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Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards Welcomes Best Western Hotels

Southwest Airlines Adds Best Western Hotels as New Preferred Partner to the Carrier's Frequent Flyer Program

DALLAS, Feb. 24 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- What do you get when you put an internationally known hotel chain, a comfy Southwest Airlines airplane, and great Customer Service together? A new Rapid Rewards partnership between Best Western Hotels and Southwest Airlines! The Rapid Rewards program has added "The World's Largest Hotel Chain(R)" as the newest preferred hotel partner. Members are now able to earn Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards credits redeemable for free flights anywhere the airline flies. Best Western Rewards(SM) members have the option to earn half of one Rapid Rewards credit for each stay at any of the more than 4,000 Best Western hotels worldwide. To book flights or hotel stays, visit: <http://www.southwest.com/?src=PRPRPRNGENR000000080808>

In celebration of this new partnership, Rapid Rewards Members who are also members of Best Western Rewards can earn double credit (one credit per stay instead of the standard 0.5 credit) when they register and stay two or more qualifying nights at any Best Western hotel between February 15 and April 5, 2009. Plus, Best Western is offering a sweepstakes for 1 million Best Western Rewards points (good for up to 125 free nights) and six Southwest Airlines roundtrip tickets from February 15 to April 5, 2009. Rapid Rewards Members are automatically entered in the sweepstakes with a stay at any Best Western property during the spring.

"Earning credits towards free travel on Southwest Airlines by staying at Best Western hotels is an option we know our Members will appreciate," said Kevin Krone, Vice President Marketing, Sales, and Distribution.

"Whether they choose to earn points toward free room nights or credits toward a free flight, our guests can travel with confidence knowing Best Western and Southwest Airlines are helping stretch their budgets," said Dorothy Dowling, senior vice president of marketing and sales for Best Western International. "This alliance is a tremendous opportunity for Best Western and Southwest Airlines to best serve our loyal travelers, as we have hotels in every U.S. city Southwest flies."

It is fast and easy to earn free travel through Rapid Rewards. Rapid Rewards Members earn credits by flying or using the program's Preferred Partners, like Best Western, the World's Largest Hotel Chain. It takes just eight roundtrips, or 16 credits, to qualify for an Award. However, members can accelerate their earnings by using the Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards Visa Signature Card, doing business with any of the airline's other Preferred Partners, or by purchasing Southwest's Business Select fares when flying. Plus, once it's earned, Southwest Airlines allows the Member to transfer the Award to anyone. The Award is free but subject to the U.S. government September 11th Security Fee of up to \$10 roundtrip.

About Southwest Airlines

After 37 years of service, Southwest Airlines continues to differentiate itself from other low fare carriers -- 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 recently updated its gate areas and improved its boarding procedure to make flying Southwest convenient and simple. Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV), the nation's largest carrier in terms of domestic passengers enplaned, currently serves 64 cities (soon to be 65 with the addition of Minneapolis-St. Paul in March 2009) in 32 states. Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,200 flights a day and has more than 35,000 Employees systemwide.

About Best Western International

Best Western International is THE WORLD'S LARGEST HOTEL CHAIN(R), Providing marketing, reservations and operational support to over 4,000* independently owned and operated member hotels in 80* countries and territories worldwide. An industry pioneer since 1946, Best Western has grown into an iconic brand that hosts 400,000* worldwide guests each night. Best Western's diverse property portfolio, its greatest strength, stems from a business model designed to give owners maximum flexibility to address market-specific needs. Equally committed to the business and leisure traveler, Best Western recently embarked on a five-year mission to lead the hotel industry in customer care. Since 2004, Best Western has served as the Official Hotel of NASCAR(R). For more information or to make a reservation, please visit www.bestwestern.com

*Numbers are approximate and can fluctuate

SOURCE Southwest Airlines