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Southwest Airlines Debuts 'Green Plane' With Environmentally Friendly Interior Materials

DALLAS, Oct. 21 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- *Southwest Airlines* (NYSE: LUV) today announced at its annual Media Day a "green plane," an innovative idea that marries efficiency, environmentally responsible products, Customer comfort, and reduced waste and weight. This plane, a Boeing 737-700, will serve as a test environment for new environmentally responsible materials and Customer comfort products.

It is a flying testament to the airline's philosophy that environmental decisions make good business sense. All of the initiatives being tested on this Green Plane, when combined, will equate to a weight savings of almost five pounds per seat, thus saving fuel and reducing emissions, along with adding recyclable elements to the cabin interior and reducing waste.

"Southwest is committed to continuing to lead the industry in emissions reductions through fuel efficiency. Efficiency in fuel consumption benefits our Company as well as the environment, and this has been part of our business model since the beginning," said Gary Kelly, Southwest's Chairman, President, and CEO. "As we look to the future, we know climate change remains of vital importance to our industry, our Company, and our Customers, so Southwest works hard every day in every area to be a responsible steward of the environment."

Southwest has designated one aircraft to serve as a test for eco-friendly products, which include:

- InterfaceFLOR Carpet - this carpet reduces labor and material costs because it is installed in sections, thus eliminating the need for total replacement of areas such as aisles, where Southwest currently uses one single piece of carpet. The 100 percent recyclable carpet is returned to the manufacturer at the end of its service life and completely re-manufactured into new carpet; the process is completely carbon neutral.
- Seat covers - two new products that will be tested on the aircraft seats, offering more than twice the durability than the current leather seats as well as a weight savings of almost two pounds per seat.
 - On one side of the aisle, e-Leather is an eco-friendly, lightweight and scuff resistant man-made alternative to traditional leather. It is made from recycled materials that have been discarded by the leather industry. It is then upgraded utilizing eco-friendly technology, resulting in composition leather, a man-made material.
 - On the other side of the aisle, IZIT Leather, a new breed of premium leather alternative, is an evolutionary step beyond calf skin that offers a lightweight product that is both economical and durable, but with the genuine appearance and touch of luxurious leather.
- Life Vest Pouch - more environmentally friendly because it offers a weight savings of one pound per passenger, replacing the current metal container with lighter durable canvas. The smaller pouch also creates more room under the seat for carryon items and offers productivity

- improvements due to design change.
- Foam Fill - A lighter weight fill from Garnier PURtec in the back of the seats that reduces weight while providing increased Customer comfort.
- Passenger Seat Rub Strips - switching from plastic to aluminum will help with durability, which reduces waste, as well as being recyclable.

"Southwest is proud to lead the aviation industry in environmental stewardship and honored to be working with these eco-friendly vendors and our partners at Boeing," Kelly says. "We are excited to test their forward-thinking products and expect these green products to not only help the environment, but also create a fuel and materials cost saving for Southwest."

In addition to the green plane, Southwest also announced the Nov. 1 kickoff of its more robust onboard recycling program, which is a co-mingled system that will allow the airline to capture more recyclable material and divert it from the waste stream. This 18-month process involved team work from all areas of the Company to implement the program on the ground at its Provisioning Bases and re-working of waste collection procedures in the cabin.

"The initiative by the Southwest Airlines Green Team, Facilities Maintenance, Inflight Department, and Provisioning Department was a truly heroic effort; when you serve nearly 68 cities there are often 68 different ways to implement a program," Kelly says. "We appreciate the hard work of our recycling vendor, Republic Services, and we are excited to take a very effective recycling program and make it even better."

Environmental Stewardship is a responsibility Southwest takes seriously, and efficient operations are the hallmark of our Company and the foundation of our environmental commitment. Over the decades, Southwest has been at the forefront of such efficiencies as paperless tickets, quick turnarounds, installation of winglets, and, more recently; the installation of fleet-wide advanced avionics. This focus on efficiency not only makes good business sense, it is the right thing to do. For more information on how Southwest Airlines cares for the environment, visit www.southwest.com/cares.

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