

BARROW SUPPLIES ON AIRLIFT

Round-the-Clock, 7-Day-Week Airlift Brings Needed Goods

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Staff Writer

A round-the-clock seven-day-a-week airlift started Friday morning to bring the eagerly awaited cargo of the North Star III to Barrow.

Three Hercules four-engine turboprop cargo planes from Alaska Airlines are each making three round trips daily between Fairbanks and Barrow, carrying approximately 60 palletloads of vital goods needed by Barrow residents for the coming year.

At Alaska Airlines freight loading at Fairbanks International Airport, crews are working furiously to keep the three Hercules cargo planes on their demanding three trip per day schedule.

With the round trip to Barrow taking approximately six hours, this leaves a short two hours each trip for ground crews to unload cargo in Barrow, load and refuel at Fairbanks.

According to Alaska Airlines station manager Jack Nott, the

airline expects to complete its contract to deliver the approximately three million pounds of cargo in less than the two weeks specified in its contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The weather has been good so far, an airline spokesman offered. Barring serious delays, such as might be caused by bad weather, they expect to complete deliveries as much as four days ahead of schedule.

Mudslides in Seward delayed delivery of the cargo in Fairbanks past the planned start for the enterprise on Wednesday.

The cargo from the North Star III, the BIA operated supply ship which has served remote Alaskan villages for 17 years, was unloaded at Seward when the ship was unable to reach Barrow this fall.

Heavy ice buildups along the shores of the Arctic Ocean and the Bering Sea made delivery impossible, leaving Barrow without vital supplies for the coming winter.

From Seward, the supplies were shipped by rail to Fairbanks, where the airlift takes over. A smaller shipment will go to Wainwright.

The supplies destined for Barrow, already delayed almost two months, include a vast range of articles needed to keep the community going through the coming year.

Food is an important component, but the shipment also

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includes construction equipment, books, cranes, toys and many other items.

Materials for three new classrooms and two sets of teachers' quarters are part of the airlift, according to Fairbanks BIA Superintendent Wally Craig.

Pupils in Barrow schools started a two week recess on Wednesday, in order to allow teachers and school personnel to unload and store supplies for the school.

One item from the ship will not be airlifted. This is a crane, used for dock unloading. It will probably be delivered next fall.

Despite original beliefs that only food would be airlifted, the present airlift will ship to Barrow almost the complete cargo which should have been delivered by the North Star.