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Southwest Airlines Announces Reporting Structure of AirTran and Leadership Changes

DALLAS, May 5, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Following its acquisition of AirTran Airways on Monday, [Southwest Airlines](#) (NYSE: LUV) announced to the Employees of both airlines today the new leadership structure for the combined Company.

"This has certainly been an exciting week! It has been gratifying to hear reports from all around our system of the many ways that the Southwest Employees and the AirTran Crew Members began the process of welcoming each other to our newly expanded Family. We certainly have much work ahead of us, and one of the first steps is assembling our Officer Team," said Gary Kelly, Chairman, President, and CEO of Southwest Airlines.

On Monday, Bob Jordan, Southwest's Executive Vice President of Strategy and Planning, assumed the title of President of AirTran Airways, and continues to report to Kelly, as he maintains his current responsibilities for Southwest's Technology, Finance, Internal Audit, and Corporate Planning Departments, while leading AirTran through the integration period. Bob Fornaro, who has served as Chairman, President, and CEO at AirTran, is in a key new role as a full-time consultant for the integration of the two airlines, working closely with Kelly and Jordan to ensure a smooth transition.

Brian Hirshman, Southwest's current Vice President Maintenance & Engineering is being promoted to Senior Vice President Technical Operations effective June 1. Hirshman will join the Company's Executive Planning Committee and will continue reporting to Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer Mike Van de Ven. Vice President Maintenance Operations Jim Sokol will continue to report to Hirshman. Additionally, Kirk Thornburg who has served as AirTran Vice President Maintenance and Engineering will move to report to Hirshman and will serve in a new role as Southwest Airlines Vice President Technical Services.

Also effective June 1, Teresa Laraba will assume the title of Senior Vice President Customer Services and Training, as she will add overall senior oversight to the operational training functions. Laraba's existing role in Customer Services will remain unchanged as she will continue to have overall responsibility for the Customer Service areas within Customer Support & Services, Customer Relations, and Ground Operations. Laraba will continue to report to Van de Ven.

Until a single operating certificate is secured from the Federal Aviation Administration, AirTran Operational Departments will continue operating under the AirTran operating certificate with the full authority of its operating teams led by Klaus Goersch, AirTran's Executive Vice President Operations and Customer Service. Goersch will report directly to Jordan, and will work closely with Van de Ven.

Maintaining their current reporting structure into Goersch will be:

- AirTran Vice President Operations Jim Tabor,
- AirTran Vice President Flight Operations Jeff Miller, and
- AirTran Senior Vice President Customer Service Jack Smith.
- Additionally, AirTran Vice President Inflight Service Peggy Sauer-Clark and AirTran Director Reservations Fred Cannon will both continue to report to Smith.
- Finally, Jim Trebilcock, currently serving as Director Maintenance Operations at AirTran, will transition to oversee the day-to-day Maintenance operations at AirTran until the companies have achieved a single operating certificate. Trebilcock will report to Goersch.

Joining Goersch in reporting directly to Bob Jordan will be AirTran Senior Vice Presidents Kevin Healy, Loral Blinde, and Arne Haak.

Additional Leaders who do not support the daily operation will be incorporated into Southwest's existing organizational structure for the interim:

- AirTran Executive Vice President & General Counsel Steve Rossum moves into a consulting role for Southwest Airlines and will provide input and strategy to Southwest's Executive Vice President Corporate Services Ron Ricks.
- AirTran Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer Rocky Wiggins remains Senior Vice President for AirTran, reporting directly to Southwest Vice President Technology and Chief Information Officer Jan Marshall.
- AirTran Vice President Tad Hutcheson now reports to Bob Jordan, but will work closely with Southwest's Vice President Marketing, Sales, and Distribution Kevin Krone, Southwest's Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer Dave Ridley, and Southwest's Vice President Communication and Strategic Outreach Linda Rutherford.
- AirTran Vice President Mark Osterberg reports to Southwest's Vice President Controller Leah Koontz.

"We have an exceptional Team of Leaders—the strongest, I believe in our Company's history. I am more than delighted to have the opportunity to work with each of them and I am excited about the Leadership, experience, and insights we will gain from the Leaders at AirTran," Kelly said.

About Southwest Airlines

In its 40th year 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 has recently acquired AirTran Airways, now a wholly owned subsidiary of Southwest Airlines Co. Southwest serves 72 cities in 37 states and 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 3,400 flights a day and has more than 35,000 Employees systemwide.

About AirTran Airways

AirTran Airways is a wholly owned subsidiary of Southwest Airlines Co. and has been ranked the top airline in the Airline Quality Rating study twice in the past four years. AirTran is the only major airline with Gogo Inflight Internet on every flight and offers coast-to-coast service on North America's newest all-Boeing fleet. AirTran's low-cost, high-quality product also includes assigned seating, Business Class and complimentary SiriusXM Satellite Radio on every flight. To book a flight, visit airtran.com.

Additional photos, videos, fact sheets, and other resources are available at lowfaresfarther.com and at Southwest's digital newsroom, swamedia.com.

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