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Southwest Airlines Announces Several Leadership Changes

DALLAS, Jan. 28, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- [Southwest Airlines Co.](https://www.southwestair.com) (NYSE: LUV) announces several Leadership changes. To view Officers' biographies—including previous roles and experience, as well as current job descriptions, or download headshots—visit www.swamedia.com.

Vice President Customer Support & Services Chris Wahlenmaier has announced his plans to retire. Wahlenmaier joined Southwest in 1989 and has served in a number of capacities and departments, including in his current role since 2014. Chris served as Vice President-Station Operations and Vice President Ground Operations, prior to becoming Vice President Customer Support and Services.

With Wahlenmaier's departure, **James Ashworth** has been promoted to **Vice President Customer Support & Services**. Ashworth joined Southwest from AirTran in 2012, where he served as the General Manager of the Atlanta Call Center prior to joining Southwest as Senior Manager Center Operations in 2012. He most recently served Southwest as Managing Director Customer Support & Services.

Southwest has promoted **Landon Nitschke** to **Senior Vice President Technical Operations**. Nitschke oversees the Maintenance Operations and Engineering Departments which plan and care for the airline's fleet of more than 750 aircraft, along with a new department within the Tech Ops organization—Tech Ops Planning & Performance. In his six years at Southwest, Nitschke has led the Tech Ops Department through a number of major initiatives, including the integration of the AirTran fleet into Southwest's and launching the Boeing 737-800 and 737 MAX 8, as well as ongoing efforts such as planning and equipping the airline for Extended Operations, or ETOPS, and implementing a new technology platform and suite of tools for its maintenance manuals and procedures.

Justin Jones has assumed the role of **Vice President Tech Ops Planning & Performance**. In this role, Jones is responsible for Field Services, Maintenance and Fleet Planning, Maintenance Reliability, Business Intelligence, and Strategic Planning for Technical Operations at Southwest Airlines. Jones most recently served as Vice President of Operational Strategy & Performance. He began his Southwest career 17 years ago and has held Leadership positions in Revenue Management and Pricing, and he also has experience in Interactive Marketing and Aircraft Operations.

Southwest is also promoting **Mark Wibben** to **Vice President Engineering and Programs**. Wibben will lead the Engineering, Fleet Management, and Maintenance Programs Teams. In this role, Wibben is responsible for the configuration and maintenance program of Southwest's fleet, with the objective of delivering Safe, reliable, and ontime aircraft for the airline's operation. In his seven years at Southwest, Wibben has directed the Engineering and Powerplant program Teams through a multitude of major initiatives including retirement of the 737-300 (Classics), introduction of the LEAP1B engine on the 737

MAX, and building out the Service Engineering organization to better support Aircraft Heavy Maintenance.

Southwest is also pleased to welcome **Kurt Kinder** onboard as the airline's **Vice President Maintenance Operations**. As Vice President Maintenance Operations, Kinder will be focused on the daily operation and Frontline Teams, including Aircraft Maintenance, Aircraft Appearance, Material Stores, and Maintenance Operations Control. Kinder joins Southwest from Alaska Airlines, where he most recently served as Vice President of Maintenance and Engineering. In his role at Alaska, Kinder led approximately 1,000 Employees and oversaw the Safety, compliance, and operational performance of Alaska's fleet of Boeing 737s.

Erika Linford has announced her decision to leave Southwest, where she serves as **Vice President Technology—Commercial Portfolio**, as her family is relocating to the California Bay Area. Linford joined Southwest in 2011 as a Director in Technology, supporting Network Planning & Revenue Management. She was then promoted to Sr. Director, Technology where she led the Office of the CIO (OCIO). In May 2016, Linford transitioned to Sr. Director, BTS - Customer within Corporate Delivery supporting Call Center Teams, including Customer Support & Services and Customer Relations, as well as our Customer-facing Teams in Ground Operations.

