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For Immediate Release

Consolidated Telecom Accepts Nearly \$14 Million in Annual Support from Connect America Fund to Expand and Support Broadband for Nearly 50,000 Rural Consumers in Six States

WASHINGTON, August 27, 2015 – Consolidated Telecom, Inc. has accepted \$13,922,480 in annual, ongoing support from the Connect America Fund to expand and support broadband for nearly 50,000 of its rural customers.

The Connect America Fund support will enable Consolidated to deliver broadband at speeds of at least 10 Mbps for downloads and 1 Mbps uploads to nearly 25,000 homes and businesses in its rural service areas where the cost of broadband deployment might otherwise be prohibitive.

“Consolidated’s decision to accept support from the Connect America Fund will greatly benefit its rural customers by expanding robust broadband in their communities,” said FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler. “The Connect America Fund is delivering on its promise of ensuring that all Americans have access to the opportunities provided by modern broadband service, no matter where they live.”

Below is the amount of annual support provided by the offer and number of homes and businesses served by state:

| State | | |
|--------------------|--------|--------------|
| Consolidated Total | 24,698 | \$13,922,480 |
| CA | 71 | \$14,837 |
| IA | 3,019 | \$2,393,216 |
| IL | 12,079 | \$6,998,705 |
| MN | 4,266 | \$2,516,502 |
| PA | 175 | \$83,898 |
| TX | 5,088 | \$1,915,321 |
| | | |

Like telephone service in the 20th Century, broadband has become essential to life in the 21st

Century. But, according to the FCC's latest Broadband Progress Report, nearly one in three rural Americans lack access to 10/1 broadband, compared to only one in 100 urban Americans. The Connect America Fund is designed to close that rural-urban digital divide.

The FCC's traditional universal service program succeeded in ensuring telephone network coverage in rural America by providing subsidies where the cost of service would otherwise be prohibitive. In late 2011, the FCC modernized the program to support networks capable of providing broadband and voice services, and created the Connect America Fund to efficiently and effectively administer that support to expand broadband in rural areas where market forces alone can't support expansion.

Over the next six years, Phase II of Connect America will provide more than \$9 billion to expand broadband-capable networks throughout rural America nationwide, all without increasing the cost of the program to ratepayers. Overall, the FCC's Universal Service Fund allocates \$4.5 billion annually through various universal service programs for high-cost areas to support voice- and broadband-capable networks in rural America.

Carriers receiving Connect America Fund support must build out broadband to 40 percent of funded locations by the end 2017, 60 percent by the end of 2018, 80 percent by the end of 2019, and 100 percent by the end of 2020.

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