

Consolidated Communications Partners with DZS in Initiative to Bring Gigabit Fiber Network to 1.6M Locations

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Fiber expansion will include overbuilding and upgrading 70% of consumer and business customers to 10 Gig capable XGS-PON networks

PLANO, Texas, July 22, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- **DZS** (Nasdaq: DZSI), a global leader in optical and packet-based mobile transport, broadband access and software defined networking solutions, today announced that it will be a key partner in supporting **Consolidated Communications, Inc.'s** (CCI's) gigabit fiber network expansion initiative which extends to over 70% of its service area nationwide. This five-year expansion already underway, which includes utilization of the latest enhancements to the **DZS Velocity** broadband access portfolio and **DZS Helix** edge access solutions. CCI will pass over 1.6 million homes and business, including 27,000 locations supported by the **Rural Digital Opportunities Fund** (RDOF). Moreover, these locations are targeted for symmetrical, multi-gigabit capable services enabled by XGS-PON technology, making this initiative one of the most advanced, large scale and high performance network buildouts of 10 gigabits per second (10 Gbps) capable broadband access technology in North America.

"We couldn't be more excited about our gigabit fiber expansion initiative, and we are fortunate to have a solid long-term partner like DZS helping us bring this strategy to fruition," said Tom White, Chief Technology Officer at Consolidated Communications. "DZS technology and solutions have over the last 20 years empowered us to deliver cutting edge services at every phase of our growth and transformation journey as we evolved from a local copper-based voice and broadband service provider, to a regional provider that was the first in the U.S. to deliver IPTV at scale, and recently to a top-ten national fiber provider. Today, DZS is helping us leap to multi-gigabit services and to build our future network today at a scale not yet seen in North America. DZS is always pushing the boundaries of technology and services, and our close partnership has helped us to elevate our game for the benefit of our

business and for our customers.”

The gigabit expansion project underway utilizes a variety of DZS Velocity broadband access solutions, including plans to utilize the new DZS Xcelerate line of 10 gig-class fiber access XGS-PON combo and 100 Gbps aggregation cards, and DZS Helix Edge Access solutions. The new DZS Xcelerate cards feature the ability support both XGS-PON and GPON and 10 Gbps and 1 Gbps AE technology out of any port. This provides CCI with extraordinary flexibility, allowing them to choose the right technology the fits their deployment and competitive scenarios, and leap all the way to 10 Gbps services when necessary. In today’s hyper-connected world where service providers face the challenges of an explosion of connected devices, applications that demand multi-gigabit speeds, and customers expecting always-on connectivity, the DZS Velocity broadband access portfolio provides industry-leading performance, open software-enabled agility, and extensive deployment flexibility to enable carrier network transformation and success.

Additionally, CCI is deploying DZS Helix Edge Access solutions to enable advanced gigabit and multi-gigabit in-home and in-business services. As CCI looks forward, the DZS Helix portfolio stands ready to address the cutting-edge requirements of the future, including 5G fixed wireless access, 10 Gigabit data rates, and Wi-Fi 6-enabled solutions.

“For more than a decade, CCI and DZS have been innovating together to expand into new markets and deliver next generation broadband services,” said Charlie Vogt, President and CEO of DZS. “Consolidated is recognized as a top-ten broadband access provider in the United States. Bringing symmetrical multi-gigabit services to more than 70% of their footprint will transform the communities they serve, which will now be among the most connected in the world.”

For more information regarding the DZS Velocity and DZS Helix Edge Access portfolios, visit <https://dzsi.com/>.

About DZS

DZS Inc. (NSDQ: DZSI) is a global leader in optical and packet-based mobile transport, broadband access and software defined networking solutions. With more than 20 million products in-service and customers and alliance partners spanning more than 100 countries, DZS is helping many of the world’s most advanced and innovative service providers and enterprises leverage the power of 5G, 10 gig fixed broadband, and software-defined networks to deliver cutting-edge services and lead in their markets.

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This press release contains forward-looking statements regarding future events and our future results that are

subject to the safe harbors created under the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements reflect the beliefs and assumptions of the Company's management as of the date hereof. Words such as "anticipate," "believe," "continue," "could," "estimate," "expect," "forecast," "goal," "intend," "may," "plan," "project," "seek," "should," "target," "will," "would," variations of such words, and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. Readers are cautioned that these forward-looking statements are only predictions and are subject to risks, uncertainties and assumptions that are difficult to predict. The Company's actual results could differ materially and adversely from those expressed in or contemplated by the forward-looking statements. Factors that could cause actual results to differ include, but are not limited to, those risk factors contained in the Company's SEC filings available at www.sec.gov, including without limitation, the Company's annual report on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q and subsequent filings. In addition, additional or unforeseen affects from the COVID-19 pandemic and the global economic climate may give rise to or amplify many of these risks. Readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on any forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date on which they are made. DZS undertakes no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements for any reason.

About Consolidated Communications

Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQ: CNSL) is dedicated to moving people, businesses and communities forward by delivering the latest reliable communications solutions. Consumers, businesses and wireless and wireline carriers depend on Consolidated for a wide range of high-speed internet, data, phone, security, cloud and wholesale carrier solutions. With a network spanning nearly 50,000 fiber route miles, Consolidated is a top 10 U.S. fiber provider, turning technology into solutions that are backed by exceptional customer support. Learn more at consolidated.com. Connect with us on **social media**.

For further information see: www.DZSi.com.

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