Lauren Woods has been promoted to **Managing Director Technology—Enterprise Data & Platforms**. In her new role, Woods will help support our Multi-Year Plan initiative with a focus on building out the transformative enterprise data and platforms component, as well as supporting the rollout of the Company's IT operating model. Woods joined Southwest in 2010 and has served in progressive Leadership capacities across different Teams within Southwest's Technology Department. Woods most recently served as Senior Director of Aircraft Operations within Southwest Airlines' Technology Department. In this role, Lauren served as the key program and delivery lead for the Company's Aircraft Operations applications.

Michael Simmons has been promoted to **Managing Director Technology—Chief Information Security Officer**. Simmons will continue to be responsible for all aspects of cybersecurity across Southwest's facilities, airports, and aircraft, comprising of security engineering, security operations, incident response, threat intelligence, risk and compliance, and security software development. Simmons joined Southwest in 2016, and he previously had leadership accountability for cybersecurity, IT strategy and enterprise architecture, IT maintenance and support, and IT service management where he helped lead a multi-year department-wide transformation initiative to better align information technology with the business to deliver strategic initiatives.

Jim Dayton has been promoted to **Vice President Technology—Air & Technical Operations**. Dayton has been leading our Air Operations Technology Teams since 2017, and recently expanded his scope by assuming leadership over our Technical Operations Technologies Teams. Dayton joined Southwest in 2012 as a Senior Manager and Program Lead for Operations Recovery, where he led the delivery of several projects to improve operational reliability and communications to Customers during irregular operations. Also during his time at Southwest, he supported Revenue Management and Network Planning. Most recently, he served as Technology Delivery Lead for Southwest's successful launch of the new reservations system implementation.

Katherine Findlay has announced her retirement after 25 years of service, currently serving as **Vice President Internal Audit**. Findlay began her career at Southwest in 1993 in the

Internal Audit group before moving into the Finance organization as Director of Maintenance Finance & Budgets. Prior to returning to the Company's Internal Audit Department in 2010, she served as the Senior Director of Maintenance Services where she oversaw the Company's outsourced maintenance activity, Maintenance Training, and the Materials workgroup in Maintenance & Engineering.

With Findlay's departure, Southwest is promoting **Colleen Russell to Managing Director Internal Audit**. In her new role, Russell will be responsible for establishing and directing Internal Audit programs and procedures, providing strategic and tactical leadership of audit plan development, and monitoring of accounting, financial, operational, and IT controls. She most recently served as Senior Director Performance and Projects role in Ground Operations. She's also held Leadership positions in Finance and Internal Audit.

Angela Marano has been promoted to **Managing Director Business Transformation**. Marano is responsible for providing a variety of services to the organization that help identify and enable business transformation opportunities, including continuous improvement, automation, data science, and innovation. Marano has been with Southwest for more than 20 years and has held a variety of roles across both Technology and Corporate Strategy & Innovation Teams. She has led enterprise strategic initiatives across multiple aspects of the business including Customer Experience, recovery from irregular operations, low-cost leadership, and enterprise mobility.

Ryan Green has been promoted to **Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer**. Green oversees and provides direction on a wide variety of areas that are important elements of growing our brand and driving revenue, including the Company's brand health and advertising and media efforts, our loyalty program and ancillary revenue development, and the digital strategy for Southwest.com and our mobile channels. Green is promoted from Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, where he has expanded his scope of responsibility in driving our Customer Experience efforts across the Company over the last several years.

"I want to thank Katherine, Chris, and Erika for the many contributions to the cause that is Southwest Airlines," said Southwest Chairman and CEO Gary Kelly. "I also want to welcome Kurt into the Southwest Family—we are lucky to have him. We have the strongest Leadership bench we've ever had, and I'm thrilled to have so many capable Leaders to step into their new roles to continue to build and strengthen Southwest to ensure our continued success for decades to come."

ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

In its 48th year of service, Dallas-based [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 58,000 Employees to a Customer base topping 120 million passengers annually. Southwest became the nation's largest domestic air carrier in 2003 and maintains that ranking based on the U.S. Department of Transportation's most recent reporting of domestic originating passengers boarded. In peak travel seasons, Southwest operates more than 4,000 weekday departures among a network of 99 destinations in the United States and 10 additional countries. Southwest has announced its intention to serve Hawaii, subject to requisite governmental approvals.

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), and there are no change fees, though fare differences might apply.

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