



HOVERCRAFT COMING TO ALASKA

Julian Rice, left, Fairbanks attorney, and Larry Landry, Anchorage businessman, display a model of the 18-passenger hovercraft their new corporation, Skimmers, Inc., will bring to Anchorage next month. The unique craft, which can skim over land or water in any weather conditions, will be used in a 30-day demonstration of its cargo and passenger transporting capabilities in the Cook Inlet area.

New Firm Tells Plans For Two Hovercraft

By ROBERT G. KNOX
Times Business Editor

An 18-passenger transport that can skim over land or water at 60 miles an hour — at night or in zero-zero weather conditions — will start a 30-day demonstration operation from the Port of Anchorage next month. Skimmers, Inc., an Anchorage-based corporation, announced plans for the Cook Inlet hovercraft demonstration at a press conference held here Thursday afternoon. The demonstration,

starting Aug. 15, will be held in cooperation with Bell Aerosystems, Inc., U.S. licensee for the unique British-built craft. Larry Landry, general manager of Alaska Van and Storage, Inc., and vice president of operations of the newly-organized corporation, said purpose of the demonstration operation was to acquaint potential commercial users — particularly the oil industry — with the feasibility of this new type of cargo and passenger transport.

Landry said the commercial charter operation Skimmers, Inc., plans here would use two of the hovercraft capable of transporting 18 passengers or a five-ton freight payload.

"This would be the first hovercraft commercial charter operation in the United States — or anywhere in the Western Hemisphere," Landry said.

"However, hovercraft are in both commercial and military use in England and Europe and the military is using them in Viet Nam," Landry said. "There is also one experimental ferry service now in operation in San Francisco running between the city and the airports."

While the corporation is planning principally on commercial cargo charter operations for the present, it also envisions other possible uses when a giant new model of the hovercraft comes into use. This new model, currently under construction, would be capable of transporting 250 passengers and 40 vehicles operating as a large, fast sea-land ferry.

Describing the hovercraft, Julian Rice, Fairbanks attorney who is Skimmers' vice president for administration, said it is "neither fish nor fowl — it's not a true airplane or a true boat — it's just a new type of transport."

"A hovercraft is nothing more than a powered vehicle which contains within a flexible skirt attached to the hull of the vehicle, a cushion of air," Rice said. "The cushion of air causes the vehicle to rise a slight distance above the surface of the earth — land, sea, ice, snow, mud, tundra or whatever — and skim along the surface."

"In other words, hovercraft can drive, ride or fly, as you wish, over any of these terrains. We believe introduction of hovercraft in Alaska will revolutionize the transportation industry particularly in those areas previously inaccessible by conventional modes of transportation."

Rice said the hovercraft to be introduced here will be equipped to operate under "zero-zero" conditions. "Weather, for all practical purposes, will be no obstacle in our operation," he said.

The American version of the hovercraft which will be brought here is modified by Bell to increase its power. It uses a 1,000-horsepower jet turbine engine driving both a four-bladed variable-pitch propeller for propulsion and the huge, enclosed fan which provides lift.

Landry said that using conservative figures the transport would travel at 60 miles an hour with four hours endurance. The craft used here will have a radar operator aboard in addition to the "driver" and will

be equipped with lights for night operation. All 18 passenger seats will be removable to provide a cargo configuration.

The hovercraft to be used in the demonstration program will arrive here about Aug. 10. Landry said. It will be shipped north, knocked down, aboard an 85-foot rail car. The assembly operation here will be directed by Sam Helms, chief pilot for Bell.

The corporation officials said the demonstration trips will be conducted from the Port of Anchorage and the firm is hopeful negotiations will be completed to provide a permanent base in the city's port area.

Wallace E. Martens, chairman of the port commission, said the commission was most impressed by a briefing it received on the proposed hovercraft operation.

"There is little doubt in our minds that this new vehicle will be a tremendous assist to the Port of Anchorage and the entire community," Martens said. "Basically the vessel will improve transportation in the area, assisting the exploration of our natural resources, and development of presently isolated lands across the inlet. This high-speed service will be on a year-round basis over water, land or ice. Additionally, the vessel's potential in search and rescue cases or fire cannot be discounted."

