

# **RCA Alascom Plans— Communications**

RCA Alaska Communications, Inc., announced last month that it has submitted to the State of Alaska and the Alaska Public Utilities Commission a comprehensive Alaska Communications Plan.

Simultaneously, the plan was filed with the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D.C.

RCA Alascom President Stephen D. Heller said: "The plan presents a veritable explosion of satellite technology for Alaska at an aggregate cost of \$100 million.

"Although Alaska with six satellite earth stations in operation or under construction already has more domestic stations than any other state, an additional six major stations and 38 small bush stations are planned by the end of 1975, with another 23 major stations to follow in the ensuing five years.

"These new satellite facilities will provide greatly expanded long lines circuits for telephone service throughout Alaska, alleviating current shortages on the government's White Alice System."

"Coupled with an extensive Improved Mobile Telephone Service (IMTS) dial telephone program for the Alaskan Bush scheduled to be completed by next summer, these new facilities, if fully approved by regulatory bodies, will provide Alaskans with a dramatic and unparalleled advance in communications facilities throughout the state," Heller added.

According to Heller, the Alaska Communications Plan developed by RCA Alascom is designed to provide modern telephone service for every Alaskan village with a population of 25 or more people where there is presently no toll service available.

There are at present some 284 communities in Alaska with a population of more than 25 persons. Of this number 176 with a population of 315,000 persons presently have exchange and toll telephone service, either through regular commercial or military exchanges.

The remaining 108 communities which do not now have telephone exchange or toll service available to them have a total population of about 18,000 people or about five per cent of the Alaskan population.

VHF Bush telephone facilities are under construction in 27 of these communities and are scheduled for completion this year.

An additional 12 communities are scheduled to have Bush telephone facilities available in the first quarter of 1975 and 15 more as soon as possible but not later than the second quarter of 1975.

Two additional villages will be served by the Angoon/Ketchikan microwave system scheduled to be operable in 1975.

As planned, satellite communications will be achieved for the Alaska communities in two ways. Communities that are reasonably close together will be served in a cluster from a single

earth station, and presently, plans call for seven earth stations to serve 21 Bush communities in clusters.

The remaining 31 Bush communities — isolated either by distance or terrain — will each be served directly by an earth station.

According to Heller, all 38 Bush earth stations are planned for installation and operation by the end of 1975 at an estimated cost of \$3.1 million.

The rate reductions provided by RCA Alascom thus far have saved the public some \$110 million since RCA Alascom commenced operation in 1971. In addition, the company has expended \$70 million for improving and expanding the system, or more than double the amount of its commitment.

This sizable investment is,

(Continued on page 8)

# ***RCA Alascom . .***

*(Continued from page 7)*

However, only the first installment on the total amount RCA Alascom plans to invest in the future of Alaska to insure that the state has communications facilities as good, diverse and efficient as those available in the contiguous 48 states.

In pursuit of this communications goal, RCA Alascom's total plant additions could exceed \$200 million in 1976 and could reach a total of \$270 million in 1980.

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