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# Southwest Airlines Breathes New Life Into Nearly 675,000 Pounds Of Seat Covers And Other Discarded Materials In 2017

**Collaborations Underway to Upcycle, Recycle, and Downcycle Materials in México, Florida, Texas, Missouri, Arizona, and Tennessee**

## **Upcycled Leather Fashion Accessories to be Available for Purchase Online**

DALLAS, Nov. 28, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) announced today the expansion of *Repurpose with Purpose*, an initiative that upcycles, downcycles, and recycles hundreds of thousands of pounds of discarded material into useful products with the help of partner organizations. Southwest Airlines has collaborated with diverse groups throughout the United States and Mexico to repurpose leather aircraft seat covers and cushions, blankets, life jackets, aircraft engines, and billboards.

By providing as many materials as possible to these groups, Southwest reduces the amount of waste it sends to landfills while also generating social and economic opportunities for communities. The Repurpose with Purpose program began in 2013, following the *Evolve* retrofit program, which replaced Southwest's leather aircraft seat covers at that time. The newly expanded program, will repurpose nearly 675,000 pounds of seat covers and other discarded materials in 2017. The Repurpose with Purpose program will benefit women in indigenous communities in Mexico, as well as veterans, people with disabilities, senior citizens, victims of trafficking, and marginalized communities in the United States.

"Through our Repurpose with Purpose program, we are able to continue our commitment to living responsibly while creating a catalyst to make transformative change happen in communities throughout the world," said Bill Tiffany, Southwest Airlines Vice President Supply Chain. "It's humbling to hear the incredible stories shared from the organizations we've partnered with on this impactful program."

**LUV Seat: México:** As a result of a multi-year collaboration with Mexican fashion designer Carla Fernández, hundreds of pounds of leather will be upcycled into sellable goods in the coming months. Carla Fernández worked with artisans in seven different communities throughout Mexico who specialize in creating textile and embroidery designs and handcrafts that preserve the country's rich cultural heritage.

**LUV Seat: Rethreaded:** Southwest Airlines donated leather from seat covers to Jacksonville, Florida-based nonprofit, Rethreaded. Rethreaded is creating a line of leather fashion jewelry and accessories that will be sold on [www.rethreaded.com](http://www.rethreaded.com). Rethreaded gives career opportunities to women who have experienced exploitation and trauma coming out of human trafficking. The women begin with a three-month development program that includes on-the-job training as well as mental health counseling, crisis management, and case

management. They are then fully integrated into the business through one of five departments and are pivotal in all aspects of the organization. For example, with the upcycled Southwest leather from seat covers, the women work on product development and design, marketing the accessories, and tracking the sales in finance.

**LUV Seat: Arise:** Southwest Airlines donated leather from seat covers to Jennings, Missouri-based nonprofit Arise Veteran Foundation. Arise provides art instruction and skills-building programs for youth, veterans, seniors, and other disadvantaged groups. Arise is using Southwest leather from seat covers in veterans' rehabilitation programs to foster the development of entrepreneurial skills and generate income. One 95-year-old Arise member and World War II veteran is using the leather to make dresses for girls in orphanages. Additionally, Arise is shredding and deconstructing e-leather seat material to be used as padding material in the furniture and automotive industries.

**LUV Seat: Dallas:** Dallas-based nonprofit [Dallas Designing Dreams](#) (DDD) provides skills and training programs for youth, people with disabilities, senior citizens, and other disadvantaged populations in the community. DDD has produced a line of items including golf club covers, jewelry, backpacks, tote bags, and luggage tags from the leather seat covers and old Southwest Airlines Employee uniforms. DDD provides workshops for entrepreneurs, volunteer opportunities, sewing classes, and training in a creative space to individuals with "dreams or broken dreams." Selling one-of-a-kind art and handmade products online and in the local marketplace, DDD offers alternatives to the mainstream shopping experience while connecting customers with local producers.

In addition to repurposing old leather seat covers, Southwest has a history of giving new life to otherwise waste materials, including:

**Aircraft & Aircraft Components:** When Southwest retires an aircraft with a remaining useful life and sells it, the aircraft's useful life is continued in some operational capacity. Those aircraft not sold are sent to Arizona to be recycled and/or parted out, where 85% of the aircraft is repurposed. In addition, Southwest provides aircraft components, such as engines, avionics, and fuselages, to assist non-profit organizations in their education, training, or rehabilitation efforts. All of these efforts help Southwest Airlines reduce the amount of waste the airline sends to landfills.

**Traditional Recycling:** Southwest recycles traditional waste materials including paper, plastic, aluminum, six-pack rings, and cardboard. The Company also recycles used carpet from its facilities by sending it to a recycling company that breaks it down for reuse in new carpet, yarn, trim, or other carpet byproducts. Altogether, Southwest recycled and beneficially reused 35 percent of its waste in 2016.

## **ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.**

In its 47th year of service, Dallas-based [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 55,000 Employees to a Customer base topping 115 million passengers annually, in recent years. Southwest became the nation's largest domestic air carrier in 2003 and maintains that ranking based on the U.S. Department of Transportation's most recent reporting of domestic originating passengers boarded. During peak travel seasons, Southwest operates more than 4,000 weekday departures among a network of 100 destinations in the United States and ten additional countries. Southwest has announced its

intention to sell tickets in 2018 for service to Hawaii, subject to requisite governmental approvals.

Southwest coined [Transfarency](#)<sup>®</sup> to describe its purposed philosophy of treating Customers honestly and fairly, and low fares actually staying low. Southwest is the only major U.S. airline to offer bags fly free<sup>®</sup> to everyone (first and second checked pieces of luggage, size and weight limits apply, some carriers offer free checked bags on select routes or in qualified circumstances), and there are no change fees, though fare differences might apply.

As launch customer of the Boeing 737 MAX 8 in North America, the Company operates the largest fleet in the world of Boeing aircraft, all of which are equipped with satellite-based WiFi. Customers who connect to the WiFi network may use their personal devices to view on-demand movies and television shows, as well as nearly 20 channels of free, live TV.

With a bold new look first unveiled in 2014, Southwest is progressing through a multi-year refresh of its fleet to showcase the carrier's *Heart*: a new logo, aircraft livery, interior design featuring new seats, Employee-designed uniforms, and an updated airport experience, all of which showcase a dedication of Southwest Employees to connect Customers with what's important in their lives.

From its first flights on June 18, 1971, Southwest Airlines launched an era of unprecedented affordability in air travel described by the U.S. Department of Transportation as "The Southwest Effect," a lowering of fares and increase in passenger traffic wherever the carrier serves. With 44 consecutive years of profitability, Southwest is one of the most honored airlines in the world, known for a triple bottom line approach that contributes to the carrier's performance and productivity, the importance of its People and the communities they serve, and an overall commitment to efficiency and the planet. The 2016 Southwest Airlines One Report<sup>™</sup> can be found at [SouthwestOneReport.com](#).

Book Southwest Airlines' low fares online at [Southwest.com](#) or by phone at 800-I-FLY-SWA.

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