

Munz Northern Airlines expanding routes

NOME—Munz Northern Airlines has announced it is expanding its routes into new areas with the addition of three round trips per week from Nome to Saint Mary's and Bethel.

The new routes were announced by Munz President Dick Galleher. In addition, Galleher said Munz will schedule air service into Pilot Station, Mountain Village, Kotlik, Emonak, Alakanukuk and Sheldon's Point.

The Nome to Saint Mary's to Bethel route will operate three times a week. "With the new routes established by Munz," Galleher said, "northwest Alaskans will now be in contact with a region and people that until now have been

strangers to Nome."

Previously only jet carriers have flown the Anchorage-Nome or Anchorage-Bethel routes. But the new routes bring Bethel and the Yukon area into contact with Nome directly.

"I think we will see a lot of new faces in Nome," said Galleher. "The routing into the Yukon is an opportunity to build ties with a region whose promise and problems are very similar to ours," Galleher added. "And we should encourage even further development."

Munz Northern Airlines primarily flies Britten-Norman "Islander" aircraft and now has a fleet of nine of the ten-passenger twin-engine bush planes. There

are also two Grand Commanders, seating ten persons, in the fleet.

"The 'Islander' airplane," said Galleher, "is ideally suited for use on short unpaved runways and rugged terrain, typical in the bush." The other Islanders were delivered a year ago and have been in service continuously since then.

"In addition," Galleher said, "Munz also has two Doenier-Sky Servants, a large cargo-only aircraft. The two will help alleviate the increasing loads of freight requirements burdening Munz as surface freight rates continue to rise or climb beyond the customer's ability to pay," he said.

The "Sky Servants" will be

able to haul lumber, road culverts, machinery and other difficult loads that currently are creating problems. "What has happened is that the public can't handle the high surface tariffs or associated costs and we, the small air carrier, are inheriting an impossible burden of delivering freight in aircraft designed for passengers only, with limited room for freight," Galleher noted.

"Hopefully this will cure the situation or at least fill the gap until a more practical delivery mode is established," Galleher ended. "Our primary job is efficient passenger operations in the Northwest Alaska bush. We are a taxi operation, not a bus service."