

Noorvik Phone Working Again

ANCHORAGE—The Noorvik earth station, which was totally destroyed by fire last Tuesday night, was turned back over to the village in full operating condition by Saturday morning. The 15-foot antenna and 30 feet of cable were all that was left following a fire that burned five homes, two small stores and several out-buildings in this small northern Alaska community.

The fire apparently spread from building to building until checked by a team of FAA firefighters from Kotzebue. They were aided by villagers from nearby Kiana who brought their own pump to help out.

The fire burned all night Tuesday and was still smoking on Thursday night when the last of RCA Alascom crew arrived.

One RCA engineer was on the scene almost immediately assessing damage and estimating equipment repairs. A cargo plane carrying three RCA Alascom technicians and an engineer left Fairbanks Thursday morning for Noorvik with tools and test equipment. Another cargo plane with more equipment

had left Anchorage Thursday morning and was followed by another RCA Alascom engineer and more equipment later in the day. Bush pilot, Gil Lankford was kept on constant standby and flew several trips to Kotzebue, fifteen minutes away by air, to pick up additional equipment.

It took over \$40,000 in test equipment and six men continuously to get the earth station operating again. John Kersteins, an RCA Alascom bush engineer from Fairbanks was "Amazed at the intensity of heat generated by the fire." The earth station equipment cabinet was completely disintegrated. The equipment cabinet and up battery supply had to be replaced.

Power from the village had to be rewired. The telephone cable from the village had to be reconnected and new wire had to be put up between the equipment and the antenna.

The Alascom team began work immediately and by Friday night had the earth station operable again. It was connected to the village phone Saturday morning.



RCA ALASCOM ENGINEER John Kersteins and technician Charlie Fox tie cable during repair work on the Noorvik earth station. The earth station and several other buildings burned down Tuesday night. The earth station was operating again by Friday.