

Great Northern Airlines granted permanent authority

ANCHORAGE--The Alaska Transportation Commission has awarded permanent authority to serve Nome, Kotzebue and Unalakleet to Great Northern Airlines which has been serving the northwestern Alaska communities on a temporary basis with

its Lockheed Electra aircraft since June 6 of this year.

The three-man commission ruled unanimously last week that the Anchorage-based carrier shall have permanent authority to serve the communities after it conducted public hearings in

Nome and Kotzebue, as well as Anchorage, where the flights originate. Public testimony was predominantly in favor of Great Northern's request to serve the communities which have had single carrier service since the federal Civil Aeronautics Board or-

dered Alaska Airlines to stop serving the communities more than two years ago.

Since June 6, a month after Wien Air Alaska pilots went on strike, Great Northern has been using its four turbo-prop Electra aircraft to serve Nome and

Kotzebue six days a week (Monday-Saturday) and Unalakleet one day a week on Wednesday. That service will continue as a result of the permanent authority granted by the commission.

Great Northern's four-engine Lockheed Electras are arranged in a way that allows 25 passengers to be seated in the rear third of the aircraft while the front two thirds of the airplane can carry up to 25,000 pounds of freight.

"We're hauling a great deal of outsize, large cargo and building materials," a company spokesman said.

"We think our additional service is encouraging some people to use air freight instead of water freight to get their supplies to these communities as well," he said.