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# Atlanta, at Last! Southwest Airlines Launches Service from Georgia

## First Flights Usher in Era of Lower Last-minute Fares, No Change Fees, and Bags Fly Free™ Value for Atlanta Travelers

DALLAS, Feb. 13, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- The People of [Southwest Airlines](#) (NYSE: LUV) today delivered an early Valentine's gift to travelers who have long-awaited the Atlanta arrival of the carrier's legendary low fares and positively outrageous Customer Service.

Continuing the 40-year mission to serve in its communities, Southwest also announced the launch of *LUV Grants for Good*, making available \$150,000 in grants to nonprofit organizations from across the State of Georgia.

"Our service from Atlanta brings greatly reduced fares with new flexibility and value for both leisure and business Customers," said Gary Kelly, Southwest's Chairman, President, and CEO, at a news conference Monday afternoon in the airport's main terminal.

Employees of Southwest Airlines celebrated the milestone in a LUV-themed ceremony featuring congratulations from Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, Aviation General Manager Louis Miller, and a cadre of excited Southwest Customers and airport employees.

"Southwest Airlines will significantly expand the tradition of excellent customer service and low fares that we have come to expect from AirTran Airways over the past 15 years," said Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed. "Hartsfield-Jackson Airport prides itself on serving more than 90 million passengers every year, and Southwest's presence will further assure our airport remains as the busiest passenger airport on the planet."

Following on months of community service performed around Greater Atlanta even prior to the August 2011 announcement of Southwest service, Kelly also announced the launch of an online essay and video contest to award \$150,000 in *LUV Grants for Good* across the State. The contest is open to 501(c)(3) nonprofits which meet guidelines and rules, available at [southwest.com/luvgrants](http://southwest.com/luvgrants).

The public will have an opportunity to vote and select the winning six organizations from a pool of finalists that produce videos on how they would use money to show love to the communities they serve. Those finalists will have been selected from essays submitted online and judged by the Georgia Center for Nonprofits and Southwest Airlines.

In accepting the gift on behalf of all Georgians, Governor Deal said, "Southwest Airlines has established itself as a first-rate corporate citizen in our State by creating *LUV Grants for Good* to celebrate their arrival in our community. This program will benefit the people of Georgia, who welcome Southwest, their good works, and the wonderful opportunities they bring to our great State."

Today's initial schedule of 15 flights to five nonstop destinations, with additional same-plane and connecting service to 48 destinations across the country, is just the beginning of a beautiful partnership between the world's busiest airport and the largest airline in the nation, as measured by the U.S. Department of Transportation in terms of originating passengers boarded. Daily nonstop service between Atlanta and Austin, Baltimore/Washington, Chicago Midway, Denver, and Houston (Hobby), will grow next month with the addition of nonstop service to and from both Las Vegas and Phoenix starting March 10. Southwest also will add nonstop service beginning June 10 between Atlanta and Los Angeles and will offer additional nonstop service connecting Atlanta to Louisville, Norfolk/Virginia Beach, and Seattle starting August 12. All flights are available for sale now at [southwest.com](http://southwest.com).

Southwest's arrival also brings Cargo Customers expedited air cargo service between Atlanta and more than 90 destinations across the map. From a brand new facility constructed at the Atlanta airport, Southwest Employees now offer award-winning Customer Service with complimentary Road Feeder Service and interline destinations.

"We're opening Southwest service to Atlanta with more flights than our traditional start, and we have big plans for the city," Kelly told the crowd. Dallas-based Southwest Airlines Co. acquired AirTran Airways, Atlanta's second-largest carrier, in May 2010, yet maintains two separate airlines until a full integration over the next several years. The carrier anticipates obtaining a Single Operating Certificate from the Federal Aviation Administration in the first quarter of this year, the first step in allowing that process to unfold. AirTran Employees, aircraft, and gates in Atlanta will convert to Southwest Airlines in the future.

With the addition of Atlanta, Southwest Airlines adds Georgia, as its 38th State, to a route map of service now totaling 73 U.S. airports. As of today, AirTran serves 52 cities nonstop from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, including near-international routes to Mexico and the Caribbean.

Today's news conference wraps a celebratory weekend of inaugural-themed events which welcomed a new chapter in a partnership with the Georgia Aquarium, Community Service, and a special reception for the first Southwest LUV jets to arrive at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. (For related photos, videos, and other information about Southwest's Atlanta Operation, please visit [swamedia.com](http://swamedia.com))

### **About Southwest Airlines**

Southwest Airlines continues to differentiate itself from other low-fare carriers—offering a reliable product with exemplary Customer Service. Southwest Airlines is the nation's largest carrier in terms of originating domestic passengers boarded and has recently acquired AirTran Airways, now a wholly owned subsidiary of Southwest Airlines Co. Southwest serves 73 cities in 38 states and is one of the most honored airlines in the world known for its commitment to the triple bottom line of Performance, People, and Planet. To read more about how Southwest is doing its part to be a good citizen, visit [southwest.com/cares](http://southwest.com/cares) to read the Southwest Airlines One Report(TM). Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,200 flights a day and has more than 37,000 Employees systemwide.

### **About AirTran Airways**

AirTran Airways, a wholly owned subsidiary of Southwest Airlines Co., has been ranked the top airline in the Airline Quality Rating study twice in the past four years. AirTran offers Gogo Inflight Internet Connectivity and coast-to-coast service on North America's newest all-

Boeing fleet. The airline's low-cost, high-quality product also includes assigned seating and Business Class. To book a flight, visit [airtran.com](http://airtran.com).

[southwest.com](http://southwest.com)

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