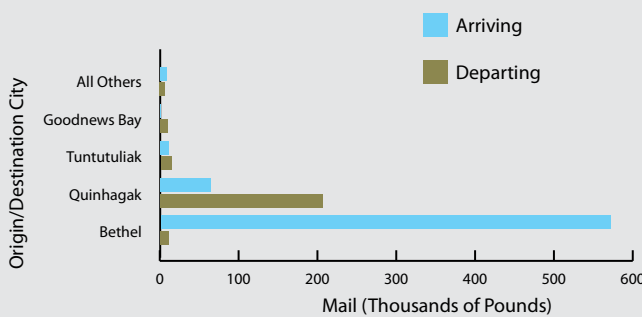


In rural Alaska, mail means more than just letters, bills, and catalogs; the United States Postal Service's Bypass Mail Program allows for the timely delivery of food and supplies via the mail system at a reduced cost to the sender. For many communities, this program is the quickest and least expensive way of receiving fresh food the majority of the year. About 900,000 pounds of air mail were transported through EEK in 2009; or more than 3,000 pounds for each resident. More than half of this air mail traffic arrived from Bethel (see Figure 4).

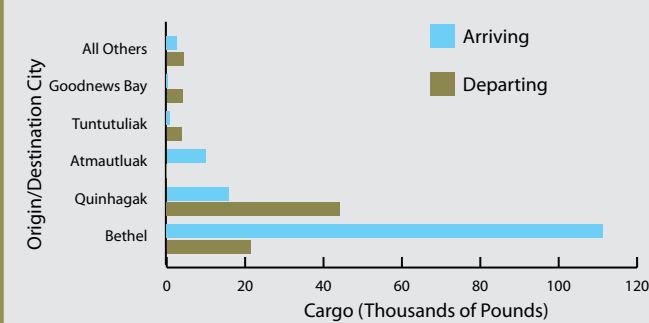
In 2009, more than 140,000 pounds of cargo arrived at EEK (nearly 800 pounds per capita) and nearly 79,000 pounds departed EEK in 2009 (see Figure 5). Bethel accounts for the majority of EEK's total air cargo traffic (61 percent), followed by Quinhagak (27 percent).

The analysis suggests that the "first retail equivalent expenditures" spent to move goods and people to and from EEK were approximately \$2.1 million in 2009 (Figure 6). Passenger enplanements contribute the bulk of it, approximately \$1.8 million (84 percent). This amount is a conservative estimate, because it does not include what travelers spent in Eek or paid for baggage fees and associated services.

**FIGURE 4**  
Eek: 2009 Mail Volumes by Origin/Destination City



**FIGURE 5**  
Eek: 2009 Cargo Volumes by Origin/Destination City



**FIGURE 6**  
Air Transport Expenditures, 2009

Expenditures Category	Segment Volume	Enplaned Volume	Enplaned Expenditures (\$Millions)
Passengers (Number)	11,631	5,892	1.8
Mail (Pounds)	899,948	424,405	0.2
Cargo (Pounds)	218,642	100,912	0.1
<b>Total</b>			<b>2.1</b>

### The Alaska Aviation System Plan

The Alaska Aviation System Plan (AASP) sets the vision for aviation in Alaska. It documents the existing aviation network, identifies needed airport improvements, sets funding priorities, and proposes aviation policy. The AASP has prepared special studies of important aviation issues, such as this document and 2009's *The Economic Contribution of the Aviation Industry to Alaska's Economy*.

The purpose of this special study is to document the economic contribution and social importance of a diverse set of Alaska airports to their communities. The study can be found at [www.alaskaasp.com/documents.aspx](http://www.alaskaasp.com/documents.aspx)

*This Alaska Aviation System Plan was conducted in accordance with FAA Advisory Circular 150/5070-7: The Airport System Planning Process. The economic analysis described in this brochure was conducted pursuant to Section 101.a(3) of that document. This report was prepared by Northern Economics, Inc. For more information please call ADOT&PF Aviation Division at (907) 269-0730. [www.dot.state.ak.us](http://www.dot.state.ak.us)*



