

Local TV Reception Issues – January 2010

ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, CW, Iowa Public TV

1. AMU receives local TV signals off-air. Prior to June 12th, 2009, TV stations broadcasted their primary signal in an analog format. Since that date the signal has been broadcast in a digital format. The signal broadcast in a digital format is subject to the same interference as a signal broadcast in an analog format. The difference is when there was interference with an analog signal it showed as static or “snow”. When there is interference with a signal broadcast in a digital format it will show tiling or pixels on a TV screen or there will be no picture or audio at all.
2. Cable Networks located on channel 14 and higher, such as ESPN, CNN, Fox News, Turner Classic Movies, etc., are received by satellite and are not affected by the same interference as local TV stations.
3. When you are watching a TV station and see “No Program” or “No Signal” flash across the screen it means AMU is no longer receiving the signal from the source or TV station.
4. Signals can be affected by atmospheric conditions that are occurring in Algona or at the source of the signal in Des Moines, Mason City, Austin or Mankato. Weather conditions, such as ice, fog, humidity, in Algona or at the source of the signal can cause interference.
5. Electro-magnetic interference coming from cell phone towers, radio towers, wind towers etc. can also affect the TV signal.
6. The FCC has cut back the amount of power TV stations can broadcast their signals. The FCC said the power required to broadcast a digital signal in a market area is less than what was needed to broadcast an analog signal in the same market area. According to the chief engineer for KCWI in Des Moines, the FCC went too far in the reduction of power and the TV station can't cover the market area it once did with an analog signal.
7. It is possible to also get poor reception if the signal strength is too high and overload receivers at AMU. When TV signals are weakened due to atmospheric conditions, some stations have increased power causing the signal to overpower AMU equipment.
8. When signal interference occurs, AMU checks its equipment to see if there is an issue. Staff will also contact the TV stations and ask if they have an issue.
9. AMU understands the frustration of poor local TV reception as our employees pay for and enjoy the same service as all our customers. AMU is diligently working to resolve the issue by looking for alternative ways to receive local TV signals. AMU will also make sure any solution to the issue of poor TV reception must be cost effective as we try to keep cable TV costs as low possible.