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Southwest Airlines and Continental Airlines Enter Into Slot Lease at Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR)

DALLAS, Aug. 27 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Southwest Airlines and Continental Airlines confirmed today that they entered into a lease providing Southwest Airlines access to 36 Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) slots which are currently held by Continental.

The lease deal, contingent upon the closing of the Continental and United airlines' merger by Nov. 30, 2010, and certain governmental approvals, would give Southwest Airlines the right to operate up to 18 daily roundtrip flights at Newark, New Jersey, with some flights beginning in March 2011 and a full schedule in place by June 2011. The slots are spread throughout the day and would allow Southwest the ability to integrate Newark service conveniently into its extensive national route network.

"We are excited by the opportunity to initiate service from Newark, New Jersey, and we plan to enable that service starting next March through continued flight schedule optimization using our existing fleet," said Bob Jordan, Southwest Airlines Executive Vice President of Strategy and Planning. "We've seen tremendous demand for Southwest Airlines in the New York City/Newark area in the past year. Customers are clamoring for our unique brand of hospitality, great value, low fares, extensive flight network, and our terrific Employees who deliver outstanding Customer Service. Adding Newark provides an excellent complement to our LaGuardia and Long Island service, giving Customers one more option for travel to and from the greater New York City/New Jersey area. This service also will provide a needed injection of low fares and competition into the New York/Newark market."

Southwest is working with the Federal Aviation Administration, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and Continental and United Airlines to finalize arrangements for commencing its Newark service in March 2011, including the approval of the acquisition of the necessary airport gates and facilities. Details on what cities Southwest will serve from Newark and on what dates that service will begin have not yet been determined.

"The divestiture of slots at Newark by the combined Continental/United will ensure competition is enhanced, and we appreciate the Department of Justice's role in finding a fair solution," Jordan said.

After 39 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 nation's largest carrier in terms of originating domestic passengers boarded and currently serves 69 cities in 35 states. Southwest also is one of the most honored airlines in the world, known for its commitment to the triple bottom line of Performance, People, and Planet. To read more about how Southwest is doing its part to be a good citizen, visit southwest.com/cares to read the Southwest Airlines One Report™. Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,200 flights a day and has nearly 35,000

Employees systemwide. When shopping for Southwest online, it's important to know that Southwest Airlines' low fares are only available at www.southwest.com.

This news release contains forward-looking statements related to Southwest's lease of slots at Newark Liberty International Airport and its related plans and expectations. These statements are based on Southwest's current intent, beliefs, and expectations and are not guarantees of future results. These statements also 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 timely closing of the Continental and United airlines' merger, (ii) receipt of necessary governmental approvals and the timing thereof, (iii) approval of the acquisition of the necessary airport gates and facilities and the timing thereof, and (iv) changes in consumer demand and preferences related to the Company's service and changes in the Company's overall business plan and strategies.

SOURCE Southwest Airlines