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November 23, 2005

Marlene H. Dortch, Executive Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: WC Docket No. 05-196;
Compliance Letter of Consolidated Communications, Inc.

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 9.5(f) and to the November 7, 2005 Public Notice¹ in the above-referenced proceeding, Consolidated Communications, Inc., by counsel and on behalf of its operating subsidiaries that provide interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (“VOIP”) service, respectfully submits this Compliance Letter.

CONSOLIDATED’S SERVICE

Consolidated provides a broad range of telecommunications and information services in rural portions of Texas and Illinois.² Among other services, Consolidated offers interconnected VOIP service,³ local exchange telephone service, long distance service, and high-speed Internet access in 21 rural exchanges outside of Houston, Texas. Consolidated currently does not offer interconnected VOIP service in Illinois.

¹ Enforcement Bureau Outlines requirements of November 28, 2005 Interconnected Voice Over Internet Protocol 911 Compliance Letters, WC Docket Nos. 04-36 and 05-196, *Public Notice*, DA 05-2945 (rel. November 7, 2005).

² Consolidated Communications, Inc. is a holding company. All services are provided through various operating affiliates. For simplicity, this Compliance Letter uses the name “Consolidated” to refer to Consolidated Communications, Inc. and its subsidiaries individually and collectively.

³ The term “interconnected VOIP service” is defined in 47 C.F.R. § 9.3.

Geographic and Usage Limitations on Consolidated's VOIP Service

Consolidated markets its interconnected VOIP service on an extremely limited basis. Both geographic and usage limitations apply.

Consolidated markets, offers, and provides interconnected VOIP service only in the 21 rural exchanges in Texas where it also provides local exchange service as an incumbent local exchange carrier ("ILEC"). Consolidated does not market its interconnected VOIP service anywhere else, and does not accept customers located in geographic areas outside of its incumbent local exchange service area.

In addition to these geographic limitations, Consolidated markets its interconnected VOIP service to multi-line business customers as an alternative to Centrex service or to PBX systems. The service is designed to function, to look, and to feel like conventional local exchange service that utilizes a PBX or Centrex. The service includes unlimited local calling with the same local calling scopes as apply to Consolidated's conventional local exchange service. Calls that are placed to locations outside of the local calling area are billed as toll calls. Further, the service utilizes telephone numbers that are native to the exchange in which the customer's premises are located.

As part of the service, Consolidated installs at the customer premises both Internet-protocol handsets and a specialized router. The specialized router connects the handsets to a high-speed Internet connection. The customer supplies battery backup equipment to power the specialized router during power outages, as well as any battery backup power for the handsets.

As a precaution, Consolidated requires all of its VOIP customers to maintain at least one conventional business class telephone line⁴ at each location to help to ensure that 911 service is available in the event that the VOIP service is inoperable for any reason.

Consolidated currently has just 40 multi-line business customers for its interconnected VOIP service. There are no residential or single-line business customers. Cumulatively, the 40 customers have 440 seats. Each seat represents one piece of customer premises equipment, such as a handset.

Nomadic Use

Consolidated's interconnected VOIP service is neither designed nor intended for nomadic use. Consolidated interconnected VOIP service agreement expressly advises customers of limitations and dangers associated with removing VOIP equipment from the customer's place of business and attempting to use it elsewhere. Consolidated guarantees neither operability nor quality of service at any location other than the customer premises where the service was installed initially. Moreover, it is unlikely that the equipment necessary for nomadic use would be or successfully could be removed from the customer's place of business, and there is little incentive to do so.

The specialized router is installed by Consolidated at the customer's place of business, usually in an equipment room or other secure location. Even if a user could gain access to the

⁴ Such a line is commonly known as a B-1.

specialized router, the user would have to possess a certain amount of technical expertise to uninstall it, move it to another location, and then to reinstall it successfully. Of course, removal of the router would disable all of the remaining handsets and other CPE that it connects to the customer's high-speed Internet service. Finally, the specialized router can be used only with Internet-protocol handsets, which are less readily available than conventional telephones. In short, removal of the specialized router is not something that could not be undertaken by the casual user.

Removal of a handset from the customer's place of business also is unlikely. Customers are unlikely to permit their employees to remove such equipment from their places of business.

From a purely technical perspective, however, it is possible that one of the handsets could be used in other locations if it were successfully removed from the customer's place of business and connected to a high-speed Internet connection. Consolidated does not guarantee that its interconnected VOIP service will operate in such circumstances. The degree to which the service would function acceptably would depend in part on whether the handset was connected directly to a single-port modem or was connected, along with other devices, to a non-specialized router.

Even if a user were to remove the necessary equipment from a customer's place of business, however, there would be limited utility to doing so. Because Consolidated's VOIP service utilizes the same local calling scopes as its conventional local exchange service and because calls outside of the local calling are billed as toll calls, it does not present the same incentives for nomadic use as some other interconnected VOIP services.

