit ears anymore: they're smaller, and much more powerful. One model, called the Bowtie, "almost looks like chicken wire," says Chap-

man of SolidSignal.com, based in suburban Detroit. Another comes in the shape of a picture frame. But the basic mechanism of the antenna is still the same: it remains "one of the few forms of consumer electronics where there's been little change since the 1960s designs," says Schneider.

He and apparently growing numbers of consumers are convinced that antennas provide the best of high-def pictures. Because high-def signals are exceedingly more plump than standard TV signals and hog the capacity of their pipelines, cable- and satellite-TV operators "compress" or squeeze, them (broadcasters don't have to). There's a wide belief that the forced dieting degrades picture quality. Naturally, someone must pay. Enter Philip Cohen, a Los Angeles lawyer who filed a class-action lawsuit against DirecTV last September. "Let's just say the high-definition isn't what it's claimed to be," Cohen says. DirecTV says the suit is without merit. Cohen says he's aware that high-def can be had with a simple antenna, but because he lives in a hilly area, rabbit ears won't help. May we suggest a rabbit's foot?

Antennas Direct's Lacrosse HDTV Antenna



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IN THE MEDIA

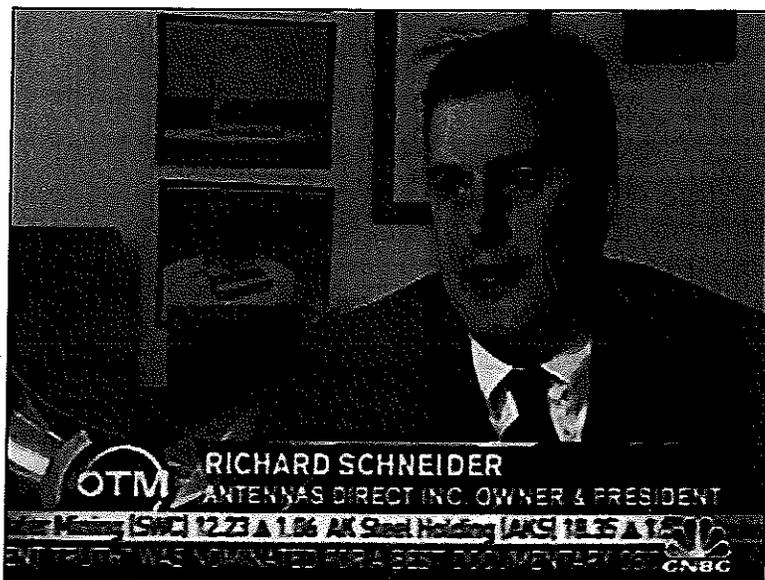


ANTENNAS DIRECT

Antennas for the HD revolution™

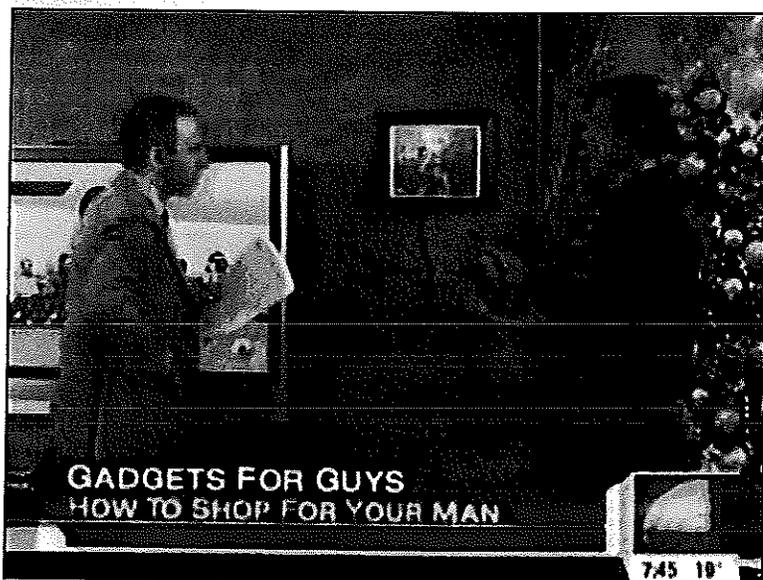
CNBC TV FEATURE

Regular segment "On The Money" described the education of the consumer on high definition antennas as a viable way of getting true HD. Specifically, how the PF7 Picture Frame antenna is revolutionizing how easy and inexpensive it can be to get better high definition programming.



