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Southwest Airlines and the FAA Revolutionize the Skies

Required Navigation Performance Procedures Reduce Aircraft Emissions, Congestion, and Fuel Costs

DALLAS, June 19 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Southwest Airlines Senior Director of Flight Operations Jeff Martin spoke today about the benefits of RNP (Required Navigation Performance) and Southwest's progression on RNP implementation fleet-wide at the Eco-Aviation Conference in Washington, D.C. -- follow this link to view the complete presentation: http://www.southwest.com/about_swa/press/rnp.pdf. RNP is one of the cornerstones for the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) Next Generation Air Traffic Control System, bringing together the accuracy of GPS (Global Positioning System), the capabilities of advanced aircraft avionics, and new flight procedures.

"RNP allows the aircraft to fly more precise, direct, and accurate paths, allowing more 'lanes' to be built into the same limited airspace," said Southwest Airlines Executive Vice President and Chief of Operations Mike Van de Ven. "We applaud the FAA's forward thinking, and we are grateful to work in conjunction with the agency to revolutionize our nation's airspace."

In support of the FAA's Roadmap for Performance-Based Navigation, Southwest has made a commitment to invest $175 million over the next six years to implement RNP procedures at all 64 airports the airline serves. The initial investment will provide longterm benefits to industry congestion and aircraft efficiencies. For a single minute of time saved on each flight, the annual savings quickly add up to 156,000 metric tons of reduction in emissions per year (by 2015), and $25 million in fuel savings per year.

"Southwest Airlines is thrilled to enhance our green efforts," Martin said. "Another obvious benefit in this environment of escalating energy prices is the ability to save on fuel burn."

To help develop its RNP program, Southwest Airlines has partnered with Naverus, the worldwide leader in RNP development. Since May 2007, Southwest, Naverus, and the FAA have been working together to gain Air Traffic Control support of RNP to train the airline's pilots on RNP, equip the airline's entire fleet to be RNP capable, and produce RNP charted procedures.

"A Southwest, FAA, and Naverus partnership is necessary to ensure our technical and economic success," Martin said. "The FAA cleared the path, and Naverus continues to share its RNP experience and expertise in supporting our RNP program."

"Implementing RNP offers the single greatest opportunity to make near-term gains in reducing harmful emissions, improving fuel efficiency, increasing airspace capacity, and maximizing flight safety," said Dan Gerrity, CEO of Naverus. "By embracing RNP across all its routes, Southwest is once again demonstrating the leadership for which it is so well known."

Southwest's Boeing 737-700 aircraft provide a wonderful RNP platform and are currently equipped and capable of operating these new procedures. Additionally, the airline has made investments to update its Classic fleet and have already begun to incorporate these new processes into its Flight Operations training. The next milestone will be choosing the airport(s) to kick off the integration of these new procedures.

"Our goal is to begin flying RNP procedures in fall 2009, with a ramp up through 2013 as our classic aircrafts are modified," Martin said. "We are currently exploring the benefits of several airports for RNP implementation, including a few in our own backyard."

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BENEFITS OF RNP
-- Increased airspace capacity
-- Operational efficiency
-- Environmentally friendly
-- Noise reduction / avoidance
-- Lower environmental emissions (By 2015 we anticipate reducing emissions
   by nearly 156,000 metric tons per year, which is the equivalent of more
   than 100,000 mid-sized cars driving roundtrip from Dallas to Washington
   DC, or generating electricity at 69,000 U.S. households for one year.)
    -- Reduced track miles -- conservative estimates of reducing flying
       routes by three nautical miles can equate to a $25 million dollar
       annualized fuel savings
    -- More efficient aircraft operation
    -- Continuous descent arrivals
    -- Aircraft can fly more directly and remain higher for longer which
       reduces noise impact on the ground.
-- Increased Safety
-- Paths engineered to avoid obstacles
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About Southwest

After 37 years of service, Southwest Airlines, the nation's leading low-fare carrier, continues to differentiate itself from other airlines -- offering a reliable product with exemplary Customer Service. Southwest Airlines is the most productive airline in the sky and offers Customers a comfortable traveling experience. Southwest offers a very comfortable ride with all premium leather seats and plenty of legroom with a young all Boeing 737 fleet. Southwest recently updated its gate areas and improved its boarding procedure to make flying Southwest even more convenient and simple. Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV), the nation's largest carrier in terms of domestic passengers enplaned, currently serves 64 cities in 32 states. Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,400 flights a day and has more than 34,000 Employees systemwide. http://www.southwest.com

About Naverus

Naverus is the worldwide Required Navigation Performance leader having created the overwhelming majority of active RNP procedures worldwide. Uniquely combining expertise in avionics, aircraft operations, and procedure design, Naverus works with airlines and air navigation service providers to find optimal solutions to their specific routes and challenges. Airlines seek Naverus RNP flight paths to save fuel, reduce carbon emissions, reduce miles flown, reduce block times, and help air traffic systems to gain new efficiencies. The company's customers include Airbus, Air China, Air New Zealand, Boeing, CAAC, COPA, IATA, jetBlue, Jetstar, SkyEurope, Southwest, Qantas, Virgin Blue, and WestJet and others. Naverus Inc. is a privately-held Seattle company founded in 2003. http://www.naverus.com

SOURCE Southwest Airlines