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# Micronesia transport coordinated

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Micronesia hopes both to solve its own ocean-sized transportation problems and become an air-sea bridge for goods moving across the Pacific in both directions.

That was the main thrust of an outline by Wayne C. Thiessen, transportation chief of the U.S. Trust Territory government, at an international transportation seminar last week.

The Trust Territory, embracing a Western Pacific area as large as the continental U.S., is making notable progress in the areas of sea and air transportation, but has its sights even higher, Thiessen said.

"WE HAVE developed a Transportation Coordination Center which is able to keep daily and even hourly track of the position and intended destination of each of the 20 ships and several aircraft which are serving the Trust Territory," he said.

"This Transportation Coordination Center is designed to insure that on any given day the full impact of planning and logical equipment routing will benefit the consumers in as many

as possible of our far-flung communities.

"That coordination center is located on board a special vessel and is operated with extensive communications equipment in conjunction with our developing Interisland Fleet Home Base facility at strategic Peleliu Island.

"This historic World War II battle site (30 miles southwest of the Palau district capital of Koror) is located at the geographic crossroads of the origin and destination of much of the expected intercontinental transport activity in the Southwest Pacific for the next few decades," he said.

The Peleliu deep water port at Orange Beach on the southern tip of the island is the best in the area near to the huge populations of Australasia, he said.

THIESSEN SAID the present planning is for a modest ship repair facility at Orange Beach that would do "above-the-water-line" work on the 20 interisland vessels serving the Trust Territory.

"That could effect savings on the \$350,000 a year we presently spend for such work in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Saipan and Hong Kong," he said.

Noting the Trust Territory's proximity to Australia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, China, Korea and other growing trading areas, Thiessen said:

"There is significant reason to expect a dramatic increase in air cargo requirements from all of these nations whose people com-

prise more than a third of the world's population and whose largely insular or rough terrain geography dictates that primary outside contact will be by sea and by air.

"MANY CONSUMER items such as outboard motors, agricultural implements, packaged food products and shipments of clothing are now moved to our district centers by air and then redistributed to the outer islands by ship with a minimum of rehandling.

"This has been partially made possible by the development of a connecting sea transport system where routing of the ships is centrally monitored and a uniform standard of ship availability is maintained," he said.

For Peleliu, a major Japanese warplane center during World War II, Thiessen said it would be easy to reactivate one of the hard coral cross-strips there — not as air transport hub for Palau, but in support of the Orange Beach ship repair facility.

Micronesian InterOcean Line Inc. (MILI), is set up to operate in each direction between San Francisco and Japan, via Hawaii, Majuro, Ponape, Truk, Koror, Guam and Saipan, with stops every 30 days.

He said the company's problems were solved, at least for the time being, when the Trust Territory Government last Oct. 19 took into escrow the stock held in the firm by the Marine Chartering Co. of San Francisco and reorganized it.