

PRESS RELEASE



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TRUST TERRITORY HEADQUARTERS

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MICRONESIAN COMMERCIAL AGENCIES
ASSUME OPERATIONS OF THREE TT VESSELS

SAIPAN, M. I. (SEPT 29)...The operations of three Trust Territory intra-district field-trip vessels are to be assumed by Micronesian commercial agencies in Ponape, Truk, and Yap Districts, effective October 1, 1965. Trust Territory Transportation Officer James M. Cook, in announcing the transaction today, pointed out that "this is another example of the transfer of Trust Territory operational and management functions to qualified Micronesians."

The 392 gross-ton, steel cargo/passenger vessel, the M/V KASELEHLIA, which the Trust Territory Government has operated in field-trip services in Ponape District since 1958, will be taken over by the Ponape Federation of Cooperatives and will continue her field-trip services in Ponape District.

Cook said the Federation later contemplates the creation of a Ponape Transportation Company which, as an affiliate of the Federation, will also handle shipping agency functions, including stevedoring and other terminal operations at the Ponape Port.

The 115-foot twin-screw KASELEHLIA has operated in Ponape waters since its arrival at Ponape District on August 13, 1958. The first new vessel ordered by the Trust Territory Government, it was built in Japan at approximately \$260,000. The ship was accepted by the

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Trust Territory Government on July 21, 1958 and was immediately turned over to the Pacific Micronesian Line, the former operator of the Trust Territory fleet under a contract with the government.

Captain Tetrick J. Melander of Kusaie has been named the new master of KASELEHLIA, replacing Captain I. N. Morrison of Australia, who served as skipper for the past 14 months.

Commercial operations of two new 100-foot cargo/passenger vessels M/V YAP ISLANDER and M/V TRUK ISLANDER--each a 270 gross-ton, steel-constructed, double-bottom, diesel-powered ship--will be assumed by the Yap Cooperative Association (formerly Yap Trading Company) and the Truk Transportation Company, respectively. These two agencies will also handle shipping agency functions, stevedore services, and other terminal operations, Cook said.

Cook said the YAP ISLANDER will perform field-trip services for both Yap and Palau Districts. The ship's home port is Colonia, Yap Proper.

Like the KASELEHLIA, the YAP ISLANDER is manned solely by Micronesian seamen, with Captain Willie M. Paznanski, formerly of the Ellice Islands, as master.

Due to the scheduled taking over of field-trip services by the YAP ISLANDER, the "old faithful" M/V ROQUE, which first served as field-trip vessel for the Marshalls District and later for Yap

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and Palau Districts, has been tied up at the Saipan Port and is now being offered for sale.

The TRUK ISLANDER is replacing M/V MILITOB I as a field-trip ship for the Truk District. Truk is also serviced by another smaller lagoon-type boat, the M/V FEIOCH, which operates within the Truk Atoll. According to Cook, the MILITOB I, after returning from drydocking in Japan, will be assigned to the Marshalls District as a field-trip vessel.

The M/V TRUK ISLANDER also has an all-Micronesian crew. Captain Rudy Muller of the Marshalls has been appointed skipper.

With these vessels being placed under commercial operations, it is anticipated that field trip services to the outlying islands will be more efficient and more economical, Cook said.

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