

Camai Air inaugurates S.W. charter air service

A new, 100 percent Native-owned aircharter service will be opening in Bethel this week. Ruth Kaloa, general manager for Camai Air, said the new

service is owned by six village corporations and is being opened in response to popular demand in the area.

"We will have very cour-

teous service," Kaloa said, "which is very much needed in our area." Further, she noted, there will be people who can speak with customers both

in English and in Native Yupic languages.

The ribbon cutting will be held this Friday, April 1, at 9:30 a.m. in Bethel. Camai will be operating a single Cessna 206 to begin with, but Kaloa said the company expects to add two to three more aircraft before the month of April is over. The planes will be available for charter anywhere customers wish to go, she said.

There will be a special blessing of the aircraft and facility. Although the final agenda had not been set by presstime, Riley said it was expected that

James Charlie of Toksook Bay would lead the blessing ceremony. Camai will employ as many Native personnel as possible, Riley said, and will help interested Native pilots go through the training program necessary to qualify.

"We will be emphasizing safety and proper maintenance," Riley stressed. Mark Charlie of Tununak is president of the new company. The villages which have pooled together to found Camai Air include Toksook Bay, Tununak, Cheformak, Nightmute-Unkumute, Newtok and Merto-yak.