"We believe the initiative of this company's officers in bringing this new service to Anchorage will have a far-reaching effect in keeping with the growth of our port and the city itself. Consequently, the commission is very pleased that the company's officers have decided to use the port of Anchorage as its base for their operations," Martens said.

Officers of the firm, in addition to Landry and Rice, are two Washington State businessmen who have wide business interests in Alaska, including Alaska Van and Storage, Inc. President of Skimmers, Inc. is Hugh B. Mitchell, former U.S. senator from Washington; and Paul Pollock is secretary-treasurer.

Anchorage Daily News, Thursday, August 18, 1966

Port Dredging Is Completed

Dredging on the site of the Port of Anchorage's north extension has been completed, according to Russ Painter, assistant port director.

Painter said Swalling-General Construction Co. began re-rigging its equipment today and should begin driving piling for the new dock by this weekend.

The construction firm, which has the contract to build the new dock, took over dredging the site when the firm which originally had the contract could not do the work.

The site had to be dredged before the pile driving could be begun.



HOVERCRAFT ARRIVES AT CITY PORT

The hovercraft vehicle to be used in a 30-day demonstration here starting later this month is currently being assembled in the city port area. Skimmers, Inc., a local corporation, brought the craft here in cooperation with Bell Aerosystems, Inc., to demon-

strate its capabilities for transporting cargo and passengers in the Cook Inlet area. At right, Sam Helms, Bell representative, points out a feature of the new craft to Larry Landry, Skimmers vice president.

Anchorage Daily Times Wednesday, Aug. 17, 1966

Japanese Firm To Route Ships Via Anchorage

By ALLAN ADASIAK
Times Staff Writer

The K Line Steamship Company of Japan will establish scheduled runs into the Port of Anchorage in the spring of 1967. Wallace Martens, chairman of the Anchorage Port Commission, announced today.

The new service, if used as anticipated, "should prove very beneficial to the port as well as Alaskan contractors, merchants and consumers," he said.

Japanese interest in the possibilities of buying Alaskan coal, iron and lumber products is high, said Martens; who returned recently from a trade development trip to Tokyo.

Conversely, the Japanese are interested in supplying cars, pipe, structural steel, plywood, electronic equipment and other goods to Alaska, he said.

The K Line (Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha Ltd.) presently runs ships to Anchorage on an irregular basis, whenever enough cargo will justify a trip.

The announcement of a definite schedule commitment by S. Oota, manager of the company's liner section, number one, "is the most significant development of our trip," Martens said.

The shipping schedule for the line will be announced in mid-winter.

The Port Commission chairman said the Japanese were "very eager to meet with us, to the point that they were calling on us before we could call on them, once they learned we were in Tokyo."

Elimination of discriminating freight rates or tariffs to Alaskan ports over other ports on the West Coast of the United States was discussed at another meeting.

The Alaskan group met with D. P. Gillette, chairman, and Takehito Sato, manager and assistant to the chairman, of the Trans-Pacific Freight Conference of Japan.

"It was pointed out that foreign ships may pay as much

as \$4,000 more for hull insurance to come into an Alaskan port than it costs to enter other West Coast ports," Martens said.

"Anchorage is 1,500 miles closer to Japan than Seattle. Tariffs should be lower, not equal to or higher than other ports," he said.

Martens spoke highly of the importance of direct personal contacts with the Japanese as a means to developing "the tremendous amount of trade that could be generated."

With Martens were Port Commissioner William Besser and Cal Jacobson, port traffic consultant from Los Angeles, Calif.

Dredge Work At Port Here Begins Again

Swalling-General Construction Firm To Handle Project

After a three-week stall, dredging will resume at the Port of Anchorage Wednesday. This time the work will be done by Swalling-General Construction Co., the firm whose job of building a \$2.4 million north dock extension at the port was delayed when dredging stopped in June.

A work-order change in the Swalling-General contract that will permit the dredging to be done at \$5,550 a day comes before the City Council tonight. Acting City Manager Karl Walter Jr. said today the firm is already setting up its three-yard clam bucket and large boom at the port so it can begin work Wednesday.

