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Southwest Airlines Announces Intent to Resume Service to San Francisco International Airport

Carrier Says Airport's Efficiency and Cost Improvements Key in Decision to Return

DALLAS, Feb. 9 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Southwest Airlines today announced its intent to resume service at San Francisco International Airport. The carrier has not released specific service details or a timeline, only saying that it is currently in discussions with the Airport and that it aims to return to the West Bay in a meaningful way in the early fall.

"San Francisco International is the only major Bay Area airport we don't currently serve, having made a very difficult decision in 2001 to cease service there after nearly 20 years. Today, SFO has improved operationally and is a more cost-efficient airport, and Southwest is a far larger airline than it was in 2001 and better able to support this type of operation," said Gary Kelly, Southwest's Vice Chairman and CEO.

For photos and Southwest's California facts, visit:

http://www.southwest.com/about_swa/press/070209_san_francisco.html?ref=sfo_pre_ss_070208 .

Southwest Airlines initiated service at SFO in October 1982 with four nonstop flights to Las Vegas, with direct or connecting service to cities like Houston, El Paso, Albuquerque, and Austin. At the time it ceased service on March 4, 2001, Southwest had 14 nonstop departures to San Diego and Phoenix.

"The business reasons for leaving San Francisco in 2001 were clear," Kelly said. "Back then, facility and runway constraints meant we could not compete and be profitable, and there was no growth potential beyond the 14 flights we had at the time. Frankly, we had demand at our other California airports that we knew would be successful. It made more sense to leave.

"The Airport Commission, under the leadership of Mayor Gavin Newsom and Commission President Larry Mazzola, has made SFO a more attractive venue for true low fare carriers like Southwest. Working closely with SFO Director John L. Martin, Southwest was excited to learn of the constructive changes at SFO, so now it makes even more sense to return."

Mayor Newsom welcomed the news, saying: "this is a big win for Bay Area passengers, particularly those located on the Peninsula and in San Francisco, as they will no longer have to travel across the Bay Bridge to avail themselves of Southwest's vast network. It makes environmental sense for passengers to avail themselves of the airports nearest their homes."

Southwest says today's announcement does not affect its commitment at Oakland International, where it has 142 daily departures; or Norman Y Mineta San Jose International,

where it has 77 daily departures.

"Similar to the Washington, D.C., metro area where we serve Baltimore/Washington International and Washington Dulles International; or the Los Angeles area where we serve LAX, Ontario, Burbank, and Orange County; or the Boston metro area where we serve from Providence, RI and Manchester, NH; the Bay Area is large enough to support complementary service from three airports," Kelly said. "We've never questioned that."

Southwest says it will release more details of its future service to San Francisco in the coming months.

For the tenth year in a row, FORTUNE magazine recognized Southwest Airlines in its annual survey of corporate reputations. Among all industries in 2006, FORTUNE has listed Southwest Airlines as number three among America's Top Ten most admired corporations.

<http://www.southwest.com>

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