## Economic Contributions of Alaska Airports THE EEK AIRPORT

### Aviation: Critical to Alaska

Aviation is a critical component of the state's economy and the vitality of Alaska's communities. As with many airports providing services to Alaska's roadless communities, the Eek Airport (EEK) is vital to sustaining the local community, and traditional economic measurements, such as how many jobs on-airport activity provides, underestimate its actual importance. The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), Division of Statewide Aviation recently embarked on updating the Alaska Aviation System Plan (AASP). As part of this effort, ADOT&PF and the Governor's Aviation Advisory Board established a goal of documenting the value and contribution of the aviation industry at 12 selected airports around the state to the state's economy and local communities. The Eek Airport (EEK) is one of the airports selected for this analysis. The community of Eek has 282 residents and is located on the south bank of the Eek River, 12 miles east of the mouth of

the Kuskokwim River. It is 35 air miles south of the regional hub of Bethel in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and 420 miles southwest of Anchorage.

In late 2010 and early 2011 contractors for ADOT&PF conducted an extensive survey and interview effort targeting on-site leaseholders at selected airports, ADOT&PF airport managers, and local community leaders. This brochure documents the results of this effort and the importance of EEK to the local community and is evidence of how similar airports in similar communities help maintain the vibrancy and diversity of Alaska's rural communities.

### Jobs Don't Tell EEK's Story

ADOT&PF contractors surveyed on-site leaseholders and airport managers at EEK to document as much of the economic activity occurring on airport as possible. On-site economic activity at airports has far-reaching consequences. The direct spending by on-site businesses and their employees, as well as the money spent operating and maintaining the airports, creates additional employment and income throughout the economy. When one employee brings home a paycheck and spends their wages on food, housing, and entertainment their spending creates more economic activity. The name for this phenomenon is the "multiplier effect". This study finds that in 2009 there was limited measurable on-site economic activity at EEK as measured by jobs. According to ADOT&PF Division of Statewide Aviation, only one job is associated with the ongoing



“The airport allows the State's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to provide avocados, pears, pomegranates, and other fresh produce that the children at the Eek School would never get otherwise.”

— Brett Stirling, Principal at the Eek School

Photo courtesy of James Amundsen



Photo courtesy of James Amundsen

**FIGURE 1**  
**Leaseholder and Airport Operation Expenditures Summary 2009**

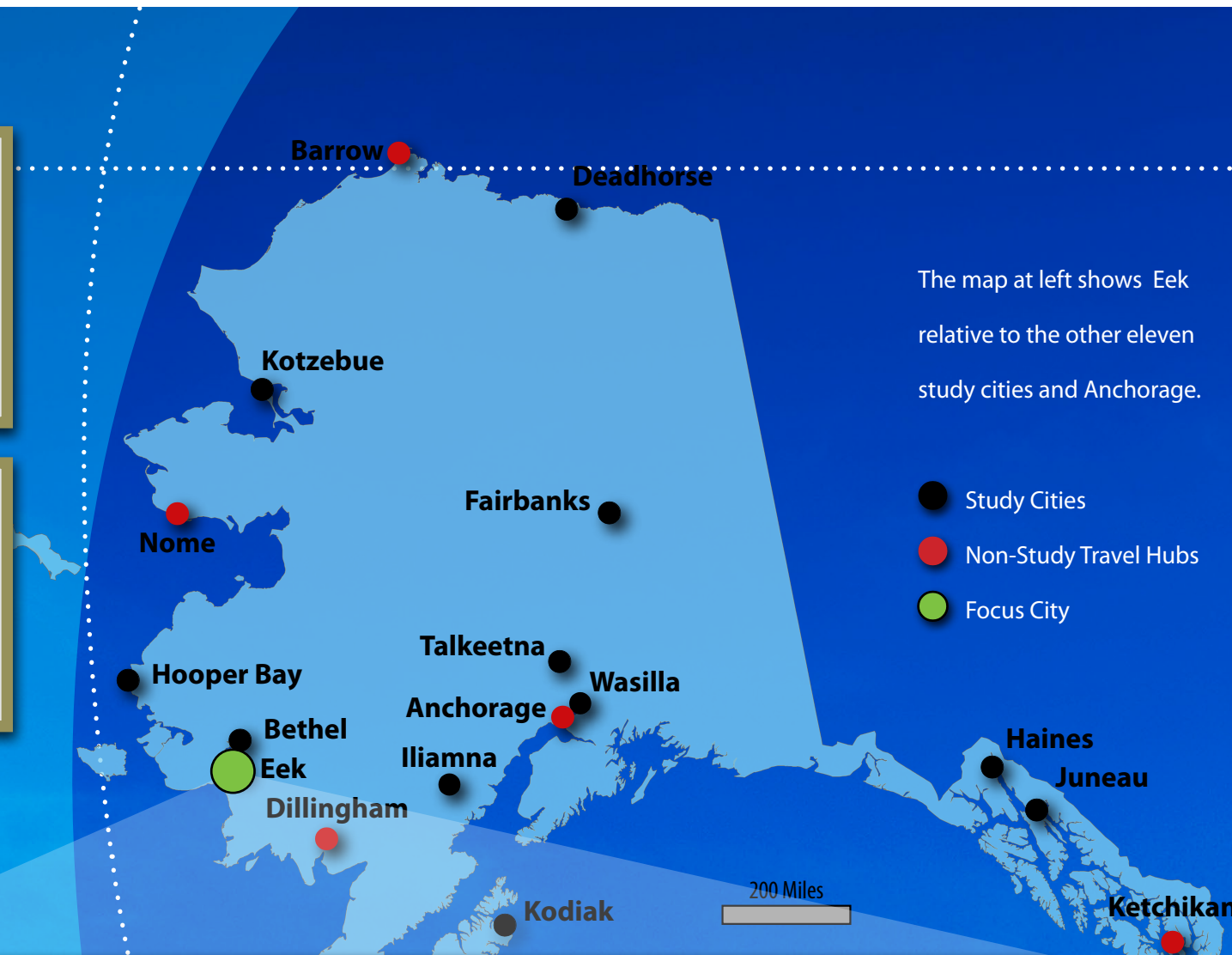
	Number of Jobs	Wages & Benefits	Capital Expenditures	Other Operating Expenditures	Total Expenditures
(\$Millions)					
Leaseholder	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Operations	1	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.02</b>

