

Mobil cries foul over accusations

A Mobil Oil Micronesia official strongly disputed the RMI government's charge that Mobil's prices are unreasonable and that it is taking advantage of the RMI because it is the country's only fuel supplier.

"Mobil takes strong exception to this statement," said Cecile B. Suda, Mobil's public relations manager who is based in Guam. "Mobil has dealt with the Marshalls Energy Company (MEC) in good faith and continued to maintain the highest business standards, despite MEC's failure to pay for product (fuel) delivered in a timely fashion."

In response to Chief Secretary Bobby Muller's contention that Mobil's actions in negotiations with MEC may be "unfair practices," Suda said Mobil "is an ethical company and abides by all RMI laws, rules and regulations applicable to its business. The company and its employees maintain the highest integrity and ethics when conducting business."

In response to the RMI's attempt to get the US government to investigate Mobil, Suda said "the company has no concerns regarding an inquiry."

Noting that "Mobil operates in a competitive market," Suda said that Mobil's proposal to MEC for fuel "was highly competitive." Further, she said, Mobil "amended its original proposal, demonstrating Mobil's willingness to negotiate." She that de-

MEC blames oil giant for loss of \$6 million

Marshalls Energy Company general manager Billy Roberts told the Journal this week that MEC was current with its payments to Mobil until the Guam-based company decided to walk away from the negotiating table earlier this year.

Mobil stopped providing fuel to MEC, as a result MEC then halted sales of fuel to fishing boats, and the Majuro company lost \$6 million in revenues as a result, according to Roberts.



Cecile Suda

spite payment concerns and the lack of a contract with MEC, "Mobil has maintained a secure fuel supply and provided two spot shipments to MEC, on credit."

Suda raised serious concerns about MEC's debt to Mobil.

"MEC's ongoing failure to pay in a

timely fashion and as agreed for product that has been consumed poses a serious concern for Mobil," she said. "In addition, payment for September 2005 fuel shipments will become due in November, which causes us more concern."

MEC indicated that it had paid about \$1.6 million of \$4 million owed on an earlier fuel shipment last week.

"Mobil has approached the RMI government to work with MEC to reduce the outstanding debt," Suda said. "In addition, Mobil offered the RMI government and MEC an opportunity to develop a repayment plan, on which we are awaiting a response."

Despite the credit risk that MEC poses to Mobil, the Guam company is still continuing to supply MEC, she said.

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Payless being besieged by rice buyers

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ture this week. Payless' Manner Iseia said he is being besieged by just about every business in town attempting to buy rice from him. He noted that the 2,000 bags left on Aemman were also not enough to meet the demand of a full outer islands circuit. Iseia said that he had already pre-sold 1,200 bags of rice to just four business people on the outer islands that Aemman is traveling to.

Transportation official Wallace Peter confirmed Wednesday that Ministry of Transportation's Aemman would leave Wednesday night for Ailinglaplap and other central atolls, despite the rice shortfall.

Peter said people on the outer islands were "screaming" for a delivery of rice. He indicated that there is no rice on the outer islands, and added that in Majuro people have alternatives to rice such as potatoes, bread and so forth.

V7AB radio on Monday reported that this is the third time this year that Majuro stores have run out of rice.

Some stores, like Payless, still had smaller rice bags — five and 10 pound quantity — in stock.

The Chief Container Service vessel that delivers most rice to Majuro is scheduled to arrive next week Thursday. The Chief brings in mainly Australian rice. Smaller shipments of American rice are expected to arrive via Matson on November 15.

Payless' Maria Lorennij said that the company keeps increasing its rice imports.

But this still hasn't kept pace with the skyrocketing demand. Payless — just one of the major rice importers on Majuro — is bringing in three containers next week. Iseia said they continue increasing the orders with each shipment.

"We've adjusted our ordering (upward), but it still hasn't been enough," he said.

Triple J Ebeye's Weatherman said the company will not receive its usual container load of rice on the Matson Barge late next month. That's because the company's US rice supplier said that it ran out of bags for the rice, he said.

Weatherman anticipates returning to the normal rice delivery schedule with the Matson Barge in late December. In the meantime, with two containers from this month's delivery still in hand, Triple J Ebeye appears to be in good condition on the rice front.

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SORRY Billy

Miss Angela W. Gibbons, 48, of 19-A MURKHESS AVE, LIVERPOOL L13 9BG (ENGLAND) IS LOOKING FOR A PENFRIEND Goody two SHOES WHO DOESN'T DRINK, SMOKE OR DRUG TAKE. SINCE Billy Roberts obviously is ineligible, The option is open to other Gentlemen of age 49. Angela has many interests, only speaks English AND IS SINGLE!