NBC TODAY SHOW FEATURE

Antennas Direct's PF7 Picture Frame antenna was recently featured prominently on the Today Show with Matt Lauer. The segment, titled "Gadgets for Guys", focused on what to buy men for the Christmas holiday season. The Senior Editor of C|NET demonstrated many products to Matt including a 50" plasma TV, but described the picture frame antenna as the "coolest thing I've ever seen."



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Picture frame antenna sales soar after 'Today' segment

Jerri Stroud
Of the Post-Dispatch

Richard Schneider nearly had forgotten about a picture frame-shaped television antenna he designed when a CNET editor decided to include it on NBC's "Today" show last month.

Now Schneider can't keep up with demand for the product.

The "Today" show mention didn't come by accident. -Schneider, the president of Antennas Direct of Eureka, had his publicist contact a CNET editor, Rich DeMuro, after he earlier saw a segment on "Today" about high-definition televisions earlier. The show implied that home-owners needed cable or satellite service to get high-definition pictures on their TVs. CNET is an online publisher of computer and technology news.

Antennas Direct markets antennas that allow customers to pick up HDTV signals broadcast by local stations. Schneider hires contract engineers to design the antennas and has the devices manufactured in Taiwan. He sells them by phone and through his website as well as through electronics dealers.

DeMuro, who does a regular segment on electronics and gadgets on "Today," said that when Antennas Direct contacted him, he wasn't interested in showing large, roof-mounted antennas. When he saw picture-frame antennas listed among the company's products, he asked -Schneider to send one to him to test for a "Today" segment on gadget gifts for guys.

Schneider was reluctant. In fact, he had almost decided to discontinue the frame antenna, which was made of plastic and Plexiglas. The antenna is disguised in the backing for the picture.

"The aesthetic (of the frame antenna) never caught me," -Schneider said. "I tried to steer (DeMuro) away from it."

But DeMuro insisted, and -Schneider decided he needed to fit the antenna into a better-looking wood frame. He bought one at a frame shop, then worked with his manufacturer in Taiwan to find frames they could use to make the antenna. The frames hold an 8-by-10 photograph or other picture.

The frame antenna can hang on a wall or sit on top of the television or another piece of furniture. It screws into a standard TV connector, so installation takes only a couple of minutes.

Schneider said he designed it for people with limited space or those without access to a roof or attic. It also works well for a television in a spare bedroom.

DeMuro said he thought the picture frame antenna fit well with a trend among electronics manufacturers to offer custom colors and styles in HDTVs that hang on walls, as well as gear built into occasional furniture.

DeMuro said he tried the antenna at home before putting it on "Today," "and it worked well. Then I took it to the office and it worked great."

He tested it on both HDTV as well as regular off-air broadcasts.

During the "Today" segment, which also featured the new Playstation 3 and Nintendo Wii, DeMuro referred to the picture-frame antenna as "the coolest thing I've seen." He said it's ideal for a bedroom or kitchen, where there may not be room for a cable or satellite receiver.



Richard Schneider is the driving force behind Antennas Direct. (Kevin Manning/P-D)

Schneider said he sold 300 antennas in the first few hours after the show aired, selling out his stock of 500 shortly thereafter. An order of 3,000 is due Jan. 15, and he has additional frame antennas scheduled to arrive every two weeks through March. The cherry-wood-frame antenna sells for \$39.

The picture-frame antenna also seems to appeal to women. Typically, Schneider said, 90 percent of his customers are male. But on Dec. 8, the day of the "Today" segment, about three quarters of the callers were female.

This month, Target is adding the antenna to its website, and several other websites also offer it, Schneider said.

Lee Goehring, a senior merchant at Target, said the frame antenna fit with Target's desire to offer "the latest and greatest cool gadgets" on its site.