**FIGURE 2**  
**Eek Airport's Direct, Indirect, and Induced In-State Economic Effects, 2009**

Category	Number of Jobs		Labor Income (\$Millions)		Total Output (\$Millions)	
	In-Borough/Census Area	Other Alaska	In-Borough/Census Area	Other Alaska	In-Borough/Census Area	Other Alaska
By Area	<10	0	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.02
<b>Total In-State Effect</b>	<b>&lt;10</b>		<b>0.01</b>		<b>0.04</b>	

airport operations at EEK, an airport maintenance contractor and there are no leaseholders (see Figure 1).

While direct expenditures at EEK are limited, as these expenditures flowed through the local and state economies they created additional jobs (see Figure 2). The study estimates that on-site activity at the airport resulted in limited job creation within the local community. Most of the airport's economic impacts do not take the form of on-site employment or spending. Instead, benefits come in the form of goods and services transported through the airport, and employment opportunities available to local residents only through the use of air transportation. Eek's economy is largely based on subsistence, but non-subsistence items must still be purchased with cash and wage opportunities in Eek are limited. The high per-capita use of passenger flights could represent residents temporarily leaving the community to seek wage employment elsewhere. Thus, the amount of economic activity occurring on the airport itself as measured by jobs and wages is not indicative of the role that EEK plays in its community.

