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Southwest Airlines Adopt-A-Pilot Program Takes Off for Students Nationwide

Pilots Volunteer in Community Relations Educational Program to Mentor Tens of Thousands of Students in Science, Math, Geography, Writing, Career-Planning, and More

DALLAS, Feb. 4 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- If a jet burns an average of 744 gallons of fuel on a one-hour flight, how many gallons of jet fuel will be burned on a 90-minute flight?* More than 30,000 fifth-grade students nationwide will find answers to this and other questions as they participate in the Southwest Airlines Adopt-A-Pilot community relations program this year.

To further its commitment to community and education, Southwest Airlines is kicking off its annual Adopt-A-Pilot program this month. From February through May, fifth-grade students in more than 1,000 classes across the country will "adopt" Southwest Airlines Pilots in this award-winning educational mentorship program that leads students through science, geography, math, writing, and other core subjects, all based in aviation-related activities. Students will also research careers, develop life values, and realize the importance of staying in school.

In order to teach students the importance of "Going Green," the Adopt-A-Pilot program has added environmental awareness to the curriculum. The lesson focuses specifically on how Southwest Airlines views energy usage and fuel consumption and ways the airline has worked toward improving its aircraft to make them more eco-friendly. The students will learn about the aircrafts' winglets, fun fuel conservation facts, energy and recycling habits, and ways they can help the environment too.

"The new environmental awareness lesson teaches about Southwest's mission to be environmentally friendly. Our Employees are excited about our green initiatives and their inclusion in the Adopt-A-Pilot program is a great way to spread awareness and spark interest in students across the United States," said Linda Rutherford, Southwest Airlines Vice President of Communications and Strategic Outreach.

More than 750 Southwest Pilots volunteer in the four-week-long mentorship program. Pilots volunteer their time in adoptive classrooms and correspond from the "road" via e-mail and postcards. Classrooms chart their Pilot's course on an official U.S. route map and complete lessons related to the Pilot's monthly flying schedule.

"We always enjoy our time in the classroom. The students' curiosity and imagination makes the program worthwhile," said Southwest Airlines Pilot Tim Leonard. "I'm proud to be a part of something that is diverse in its curriculum, enriching for students, and gets them excited about travel and future professions. The Adopt-A-Pilot program is more than just a volunteer opportunity for Pilots; it's about building relationships."

Created in 1997, Adopt-A-Pilot started as a small community outreach program in just 50 classrooms in Southwest's destination cities, and now it reaches more than 800 classrooms in large and small communities nationwide. Southwest Airlines developed the program in

cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education and the Smithsonian Institute's National Air and Space Museum. National leaders such Gen. Colin Powell, President Bill Clinton, and former First Lady Laura Bush have recognized the excellence of the Adopt-A-Pilot program. For additional program information and to view the program curriculum please log on to the web site at www.southwest.com/adoptapilot.

Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV), the nation's largest carrier in terms of domestic passengers enplaned, currently serves 64 cities in 32 states (Southwest will begin service to Minneapolis/St. Paul in March 2009). Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,200 flights a day and has more than 35,000 Employees systemwide.

Click here to view a video from a recent Adopt-A-Pilot event with Southwest Airlines CEO, President, and Chairman of the Board Gary Kelly:

<http://www.blogsouthwest.com/video/southwest-airlines-adopt-a-pilot-2009>

* (Answer: 1,116 gallons of jet fuel will be burned)

www.southwest.com

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