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Southwest Airlines Seeks U.S. - Canada Route Authority from the Department of Transportation

DALLAS, Dec. 22 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Southwest Airlines today submitted an application to the Department of Transportation (DOT) to acquire international route authority to operate flights between the United States and Canada. The application for a certificate to provide foreign air transportation is required by law before Southwest Airlines can fully implement its previously announced codeshare agreement with Canadian carrier WestJet. The certificate, which Southwest hopes to receive in the first quarter of next year, would also allow Southwest Airlines the authority to operate flights to Canada with its own planes, although the airline does not have any plans to do so at this time. Under the planned codeshare, Southwest Airlines and WestJet will offer Customers a seamless travel experience to a wide array of destinations in both the U.S. and Canada. The airlines plan to announce codeshare flight schedules in the second half of 2009.

About Southwest Airlines

After 37 years of service, Southwest Airlines, the nation's leading low-fare carrier, continues to stand above 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 with all premium leather seats and plenty of legroom. Southwest recently updated its gate areas and improved its boarding procedure to make flying Southwest Airlines even more convenient and simple. Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV), the nation's largest carrier in terms of domestic passengers enplaned, currently serves 64 cities (will begin service to Minneapolis/St. Paul in March 2009) in 32 states. Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,300 flights a day and has more than 35,000 Employees systemwide.

This news release contains forward-looking statements related to Southwest's intention to offer services in connection with its planned codeshare alliance with WestJet. Specific statements relate to the anticipated impact of such alliance on Southwest's routes and Customer experience. These forward-looking statements are based on Southwest's current intent, beliefs, and expectations and are not guarantees of future results. These statements involve risks, uncertainties, assumptions, and other factors that could cause actual results to vary materially from those expressed in or indicated by them. Factors include, among others, (i) the companies' ability to negotiate mutually agreeable codeshare terms and their receipt of necessary governmental approvals, (ii) consumer interest in, and demand for, the combined offering; (iii) the impact of competitive offerings; and (iv) economic and related uncertainties that could impact the ability of the two companies to fully implement all of the initiatives currently contemplated by their alliance.

<http://www.southwest.com/>

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