



## **Consolidated Communications Named Cisco Systems IP Innovator of the Year at TelecomNEXT**

LAS VEGAS, March 20 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- TelecomNEXT -- Consolidated Communications (Nasdaq: CNSL) announced today that Cisco Systems®, the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet, has recognized the telecommunications company as the "IP Innovator of the Year" for 2006. Consideration for this designation is given to hundreds of telephone and Internet companies across the United States.

Cisco Systems recognized Consolidated Communications for its steady progress in building a world class internet protocol (IP) network and positioning the company to efficiently deliver Metro Ethernet, voice, data and video services to its customers. The IP network allows Consolidated to continue the migration of its legacy networks to a core IP network creating efficiencies and establishing the base foundation to offer next generation IP services.

"Innovative providers such as Consolidated are driving the next wave of advanced services based on a willingness and ability to map network and service development to their customers' changing needs," said Vic Northrup, area vice president at Cisco. "Cisco is pleased to recognize Consolidated for its ongoing deployment of industry-leading technology to further its progress and enable its customers' success."

"Consolidated Communications is gratified to be singled out by Cisco for our IP innovations," said Joe Dively, president, Telephone Operations. "We are focused on delivering new and exciting services, including Metro Ethernet services to small businesses as well as triple-play service bundles to businesses and consumers, through the migration of our legacy network infrastructure to the next generation IP network. The investment in our core IP network eliminates maintaining a costly legacy network infrastructure and allows us to continue to provide high quality voice and broadband services, as well as many new applications and content our customers want."

### **About Consolidated**

Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc. is an established rural local exchange company (RLEC) providing communications services to residential and business customers in Illinois and Texas. Each of the operating companies has been operating in their local markets for over 100 years. With approximately 242,000 local access lines and over 39,000 digital subscriber lines (DSL), Consolidated Communications offers a wide range of telecommunications services, including local dial tone, custom calling features, private line services, long distance, dial-up and high-speed Internet access, carrier access, digital TV, VoIP, telephone directories and billing and collection services. Consolidated Communications is the 17th largest local telephone company in the United States.

SOURCE Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc.  
03/20/2006

CONTACT: Investor Relations, Stephen Jones, Vice President - Investor Relations, +1-217-258-9522, investor.relations@consolidated.com , or Media Relations, Laura Zuhone, Director Corporate Communications, +1-217-234-5965, laura.zuhone@consolidated.com , both of Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc.

4659 03/20/2006 08:00 EST <http://www.prnewswire.com>