Schneider said sales of his HD antennas have really taken off in the last year. He expects his sales for 2006 would be nearly double his 2005 sales of \$800,000.

He had to move the business out of his home in Wildwood, and he recently increased the size of his office in Eureka.

"We're growing like a weed," Schneider said.

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Personal Tech: **SPARKLING HDTV RECEPTION IS AVAILABLE FOR FREE**
Bill Husted

I get great HDTV reception -- better than from my HDTV cable box, better than from satellite.

And unlike the other choices, it's free.

The technology I use isn't secret or new. In fact, it's older than the most ancient TV set in your basement. Yet the picture is likely crisper than any you've seen before. It puts HDTV from cable and satellite in the shade.

I'll tell you about it in a moment. Today we'll talk about several ways to get more enjoyment from your HDTV set.

We'll start with my recipe for free, crisp pictures. I don't want to keep you in suspense unless it is absolutely necessary.

The best possible HDTV pictures -- no exceptions, no quibbles -- come from those you get using an antenna. Here's why: When cable or satellite companies broadcast HDTV programming, they use compression techniques to get all that data into their comparatively narrow pipeline.

Compressing the data is good for the folks who deliver the signal -- it lets them cram more programming into the bandwidth available. It's bad for you. Hey, condensed milk tastes different from fresh milk, and condensed

TV looks different from what you get if you didn't tamper with the signal.

Broadcast TV doesn't compress the signal. I live in town, so I can get away with a simple indoor antenna. If you want an even better setup, or if you live a long distance from a broadcaster, you may need

an antenna in your attic or even on your roof.

You won't have any trouble finding old-fashioned antennas -- anything from rabbit ears to the

big roof-mounted jobs. In fact, HDTV has created a resurgence for the antenna:

Here's a quick way to find out the specifics of what you need to do from your own home: The Web site www.antennaweb.org/aw/welcome.aspx will tell you which stations are broadcasting in your area and what kind of an antenna you'll need.

In my own case, there's an added bonus besides the great picture -- my cable company doesn't carry the HDTV feed for at least one station in my area. But the HDTV version is available using my home antenna.

Truth is, as great as the pictures are, I won't be giving up my HDTV cable service. It offers

premium movies and other programming that isn't available over the airwaves.

So let's talk about some ways to get better pictures when you're using a satellite receiver or an HDTV cable box.



The cable you use to connect your satellite receiver or cable box to the TV is really important. Don't scrimp when you buy the cable. The cheap stuff produces a cheap signal. There's a simple rule that holds true: The larger in diameter the wire, the more capacity for the signal.

And the type of connector is a big deal, too. If your HDTV offers a

connection type called HDMI, use it. HDMI will give you the best possible way to transfer the signal from the receiver to your set. HDMI was once was an upscale option found only on top-of-the-line HDTV sets. But it's common now. Use it if you can, instead of component connection. And avoid S-video connections, since that technology just doesn't do a good job compared to what is available now.

The next thing to consider is a tune-up for your HDTV.

Even brand-new HDTV sets, fresh from the box, need some adjusting to get the best picture. There are two ways to do this. You can simply spend some time with the set and adjust it to best suit your eyes, or you can use a DVD made for that purpose.

If you decide to go the DVD route, look for the Avia Guide to Home Theater or Digital Video Essentials: Optimize Your Home Entertainment System. These are the two discs that are most commonly used. But there's another called the Ultimate DVD -- Home Theater Fine Tuning Made Simple that is a little newer. All three of these DVDs are available at Amazon.com. Or, if you live near a large consumer electronics store, you will be able to find them there.

The experts universally recommend using some sort of a disc like this, or even an outside consultant who comes to your home and adjusts the set in a much more precise manner than you could do with a DVD.

In my case, after trying a DVD, I decided to do the adjusting to suit my own preferences. Hey, you're the one who will be watching the set, so even if you favor a picture with warmer or cooler colors than are accurate, go for it.

The whole notion of HDTV is to get a picture with quality that rivals what you'd see out a window. My tips will help you get there.

These aren't radical changes. But they make a difference. So the next time you feel like blowing up your TV, try my tips instead.

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