



# Hawaii's digital switch goes smoothly

By *MARK NIESSE* , 01.16.09, 05:55 PM EST

Hawaii's first-in-the-nation switch to all-digital TV went smoothly, with volunteers handling about a call a minute to a special hotline and only minor technical glitches reported.

Experts from six teams made several house calls for last-minute hookups, said Chris Leonard, president of the Hawaii Association of Broadcasters.

There was no wait to get through on a special hotline as the switch from analog to digital was made at noon Thursday, but it was not possible to tell exactly how many TV owners in the islands were still left without a signal by Friday.

Hawaii went to all-digital TV signals on Thursday so that broadcasters and park rangers could take down analog transmission towers on the slopes of Maui's Haleakala volcano before the nesting season of the endangered Hawaii petrel.

In Washington Friday, Senate Republicans blocked a bill to delay the Feb. 17 nationwide shutdown of analog TV signals until June 12, but Democrats said they would bring the measure back next week.

President-elect Barack Obama urged Congress to postpone the Feb. 17 transition amid mounting concerns that too many Americans who rely on analog TV sets to pick up broadcast channels won't be ready. The federal program that subsidizes converter boxes for such viewers ran out of money this month.

The only technical problem during the switch in Hawaii occurred when ABC affiliate KITV reported a mechanical problem in its digital transmitter that delayed the transition on the Big Island. The transmitter was fixed after about three hours.

PBS has been the only station serving the rural area. The problem was expected to last for several days.

*Copyright 2008 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed*