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Southwest Announces Leadership Changes

DALLAS, Sept. 13, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) announced the following leadership changes.

Tom Nealon, 60, has decided to retire from his duties as President effective immediately, but will continue to serve the Company as a strategic advisor, focusing primarily on the airline's environmental sustainability and carbon emissions reduction plan. Nealon has held numerous leadership positions during his tenure with the airline, including Executive Vice President Strategy & Innovation from 2016 to 2017, Director on the Southwest Board from 2010 to 2015, and in a consultant capacity as Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer from 2002 to 2006.

"I'm honored to have served Southwest throughout the years in several different capacities, and especially to have been President of the best airline in the business," Nealon said. "I look forward to continuing to serve and advise Southwest on strategic initiatives, and most importantly, on the airline's long-term environmental sustainability plans."

Gary Kelly, Southwest's Chairman and CEO, announced on behalf of the Southwest Airlines Board of Directors that Chief Operating Officer Mike Van de Ven, 59, has been named as the Company's President, effective immediately. Van de Ven will take on the additional responsibilities of the Company's Internal Audit, Business Continuity, Emergency Response, and Enterprise Risk Management functions.

"I want to thank Tom for his countless contributions to the cause that is Southwest Airlines over the years—they are many and immeasurable. I'm grateful Tom will continue serving as a strategic advisor. I'm thrilled for Mike as he assumes his new role as President, in addition to COO. Mike is as talented and dedicated a leader as one will find, and he has directly contributed to Southwest's success during his 28 years serving the Company and our People.

"The transition efforts being led by Executive Vice President and incoming CEO Bob Jordan are going extremely well, and as that continues, we are taking steps to shift reporting roles in preparation for Bob to assume the CEO role on February 1, 2022," said Kelly.

As the transition progresses, the Finance, Commercial, Legal & Regulatory, Operations, and Technology teams that were reporting to Kelly or Nealon will now report to Jordan, also effective immediately.

"On behalf of the Board of Directors, I'd like to thank Tom for his nearly five-year tenure as President and more than 15 years of service to our Southwest Airlines Employees, Customers, Shareholders, and the Communities we serve," said Southwest Airlines Lead Director William Cunningham. "We are extremely proud to have such a talented and robust leadership bench at Southwest Airlines, and are delighted with the announcement of Mike Van de Ven as Tom's successor."

Southwest Airlines also announced additional Senior Leader promotions:

- **Laurie Barnett**, from Managing Director Communications & Outreach, to Vice President of Communications & Outreach. Barnett is responsible for guiding the efforts of the airline's Public Relations & Communications, Creative Studio, Digital & Social Business, and Community Outreach functions. She also helped create and provided Leadership support for the Company's Emergency Response, Business Continuity and Enterprise Risk Management functions.
- **Ryan Martinez**, from Managing Director Investor Relations, to Vice President of Investor Relations. Martinez has been instrumental in evolving Southwest's IR strategies and communications along with the changing economic environment. Under his Leadership, Southwest is well-positioned to continue effectively communicating with investors while the Company manages through the pandemic.
- **Juan Suarez**, from Managing Director, Deputy General Counsel in the Legal Department to Vice President Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. Suarez serves as Southwest's executive-level champion for organizational goals related to diversity, equity, and inclusion both internally and externally. Among other things, Suarez is responsible for creating and driving the development of diversity initiatives that align with our business objectives and advises on policies and practices involving diversity, equity, and inclusion. He will partner closely with peers throughout the Company on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts as it applies to, among other things, supplier diversity, diversity hiring and recruiting, and training.
- **Marilyn Post**, from Deputy General Counsel and Corporate Secretary to Vice President Legal and Corporate Secretary. Post heads the Legal Department's Corporate & Transactions Team, which is responsible for assisting with the legal aspects of all of Southwest's securities and transactional matters. She also serves as a senior advisor to the Company's Board of Directors and Executive Team on corporate governance, executive compensation, and SEC matters.
- **Lauren Woods**, from Managing Director Technology, to Vice President Technology-Technology Platforms. Woods and her Teams are responsible for delivering stable technology platforms and driving transformation efforts across Technology. Under her leadership, the Technology teams will continue to focus on building out new modern foundational platforms used and leveraged by development Teams to increase efficiency and speed to market.

"I am pleased with the Team's flexibility and support as we continue the steady pace of our Leadership transition efforts," Jordan said. "I am looking forward to working with Tom on our sustainability imperatives and collaborating with Mike as we set the agenda for the Company moving forward. I know Gary joins me in congratulating Lauren, Laurie, Marilyn, Juan, and Ryan on their well-deserved promotions; we are fortunate to have a deeply talented bench of Southwest Leaders."

ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

In its 51st year of service, Dallas-based [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 54,000 Employees to a Customer base that topped 130 million Passengers in 2019. Southwest has a robust network of point-to-point service with a strong presence across top leisure and business markets. In peak travel seasons during 2019, Southwest operated more than 4,000 weekday departures among a network of 101 destinations in the United States and 10 additional countries. In 2020, the carrier added service to Hilo, Hawaii; Cozumel, Mexico; Miami; Palm Springs, Calif.; Steamboat Springs; and Montrose (Telluride), Colo. Thus far in 2021, Southwest has initiated service

to Chicago (O'Hare) and Sarasota/Bradenton both on Feb. 14; Savannah/Hilton Head and Colorado Springs both on March 11; Houston (Bush) and Santa Barbara, Calif. both on April 12; Fresno, Calif. on April 25; Destin/Fort Walton Beach on May 6; Myrtle Beach, S.C. on May 23; Bozeman, Mont. on May 27; Jackson, Miss. on June 6; and Eugene, Ore. on Aug. 29. The carrier will begin service to Bellingham, Wash. on Nov. 7; and Syracuse on Nov. 14.

The carrier issued its **Southwest® Promise** in May 2020 to highlight new and round-the-clock efforts to support its Customers and Employees well-being and comfort. Among the changes are enhanced cleaning efforts at airports and onboard aircraft, along with a federal mandate requiring every person to wear a mask at all times throughout each flight. Additional details about the Southwest Promise are available at [Southwest.com/Promise](https://www.southwest.com/Promise).

Southwest coined **Transfarency®** to describe its purposed philosophy of treating Customers honestly and fairly, and low fares actually staying low. Southwest is the only major U.S. airline to offer bags fly free to everyone (first and second checked pieces of luggage, size and weight limits apply, some carriers offer free checked bags on select routes or in qualified circumstances). Southwest does not charge change fees, though fare differences might apply.

Southwest is one of the most honored airlines in the world, known for a triple bottom line approach that contributes to the carrier's performance and productivity, the importance of its People and the communities they serve, and an overall commitment to efficiency and the planet. Learn more about how the carrier gives back to communities across the world by visiting [Southwest.com/citizenship](https://www.southwest.com/citizenship).

Book Southwest Airlines' low fares online at [Southwest.com](https://www.southwest.com) or by phone at 800-I-FLY-SWA®.

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