

SUREWEST COMMUNICATIONS

Form 425

February 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): February 17, 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
(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))[Missing Graphic Reference]

Item 1.01. Entry into a Material Definitive Agreement.

On February 17, 2012, Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc. (the “Company”) entered into the First Amendment (the “Amendment”) to the Amended and Restated Credit Agreement, dated June 8, 2011 (the “Original Credit Agreement”), among the Company, as Parent Guarantor, Consolidated Communications, Inc., as Borrower, the lenders referred to therein, Wells Fargo Bank, National Association, as administrative agent, issuing bank and swingline lender, CoBank, ACB, as syndication agent, General Electric Capital Corporation, as documentation agent, The Royal Bank of Scotland PLC, as documentation agent, and Wells Fargo Securities, LLC, as sole lead arranger and sole bookrunner. The Company previously disclosed its agreement to acquire (the “Proposed Acquisition”) of all the outstanding shares of SureWest Communications (“SureWest”), as disclosed in the Company’s Current Report on Form 8-K filed February 6, 2012 and its Current Report on Form 8-K filed February 8, 2012. The Amendment provides the Company with the ability to escrow proceeds from a high-yield note offering prior to closing the Proposed Acquisition, and, until closing, excludes the debt from current leverage calculations. The Amendment also permits the Company additional flexibility for future high yield notes issuances with the same subsidiary guarantees as the Original Credit Agreement. All other terms, coverage, and leverage ratios in the Original Credit Agreement were unchanged.

The description set forth above does not purport to be complete and is qualified in its entirety by the Amendment filed herewith as Exhibit 10.1 and is incorporated into this report by reference.

Item 2.03. Creation of a Direct Financial Obligation or an Obligation under an Off-Balance Sheet Arrangement of a Registrant.

The information included in Item 1.01 of this Current Report on Form 8-K is incorporated by reference into this Item 2.03.

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,” “will” and similar 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 such statements. These risks and uncertainties include the ability of the Company to complete the SureWest acquisition, 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 and 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 our 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.

Prospectus/Proxy Statement

This material is not a substitute for the prospectus/proxy statement the Company and SureWest will file with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Investors in the Company or SureWest are urged to read the prospectus/proxy statement, which will contain important information, including detailed risk factors, when it becomes available. The prospectus/proxy statement 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 when such a filing is made 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. A final proxy statement or prospectus/proxy statement will be mailed to the Company's shareholders and shareholders of SureWest.

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 proxy statement for the Company's 2011 annual meeting of shareholders. Information about the directors and executive officers of SureWest is set forth in the proxy statement for SureWest's 2011 annual meeting of shareholders and SureWest's Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010. Investors may obtain additional information regarding the interests of such participants in the proposed transactions by reading the prospectus/proxy statement for such proposed transactions when it becomes available.

Item 9.01. Financial Statements and Exhibits.

(d) Exhibits

No.	Description
10.1	First Amendment to Amended and Restated Credit Agreement, dated as of February 17, 2012, by and among Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc., Consolidated Communications, Inc., the Subsidiary Loan Parties identified therein, the lenders referred to therein and Wells Fargo Bank, National Association, as administrative agent

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: February 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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