Set-top box energy conservation agreement expected to save U.S. consumers $1.5 billion annually

Fifteen industry-leading multichannel video providers and device manufacturers that deliver service to more than 90 million American households, are launching an unprecedented Set-Top Box Energy Conservation Agreement [1] that will result in annual residential electricity savings of $1.5 billion or more as the commitment is fully realized, the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) and National Cable & Telecommunications Association (NCTA) announced today.

Participating companies include providers (listed according to number of customers) Comcast, DIRECTV, DISH Network, Time Warner Cable, Cox, Verizon, Charter, AT&T, Cablevision, Bright House Networks and CenturyLink, and manufacturers Cisco, Motorola, EchoStar Technologies and ARRIS. Through the voluntary, five-year Set-Top Box Energy Conservation Agreement, which goes into effect January 1, 2013, these companies commit to the following:

- At least 90 percent of all new set-top boxes purchased and deployed after 2013 will meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ENERGY STAR 3.0 efficiency levels. Based on market projections for set-top box deployments, this will result in residential electricity savings of $1.5 billion annually, as the agreement is fully realized.

- For immediate residential electricity savings, “light sleep” capabilities will be downloaded by cable operators to more than 10 million digital video recorders (DVRs) that are already in homes. In 2013, telco providers will offer light sleep capabilities, and satellite providers will include an “automatic power down” feature in 90 percent of set-top-boxes purchased and deployed.

- Energy efficient whole-home DVR solutions will be available as an alternative to multiple in-home DVRs for subscribers of satellite and some telco providers beginning in 2013.

- “Deep sleep” functionality in next generation cable set-top boxes will be field tested and deployed if successful.

"Providing American consumers with innovative services that deliver great video content and reduce in-home energy costs is win-win for customers and participating companies," said Michael Powell, NCTA President and CEO. "Multichannel video providers and device manufacturers are proud to participate in this unprecedented initiative, and we will continue to pursue even more ways to reduce the overall energy footprint of our services."

According to the EPA, which administers the ENERGY STAR program, set-top boxes that are ENERGY STAR-qualified are, on average, 45 percent more efficient than conventional models. The new energy conservation initiative will produce more energy savings overall, and five years earlier than originally anticipated by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) in its most recent review of set-top box energy conservation issues [2]. Prior to this agreement, 2018 was the earliest date that any DOE set-top box standards would have been implemented.

"Our industry today commits to a comprehensive initiative that will lead the way to energy savings for consumers in this popular and rapidly evolving product category," said Gary Shapiro, President and CEO, CEA. "The Set-Top Box Energy Conservation Agreement will protect innovation and consumer choice while reducing energy use and saving money."

Companies involved in the new Set-Top Box Energy Conservation Agreement will meet regularly to review and update energy efficiency measures, and to host ongoing discussions with the DOE, the EPA and other interested government agencies and stakeholders on new technologies and equipment. To create accountability and support transparency, the agreement's terms include detailed processes for verification of set-top box performance in the field; annual public reporting on energy efficiency improvements; and posting of product power consumption information by each company for its customers.

www.ce.org [3]

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