

Digital TV switch hurts U.S. poorest

By Dorothy Rowley
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — For people who rely on “rabbit ears” or antennas to watch their favorite TV programs, time is running out — particularly in communities of color and for people living on fixed incomes as they are appearing to be the least prepared when the country converts next month from analog to digital-only broadcasting.

But the Feb. 17 conversion, touted on one hand as the nation’s biggest changeover since the introduction of decimal currency, has been criticized as a public sham.

A current Black Agenda Report (BAR) claims not only did the public not have a say in the matter, but also the conversion is but a mere opportunity for big media corporations to engage in a monopoly.

BAR also says that with a value of \$80 billion, the 5,000 new channels that accompany the conversion will become the “quasi property” of the same corporations that already hold the licenses for all of American TV.

“Corporate media and their accomplices at the Federal Communications Commission may have pulled off the biggest public rip-off since Congress conspired to grant millions of acres to the railroad barons,” the report states.

Nonetheless, the switch is slated to spawn significant improvements in TV viewing that include better picture quality and sound while making more space available on the airways for public safety communications.

At the same time, the change could signal a setback for millions of individuals and families who — unable to afford cable television — have become accustomed to their rooftop antennas.

Those who fail to convert in time will not be able to get a picture on their TVs and may have to purchase a converter box or an updated set.

As a result, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) believes the transition, in which all TV stations in the country have been federally mandated to discontinue use of their analog systems, will bring about an even wider divide between the “haves” and “have nots.”

Especially, observers note, when it was largely the votes of the latter that helped President Barack Obama get to the White House. They contend that those among them without digital service will probably not keep track of his progress.

A study conducted this past fall by the Nielson Company showed that 12.5 percent of African-American households and 13 percent of Hispanic households that were using analog TVs were not ready for the digital conversion.

The study also found that households with annual incomes of \$25,000 or less were five times more likely to be unprepared for the conversion than households earning more than \$75,000.

Further, if the required digital TV programming would go into effect today, Nielson noted that some 12.6 million households would have at least one TV that would no longer work.

Additionally, a consumer survey released after the Nielsen report stated that millions of people remained confused about how to prepare for the transition. According to the Web site TgDaily.com, to address their concerns and make the issue clear, many TV stations are launching preview tests that will occur during normal news and prime time programming.

During the test, if the TV goes to snow or shows no signal, a converter box will be needed.

LCCR says that to that end, it’s also crucial for public officials as well as corporate and community officials to join forces and inform people with analog sets how and where they can obtain converter boxes.

Depending on the television, converter boxes cost between \$40 and \$70.

The government however, is sponsoring a conversion assistance program in which households can receive two \$40 coupons for the purchase of converter boxes. For more information, visit www.dtv2009.gov or call 1-888-388-2009.

Tomlin: Ward to play in Super Bowl

Special to Sentinel-Voice

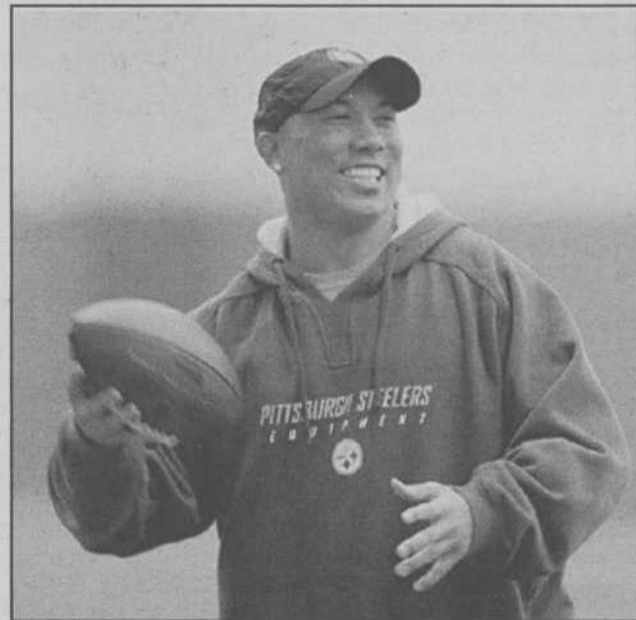
PITTSBURGH — Perhaps simply correcting a perception he may have left with the media on Tuesday, Steelers coach Mike Tomlin all but guaranteed that wide receiver Hines Ward will play in Super Bowl XLIII against the Arizona Cardinals a week from Sunday.

“Hines is going to play,” Tomlin said, just after realizing that he may have to update the media daily on Ward’s status. Asked how important it might be to the offense to have Ward available, Tomlin said a mouthful.

“Not only the offense, but the team,” he said. “It’s the spirit and the manner with which he plays the game. His character is big.”

Then, Tomlin backed off, just a bit. “If he is unable to play, it is business as usual and time for someone else to step up.”

A day earlier, at his



Steelers wide receiver Hines Ward smiles during practice in Pittsburgh Wednesday. Ward did not practice with the team as he continues to rehabilitate an injured knee.

weekly news conference, Tomlin labeled the injury a sprained right knee and said that Ward faces a good deal of accelerated rehabilitation in order to be able to play.

