

Western Region pilot keeps employees moving

If you ask Ralph Rosel about his job as chief pilot for ALLTEL's Western Region, you'll get nothing but smiles. Rosel loves to fly.

As chief pilot, he is responsible for flying employees to various destinations within the region on the company plane, a King Air BE200.

"I often fly employees who need to attend meetings in two or three different locations in one day," said Rosel.

Because the region consists of seven small rural operating districts, there is a need to centralize many job functions. Most of the region's engineering, marketing and training personnel are located in Walnut Creek, but their abilities are needed in all areas of the region.

The Western Region encompasses six states: California, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico and includes the 25,000 square-mile Navajo Reservation. Rosel enjoys flying to these locations and has become good friends with many of the ground personnel at the various airports. "I always see someone I know," he said.

The Region has maintained a corporate airplane since the early 1970s. Back then the company was called California Pacific Utilities, and the plane was a six-passenger Cessna 340. In 1979, the company changed its name to CP National, and Rosel joined the company in 1982.

In October 1982, CP National Transportation Company was formed. This wholly-owned subsidiary of CP National operated two planes, a Beechcraft Super King Air and a Westwind 2 Turbojet and maintained a very active charter business. During those days, executives from other companies, as well as a few celebrities and politicians, were Rosel's passengers.

"During the 1984 presidential campaign, Mrs. Mondale (wife of Democratic presidential candidate Walter Mondale) was one of my passengers," said Rosel. "I also flew Jean Kirkpatrick, Pierre Trudeau and members of the



musical groups Grateful Dead and Alabama. But the one celebrity Rosel recalls as his favorite is Burt Reynolds. "He was so friendly and personable," he said.

A native of Walnut Creek, Rosel began flying in 1973. This was after he served in the U.S. Navy and obtained a degree in business administration (with an emphasis in transportation) from San Francisco State and an MBA from Long Beach State. Utilizing the benefits granted under the GI Bill, he attended flight school in Livermore, Calif. After graduation, he flew with several freight carriers before coming to CP National.

CP National was acquired by ALLTEL Corporation in 1988, and the Walnut Creek office became ALLTEL/Western Region. Shortly afterwards, CP National Transportation was dissolved, and the Westwind 2 was sold.

The King Air BE200 is now part of ALLTEL Corporation's seven-plane fleet. The Company's other planes are based in Little Rock, Ark., and Matthews, N. C. Rosel is often in contact with Roger Shultz, chief pilot for ALLTEL Corporation. He is responsible to Shultz for all technical and safety details of the region's air-

Person to Person

craft and operation.

Like most pilots, Rosel has had some unusual experiences. "I've heard the pilot of the president's plane, Air Force One, over the airwaves several times," remembers Rosel.

Flying in the vicinity of the president's plane can sometimes create havoc for pilots. Airspace surrounding Air Force One is considered "restricted," forcing pilots to schedule flight paths which keep their planes a certain distance from the president's plane. Restricted airspace also has been established over the White House and the president's other residences such as Camp David and Kennebunkport. When the president was flying to California several months ago, Rosel was almost diverted to another airport because his scheduled flight path was too close to Air Force One.

When Rosel flies now it is usu-

ally with Western Region Pilot Pete Williams. Rosel and Williams have been flying together for almost two years and have developed a deep respect for each other. Like Rosel,

Williams has years of flying experience. Prior to coming to ALLTEL, he was a crew member in a U.S. Marine Corps helicopter squadron and spent several years flying for Kaiser International and TRW Corporation.

In describing his job, Rosel will tell you he is "responsible for getting people where they need to be when they need to be there."

"I'm here to help the people who work for ALLTEL and the Western Region do their jobs better," he said.

Linda Slevin, manager of Administrative Services, handles much of the paperwork for the region's flight operations. She works with Rosel to determine safety issues and flight schedules and always relies on his experience regarding weather conditions.

"I really enjoy this part of my job," he said. "It allows me to be part of the decision-making process."

When employees fly on the company plane for the first time, they're often a little apprehensive. With only eight passenger seats, the King Air is much smaller than most commercial planes. Rosel always gives first-time passengers a short lesson on the plane's instrumentation and emergency systems. After several flights with the chief pilot, employees usually feel more comfortable with him at the helm than with commercial pilots.

Rosel's dedication to his job and the company were commended recently with a Gold Pin Award. In presenting this honor, former Western Region President Scott Chesbro said, "The extra effort Ralph puts forth ensuring the safety of his passengers, along with the high degree of courtesy and professionalism he always exhibits, certainly meet the high standard of performance that the Gold Pin recognizes."

Rosel's involvement in transportation doesn't end when he's off the job. His hobby is model railroads, and he has spent a great deal of time collecting them. He enjoys all eras of railroad history, but has developed a special interest in the period from 1945 to 1980.

"I like everything about transportation," he said. Even in college, he was involved in the business. During that time, he was employed by Bekins Moving and Storage and also worked in the physical distribution department for a large manufacturing company overseeing the transport of goods from the plant to the customer.

Rosel also stays busy as a single parent to his two teenaged children, Vicky, 18, and Randy, 15. He has raised his children alone since their mother died more than 10 years ago.

"Being a single parent isn't easy," he said. "But I've been luckier than many parents in that I have really gotten to know my children. We are very close."

Rosel has a life and job most people would envy. "I love flying," he said. "I'm always meeting new people and spending time in interesting places."