The proposition before the City Council when it meets at 7:30 p.m. in the chambers of the Loussac Library calls for a maximum expenditure of \$205,000 for the dredging work.

Walter estimated that the dredging needed to drive the piles for the north dock could be completed "within 30 days, based on conservative production figures."

The Corps of Engineers has said it will hold Pacific Marine Constructors of Seattle in default of the \$400,000 part of its contract with them for dredging the Anchorage port area.

Pacific Marine ceased work after it encountered bottom conditions reported to be too hard for its equipment to handle.

The failure to complete the dredging as planned has kept Swalling-General from beginning construction on the north dock July 15, as it had planned.

Wally Martens, chairman of the Anchorage Port Commission, said today that he has heard rumors that Swalling-General might be able to obtain the full dredging contract for the Anchorage waterfront.

"If they do, it is the feeling of the Port Commission and the City Council that our cost for Swalling-General's delay in getting started would be greatly reduced, if not eliminated."

The contract for building the north dock calls for a July 15 starting date, and the contractor has made note of the costs he will run up by having men and equipment standing by if he cannot start work on time.

The acting city manager said he did not know yet what would be done about having the city pay damages for the delayed starting time.

"At present, we also have no assurance that the city will be able to recover the \$5,650 a day cost we will be paying to have Swalling do the dredging," Walter said.

He said he hoped some arrangement could be made with the Corps of Engineers, which issued the dredging contract to Pacific Marine Constructors.

The Corps of Engineers is currently negotiating with other firms on the dredging job, he said, and may hire someone to do the work which remains after Swalling-General has excavated enough to drive piles for the north dock.

Swalling-General is presently having a larger "clam" with a five-yard bucket shipped to Anchorage from Portland, Ore., in order to speed the dredging work.

Alaska Construction July-Aug. '66

Big Crane In Service At Port of Anchorage

Ceremonies were held at the Port of Anchorage June 10 marking startup of one of the world's largest gantry cranes which will speed loading and unloading of container ships operated by Sea-Land Service, Inc. on its Alaska service.

The specially-built crane was designed and constructed by Pacific Coast Engineering Co., Alameda, California. The 400-ton structure was shipped in sections by barge from Alameda to Anchorage, where it was erected by Bigge Drayage Co., San Leandro, California.

Leased by the Port of Anchorage to Sea-Land, the huge crane is used for simultaneous loading and unloading of 35- and 40-ft. highway trailers weighing 27½ tons each at a rate of up to 40 vans per hour. Previous facilities had a maximum rate of 14 vans per hour. Use of the crane eliminates shipboard cranes and permits stowing trailers three deep on deck, boosting the capacity of Sea-Land's trailerships.

Anchorage Daily News, Tuesday, August 2, 1966

Construction On Port Extension May Begin Soon

Construction of the Port of Anchorage's north dock extension could begin by mid-month, the Anchorage Port Commission has learned.

Loren Lounsbury, member of the port's consulting engineering firm, gave the commission a run-down on dredging operations which must be completed before construction work on the dock can begin.

It should take 10 to 13 days to remove the remaining 16,000 cubic yards of material that must be dredged from the area, Lounsbury said.

Allowing time to convert the dredging equipment so that it can be used to drive piling, work could begin by Aug. 17, the engineer said.

SWALLING - General, the firm which will build the dock, signed an agreement with the city to clear the area when the dredging firm which held the contract was unable to do the work.

Commissioners meeting last night heard A. E. Harned, port director, report that 1966 reve-

nues from the port and the industrial park would exceed that originally anticipated by \$24,240.

The commission will recommend that the present port position of operations-business manager be separated and that two posts — that of operations manager and office manager — be created instead.

THE commission agreed to boost the annual salary of the assistant port director from \$12,828 budgeted to \$15,000.

It also approved sending a member of the commission and either the port director or his assistant to the Pacific Coast Association of Port Authorities port management seminar in San Francisco in September and two members of the commission to Japan on a trade development trip later this month.