

AIA adds new Hercules to Alaska cargo fleet

A new \$7.25 million Hercules airplane has joined the Alaska International Air (AIA) fleet, bringing to five the number of planes the Fairbanks-based carrier is operating.

AIA chief pilot, Joe May, co-pilot Bob Jacobs and flight engineer Kristopher Paull traveled to Marietta, Ga., during November to take delivery of the 112-foot cargo plane from the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, which has been manufacturing the Hercules since 1956.

The new plane replaces a slightly smaller Hercules that AIA recently sold to an Angolan airline. The new Model G airplane is a Dash 30 aircraft which has a 6.3-foot longer interior cargo space than the Dash 20 model that was sold. Its 55.4-foot long cargo space, which is nine feet high and ten feet wide, can carry up to 25 tons of payload, giving the plane a gross take-off weight of 77.5 tons (155,000 pounds).

The plane's official designation by the manufacturer is an L-382, the civilian designation of the C-130 aircraft that have been used by the U.S. Air Force for more than 20 years.

The new Model G airplane, which carries tail number N108AK, is equipped with an improved air conditioning and pressurization system, as well as improved flight instruments and

a Collins FD-109 flight director system, according to AIA vice president of maintenance and engineering, Ralph Brumbaugh.

"It's got later state-of-the-art avionics (aviation electronics) such as solid state instead of tube type equipment," Brumbaugh explained.

The plane normally cruises at 25,000 feet at 300 knots (345 m.p.h.) and is powered by four 14,300-horsepower turbine engines manufactured by the Allison Division of General Motors, which turn a 13.5-foot diameter, four-bladed Hamilton Standard

propeller.

N108AK will be used to train pilots on its new cockpit navigation equipment for several days, and then will go into service carrying freight to the North Slope.

AIA is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Alaska International Industries, which also owns the state's largest locally-owned trucking company, Weaver Brothers, Inc., as well as Alaska International Construction and Frank Moolin & Associates, Inc., a newly-formed construction management firm.