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Southwest Airlines Celebrates 35 Years of Luv in the Valley

Carrier Renews Vows with Valley International Airport in Harlingen and Helps Launch a New Partnership with Unmistakable Southwest Spirit

DALLAS--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- True LUV takes flight again as Southwest Airlines commemorates its 35th anniversary of service to Valley International Airport in Harlingen, Texas, with a ceremony honoring love, commitment and fun while hosting a Southwest-themed wedding and instant honeymoon for one lucky couple.

Rio Grande Valley natives Justin Lang and Rhonda Miller started their new life together as husband and wife in the airport atrium surrounded by family, friends and hundreds of invited guests. Carrying a bouquet of flowers, peanuts and heart-shaped swizzle sticks, the bride and her beau walked down the aisle and onto one of Southwest's LUV jets after their essay was selected from among more than 300 contest entries submitted at www.southwest.com/luvinthevalley.

"Just like the relationship between the Valley and Southwest Airlines, you'll be amazed how quickly the years fly by," said Teresa Laraba, Southwest's Vice President of Ground Operations. "This Valentine's Day weekend, Southwest and Harlingen renew vows we made to each other 35 years ago to bring low fares and legendary Customer Service to South Texans."

Harlingen Mayor Chris Boswell noted Harlingen was the first expansion city for Southwest, a then four-year-old upstart Texas-only airline, "...marking the beginning of a long and prosperous relationship for both of us."

Southwest Airlines started service in Harlingen on February 11, 1975, with four nonstop flights to Houston. Today, the airline operates 12 daily nonstop departures from Valley International Airport to three cities: Austin, Houston (Hobby), and San Antonio with additional and connecting service to 49 cities.

"Our partnership changed the way people travel to and from the Rio Grande Valley," said Rick Ledesma, President of the Board of Directors of Valley International Airport. "We are forever grateful to Southwest founder Herb Kelleher for believing in the Valley as a destination."

Southwest Employees who live and work in the Valley spent part of the day Sharing the Spirit of LUV by providing Valentine's Day cards, cookies and decorations to the families of critically ill and injured children at the Ronald McDonald House of the Rio Grande Valley, the carrier's corporate charity.

After 38 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 and no hidden fees. 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. Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV), the nation's largest carrier in terms of domestic passengers enplaned, currently serves 68 cities in 35 states. Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,100 flights a day and has nearly 35,000 Employees systemwide.

Source: Southwest Airlines