Ward, the self-proclaimed leader of the wideouts, suf-

fered the injury in Sunday’s win over Baltimore in the AFC Championship Game. He left no doubt after the game or on Wednesday that he would play. Tomlin noted the diligence with which Ward embraced his rehabili-

tation from the injury as a true gauge of Ward’s character and dedication to the game and his teammates.

“I get all this week off,” Ward said. “I get a chance to work on this knee and see if I can get as close to 100 percent as possible. I will be on that field. I won’t miss the Super Bowl.”

And, if there still was any doubt, quarterback Ben Roethlisberger eliminated it.

“If the game were tomorrow, Hines would play,” Roethlisberger said.

The Steelers began implementing their game plan Wednesday as though the game would be played this Sunday, just as Tomlin had promised a day earlier.

“It’s cool to get it out of the way now,” nose tackle Casey Hampton said. “Next week will be crazy enough. It won’t be as tough for guys who have been there before, but it’s a crazy week.”

Recession hits Super Bowl scalpers

Special to Sentinel-Voice

CHICAGO — Tickets for the National Football League’s Super Bowl could be the most affordable in years as a recession drives down prices, top ticket exchange executives said.

Ticket prices to watch the Pittsburgh Steelers battle the Arizona Cardinals in the championship game have slumped as much as 40 percent in the secondary market due to weak demand. The face-off is scheduled for Feb. 1 in Tampa, Florida.

“The most obvious thing to point to is the economy,” said Eric Baker, chief executive of viagogo, a London-based secondary ticket ex-

change.

Ticket prices overall are down about 38 percent to about \$3,100, the lowest level since 2006, when the Steelers won their last title, Baker said.

The NFL, like most sports globally, has been hurt by the recession. Last month, the NFL, the U.S. sports league with the strongest television ratings, said it would cut 14 percent of its work force.

Tickets to the Super Bowl carry a face value of either \$800 or \$1,000, with about 1,000 tickets priced at \$500 this year in response to the slumping economy. However, prices to popular sporting events are often resold at

prices far higher than face value.

Prices may still go up since more than half of Super Bowl tickets in the secondary market tend to be sold in the final two weeks, according to industry executives. However, prices typically fall in the final days before the game.

EMPLOYMENT

Musician Search

Gethsemane Baptist Church is seeking a qualified keyboardist to work in conjunction with the Minister of Music to coordinate music for the 11:00 a.m. Sunday Service.

Those interested, please contact Pastor Charles Hemphill, at 702-435-4422 Monday thru Friday

LEGAL NOTICES

LAS VEGAS-CLARK COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT INVITATION TO BID
BID NO. 09-15
LIBRARY MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

SCOPE OF WORK: Provide library materials and supplies including audio visual cases. Delivery will be to various branches/departments in different locations, at no additional costs, F.O.B. Destination.

Bid documents will be available on **Wednesday, January 21, 2009, 10:00 AM (PST)**, at the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District Reception Desk, 833 Las Vegas Boulevard North, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101.

PRE-BID CONFERENCE: A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **Tuesday, January 27, 2009, 11:00 AM (PST)** in the Multipurpose Room at the Las Vegas Library, 833 Las Vegas Boulevard North, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101. Bidders will be able to participate in the Pre-Bid via teleconference. See bid document for instructions on teleconference. The purpose of this Pre-Bid Conference is to discuss the bid and any prospective bidder’s concerns.

Bids must be received at the Reception Desk of the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, 833 Las Vegas Boulevard North, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101, on or before **11:00 AM (PST), Friday, February 6, 2009**. Bids are time-stamped upon receipt. Bidders and other interested parties are invited to attend the bid opening. Bids time-stamped at 11:01 AM (PST) or later will be returned unopened to the Bidder.

BID OPENING: The Bid Opening will be held on **Friday, February 6, 2009** at 11:00 AM (PST), in the Multipurpose Room at the Las Vegas Library, 833 Las Vegas Boulevard North, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101.

To request a faxed copy of this Invitation to Bid notice, call the Clark County Fax on Demand System at (702) 455-5428 and request document #501.

Questions regarding this Invitation to Bid may be directed to **Floresto Cabias, Assistant Finance Director**, (702) 507-3565.
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Las Vegas-Clark County Library District

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EMPLOYMENT

Housing Authority of the City of Las Vegas
P. O. Box 1897, Las Vegas, NV 89125 • (702) 922-6806

Administrative Clerk I

Salary: \$27,747 - \$44,450 per annum
Open: Wednesday, January 14, 2009
Closes: Wednesday, January 28, 2009

Experience: One year of responsible experience and/or training involving public contact.

Education: Graduation from high school or the equivalent.

NOTE: This recruitment is limited to the first 50 applications received, and will close without notice upon receipt of the 50th application, even if it is prior to the posted closing date.

You may pick up an application at 340 North 11th Street, Las Vegas, NV 89101 or visit our web site at www.haclv.org. If you have any questions, please contact Human Resources at 922-6806; **TDD:** (702)386-0789. All applications must be received in the Human Resources Department by 5:00 p.m. on the closing date.
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