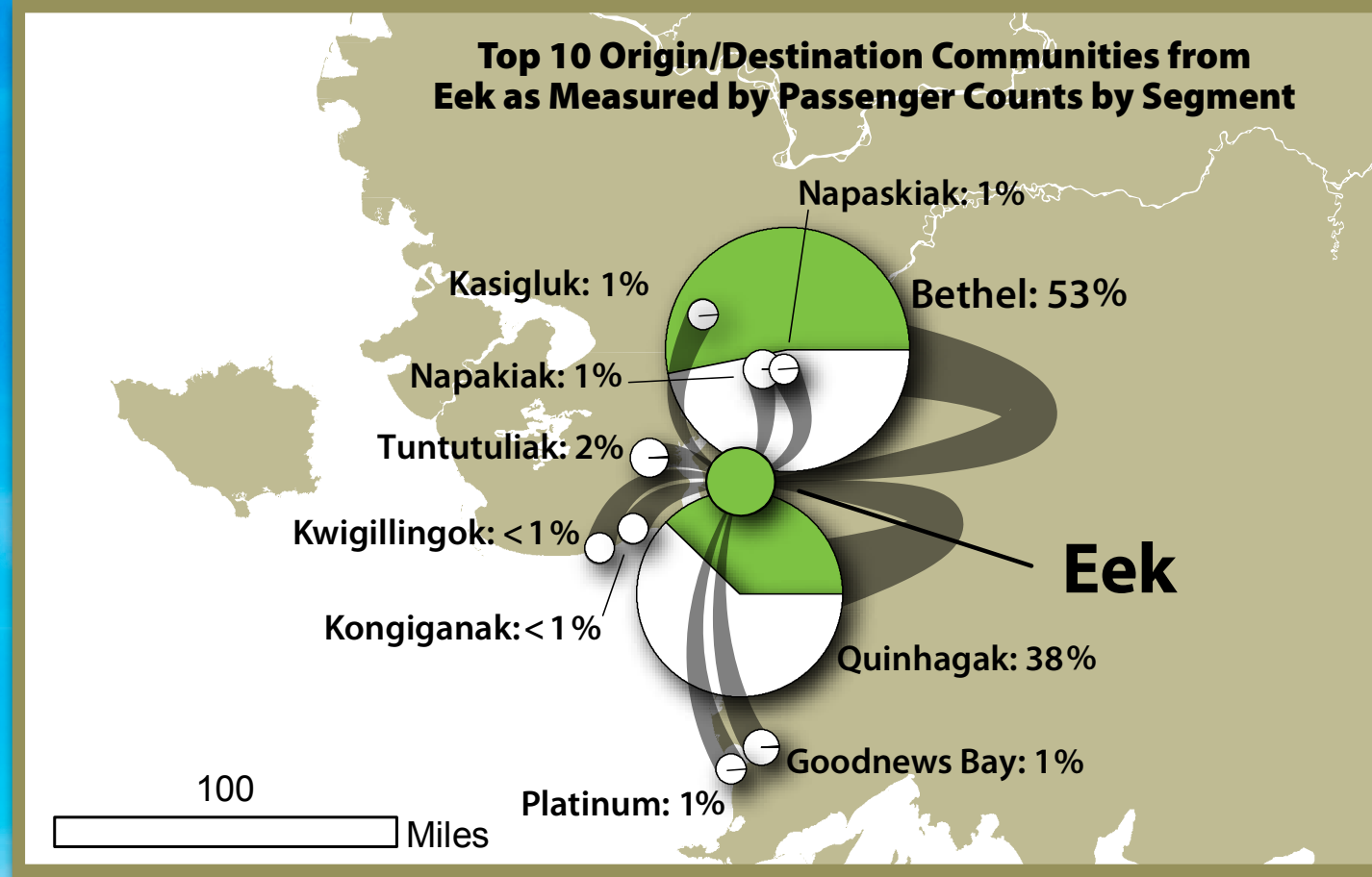


The map at left shows Eek relative to the other eleven study cities and Anchorage.

- Study Cities
- Non-Study Travel Hubs
- Focus City

**A Vital Artery Supplying the Community**  
 EEK is a key component in maintaining both the vitality of the local community and the physical health of its residents. The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region is a large river delta, dotted with wetlands. The tundra-covered soil on top of often very thin permafrost is not conducive to road construction or maintenance; thus, travel is by boat and aircraft in summer and by aircraft and snowmobile on marked trails in winter.

In 2002, ADOT&PF completed a \$2.1 million runway relocation and extension at EEK, creating a 3,243 x 60 foot gravel service runway. The runway extension led to a 45 percent increase in the number of annual commercial flights using the airport and a comparable increase in the average number of passengers per flight. In 2009, EEK had more than 11,600 passengers equal to more than 40 passenger segments for every resident of Eek. A more typical average for a Lower 48 community would be less than one passenger segments for each resident per year. Eek is en route between Bethel, the Yukon-Kuskokwim region's hub, and Quinhagak. Bethel accounted for 53 percent of the total passengers traveling to or from EEK, followed by Quinhagak (38 percent) (see Figure 3).



**FIGURE 3**  
**Eek: 2009 Passenger Segment by Origin/Destination City**

