

Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc.
Form 8-K
May 23, 2012

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT

Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of
the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Date of Report (Date of Earliest Event Reported): **May 23, 2012**

CONSOLIDATED COMMUNICATIONS HOLDINGS, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware
(State of Incorporation)

000-51446
(Commission File Number)

02-0636095
(IRS employer identification no.)

121 South 17th Street
Mattoon, Illinois
(Address of principal executive offices)

61938-3987
(Zip code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: **(217) 235-3311**

Not Applicable

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(Former name or former address, if changed since last report)

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions:

- Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)

 - Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)

 - Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))

 - Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))
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Item 5.04. Temporary Suspension of Trading Under Registrant's Employee Benefit Plans.

On May 18, 2012, participants in the SureWest KSOP (the Plan) were notified that during a blackout period, restrictions would be imposed on certain Plan transactions. These restrictions will be imposed in order to provide for the conversion of shares of common stock of SureWest Communications (SureWest) held by the Plan's SureWest common stock fund (the SureWest Stock Fund) into shares of common stock of Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc. (the Company) and cash, contingent upon the closing of the transactions contemplated under the pending merger agreement between SureWest and the Company (the Merger), which closing remains subject to the satisfaction of the conditions set forth in such merger agreement. Among other restrictions, Plan participants will be prevented from transferring contributions or account balances into or out of the SureWest Stock Fund during the blackout period.

On May 23, 2012, the Company sent a notice to its directors and executive officers informing them that, as a result of such Plan restrictions, a blackout period will be imposed on them after the Merger with respect to the Company's common stock that they acquired in connection with their service as a director or an executive officer of Consolidated, subject to certain limited exceptions.

A copy of the blackout notice to directors and executive officers of the Company, which includes the information required by Rule 104(b) of Regulation BTR, is attached hereto as Exhibit 99.1 and is incorporated herein by reference.

Item 8.01. Other Events.

The information set forth above under Item 5.04 of this Current Report on Form 8-K is hereby incorporated into this Item 8.01 by reference.

Item 9.01. Financial Statements and Exhibits.

(d) *Exhibits.*

| Exhibit No. | Description |
|--------------------|---|
| 99.1 | Notice of Blackout Period, dated May 23, 2012 |

Safe Harbor

Any statements other than statements of historical facts, including statements about management's beliefs and expectations, are forward-looking statements and should be evaluated as such. These statements are made on the basis of management's views and assumptions regarding future events and business performance. Words such as estimate, believe, anticipate, expect, intend, plan, target, project, should, may, expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements (including oral representations) involve risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results to differ materially from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by

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such statements. These risks and uncertainties include the ability of Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc. (the Company) to complete the acquisition of SureWest Communications (SureWest), successfully integrate the operations of SureWest and realize the synergies from the acquisition, as well as a number of other factors related to the businesses of the Company and SureWest, including various risks to stockholders of not receiving dividends and risks to the Company's ability to pursue growth opportunities if the Company continues to pay dividends according to the current dividend policy; various risks to the price and volatility of the Company's common stock; the substantial amount of debt and the Company's ability to repay or refinance it or incur additional debt in the future; the Company's need for a significant amount of cash to service and repay the debt and to pay dividends on the Company's common stock; changes in the valuation of pension plan assets; restrictions contained in the Company's debt agreements that limit the discretion of management in operating the business; regulatory changes,

including changes to subsidies, rapid development and introduction of new technologies and intense competition in the telecommunications industry; risks associated with the Company's possible pursuit of acquisitions; economic conditions in the Company's and SureWest's service areas; system failures; losses of large customers or government contracts; risks associated with the rights-of-way for the network; disruptions in the relationship with third party vendors; losses of key management personnel and the inability to attract and retain highly qualified management and personnel in the future; changes in the extensive governmental legislation and regulations governing telecommunications providers and the provision of telecommunications services; telecommunications carriers disputing and/or avoiding their obligations to pay network access charges for use of the Company's or SureWest's network; high costs of regulatory compliance; the competitive impact of legislation and regulatory changes on the telecommunications industry; and liability and compliance costs regarding environmental regulations. These and other risks and uncertainties are discussed in more detail in the Company's and SureWest's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including the companies' respective reports on Form 10-K and Form 10-Q.

Many of these risks are beyond management's ability to control or predict. All forward-looking statements attributable to the Company, SureWest or persons acting on behalf of each of them are expressly qualified in their entirety by the cautionary statements and risk factors contained in this communication and the companies' filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Because of these risks, uncertainties and assumptions, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. Furthermore, forward-looking statements speak only as of the date they are made. Except as required under the federal securities laws or the rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission, we do not undertake any obligation to update or review any forward-looking information, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

Proxy Statement/Prospectus

This material is not a substitute for the joint proxy statement/prospectus the Company and SureWest filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 28, 2012, which, as amended, was declared effective on April 24, 2012. **Investors in the Company or SureWest are urged to read the joint proxy statement/prospectus, which contains important information, including detailed risk factors.** The joint proxy statement/prospectus is, and other documents which will be filed by the Company and SureWest with the Securities and Exchange Commission will be, available free of charge at the Securities and Exchange Commission's website, www.sec.gov, or by directing a request to Consolidated Communications, 121 South 17th Street, Mattoon, IL 61938, Attention: Investor Relations; or to SureWest Communications, 8150 Industrial Avenue, Building A, Roseville, California 95678, Attention: Investor Relations. The definitive joint proxy statement/prospectus was first mailed to the Company's stockholders and shareholders of SureWest on May 1, 2012.

This communication shall not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy securities, nor shall there be any sale of securities in any jurisdiction in which such offer, solicitation or sale would be unlawful prior to registration or qualification under the securities laws of such jurisdiction.

Proxy Solicitation

The Company and SureWest, and certain of their respective directors, executive officers and other members of management and employees are participants in the solicitation of proxies in

connection with the proposed transactions. Information about the directors and executive officers of the Company is set forth in the joint proxy statement/prospectus. Information about the directors and executive officers of SureWest is set forth in SureWest's Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011. Investors may obtain additional information regarding the interests of such participants in the proposed transactions by reading the definitive joint proxy statement/prospectus for such proposed transactions.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

Date: May 23, 2012

Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc.

By: */s/ Steven L. Childers*
Name: Steven L. Childers
Title: Chief Financial Officer

EXHIBIT INDEX

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