REQUIRED DATA

In the Public Notice, the Enforcement Bureau identified specific information to be included in this Compliance Letter. Consolidated provides that information below utilizing the same headings as the Public Notice.

911 Solution

Consolidated provides 911 service in compliance with 47 C.F.R. § 9.5 to 100% of its interconnected VOIP customers within its incumbent local exchange service area, which is the only area where Consolidated markets, offers, and provides service. Consolidated has never marketed or offered interconnected VOIP outside of the geographic area in which it can provide 911 service. Further, as discussed above, it is unlikely that a user could or would use Consolidated's interconnected VOIP service in other areas.

Currently, Consolidated is not capable of providing 911 in other geographic areas. Despite the fact that it is highly unlikely that a user could or would use Consolidated's interconnected VOIP service in other geographic areas, Consolidated has diligently investigated technical solutions that may enable it to provide 911 nationwide. There are no vendors currently offering a solution with that capability. Accordingly, the following information applies to 911 calls originating from within Consolidated's service area.

911 Routing Information/Connectivity to Wireline E911 Network

Consolidated transmits all 911 calls to the appropriate PSAP utilizing the same wireline E911 Network used by its ILECs, including trunks between its end offices and Selective Routers maintained by SBC, the Selective Routers, and the trunk lines between the Selective Routers and the PSAP. SBC maintains the three Selective Routers that together cover all of the PSAPs serving Consolidated's service area, although some of the PSAPs are located within Consolidated's service and others are located within SBC's service area. Consolidated is interconnected to all three Selective Routers.

Additionally, as noted above, all of Consolidated's VOIP customers are required to maintain a POTS B-1 line at their places of business in order to ensure the availability of 911 service in the widest possible range of circumstances.

Transmission of ANI and Registered Location Information

Consolidated transmits via the Wireline E911 Network each 911 caller's ANI and Registered Location to all of the PSAPs serving its service area. 100% of these PSAPs are capable of receiving ANI and Registered Location information, and Consolidated transmits such information for 100% of its customers.

For the reasons stated previously, Consolidated currently does not provide 911 outside of its service area, and thus does not transmit ANI and Registered Location Information from other geographic areas.

911 Coverage

Consolidated can provide 911 service to interconnected VOIP customers located anywhere within the 21 rural exchanges in which it also provides local exchange telephone service on an incumbent basis. Thus, Consolidated can provide 911 service throughout the entire area where it markets its interconnected VOIP service.

The 21 exchanges Consolidated serves are located near Houston, Texas. A copy of an exchange map showing Consolidated's Texas exchanges is attached.

Obtaining Initial Registered Location Information

Consolidated has obtained Registered Location information from 100% of its customers. It obtains Registered Location information from each customer at the time that the service order is taken and before any service is rendered. As discussed above, Consolidated provides interconnected VOIP service only to multi-line business locations and its technicians install the necessary equipment at the customer's place of business. Therefore, the initial Registered Location is always the location where Consolidated's technicians install the service. Consolidated also associates this address with the 911 service that it provides to the same customers over the required B-1 line.

Obtaining Updated Registered Location Information

Customers may update their Registered Location by calling Consolidated's toll-free customer service number from any of the handsets provided by Consolidated. Consolidated also is in the process of adding a new feature to its website that will enable customers to update their Registered Location by logging into their accounts via the Internet. Finally, Consolidated updates the Registered Location whenever an existing customer moves its place of business and Consolidated's technicians install interconnected VOIP service at the new location.

Technical Solution for Nomadic Subscribers

Consolidated does not market its interconnected VOIP service as a nomadic service, and it does not intentionally provide such service to any customer for nomadic use. As discussed in more detail above, it is unlikely that any user would or even could use the service nomadically. Accordingly, Consolidated believes that it is fully compliant at present with the applicable rules.

Despite that, Consolidated diligently has investigated technical solutions that would enable it to provide 911 throughout the nation. Currently, there are no technical solutions that provide such capability. Consolidated will continue to monitor the development of technical solutions to provide nationwide 911, as well as technical solutions that prevent the service from being used outside of Consolidated's service area. Consolidated also will include a term in its service agreement to contractually limit the geographic area in which the service can be used.

Should Consolidated ever decide to offer interconnected VOIP service for nomadic use, it will deploy an appropriate technical solution before offering the service.

Because of the marketing and usage limitations that have existed since Consolidated first began offering interconnected VOIP service and because of the requirement for customers to maintain a traditional B-1 at their places of business to provide a backup option for 911, Consolidated provides a level of protection for its customers that is superior to that provided by AT&T's technical solution mentioned in the Public Notice.

Respectfully Submitted,

Consolidated Communications, Inc.

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