

Haines is owed better ferry service:

This is a brief explanation of why Haines - and not Juneau - deserves and needs better ferry service. Haines is a small town with limited resources, no hospital, limited dental, no jetport, no auto, truck, snowmobile, outboard, boat, RV dealerships, no "big box stores", etc., whereas Juneau is a full-service, small city and the jet and Ferry transportation hub for the entire Panhandle, not to mention our state's capital.

From the 1940s until the early 1970s, Coastal Ellis Airlines, flying twin-engine, amphibious aircraft, was the only airline serving the Panhandle. In 1970-71, the Civil Aeronautics Board merged all of Alaska's small airlines into one dominant airline, Alaska Airlines. Then they built the airports at Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg and Sitka, thus ending salt-water operations. In 1973, Alaska Airlines started jet service to Ketchikan and Juneau. In 1978, the airlines were deregulated, the small-town airports were expanded to handle jets and the Air Service Act was enacted to serve all of Southeast except Haines. Today, all major towns in Southeast except Haines get twice-daily jet service and scheduled Ferry service. To compound this problem, the Ferry schedule favors Juneau, which does little to no Business with Haines. The new Ferry rescheduling proposal would correct this long overdue oversight.

I've described how Haines got short changed with the Essential Air Service Act in the 1970's as well as biased Juneau north bound Ferry scheduling. Our governor is now soliciting public input to reduce the high cost of Ferry service.

Here is our solution for the Upper Lynn Canal. Base the Aurora and its crew in Haines (as Cordova dose) build an inexpensive bulkhead/floating ramp system in Berners Bay at the end of the N. Juneau Highway, thus cutting travel time by half. Using Auroras side or or Aft loading capabilities (drive on/drive off) would cut turnaround times by half. Depart Haines at 7am, arrive N. Juneau at 9am, depart Juneau 9:30am arriving Haines at 11:30am. Layover for three hours then do a second round trip at 2:30pm. Every other day do a mid-day round trip to Skagway. Cutting travel time to Juneau by half, would cut travel cost by half, allowing for two roundtrips to Juneau per day. Thus twice as many passengers and vehicles per day could generate twice the revenue. Juneau passengers would purchase tickets at Auke Bay before driving or shuttle busing to Berners Bay. (huge haul-back potential) Vending machines could cut staff by two. Operating within the 12 hour limit could cut crew cost by almost half.

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CALL 767-5471
FOR DETAILS