

# Southwest Airlines Announces Leadership Changes With Retirements And Promotions

[Southwest Airlines Co.](http://www.swamedia.com) (NYSE: LUV) today announced the retirement of two veteran Officers and the promotion of several others within the carrier's ranks across the Operational, Finance, and Commercial Departments. To view Officers' biographies or download headshots, visit [www.swamedia.com](http://www.swamedia.com).

Executive Vice President of Daily Operations Greg Wells is retiring from his current position and will move to an Advisor role, effective March 1. Wells has a broad background of operational experience, starting on the Ramp in 1981, and working his way up to Executive Vice President. Throughout his tenure, he worked in nine different locations before moving to Dallas in 1997. His experience includes Station Manager in both San Jose and Phoenix, Regional Ground Operations Director, Senior Ground Operations Director, Director of Flight Dispatch, Vice President of Safety, Security and Flight Dispatch, Vice President of Ground Operations, Senior Vice President Ground Operations, and Senior Vice President Operational Performance. As an Advisor, Wells will provide Leadership coaching and mentoring, historical perspectives and insights on a recurring basis to various training classes, and input into Operational training needs.

Senior Vice President of Air Operations Alan Kasher is promoted to Executive Vice President of Daily Operations and will be transitioning into that role over the next month. Kasher, a Pilot, joined Southwest more than 20 years ago as a First Officer and upgraded to Captain in 2007. He worked in Flight Operations Safety and served in various management positions within Flight Operations. He served as Director of Operations and Managing Director of Regulatory Programs and Compliance, then Vice President of Flight Operations, prior to transitioning to his most recent role. In his new position, Kasher will oversee the daily operations of the airline, including Air Operations, Technical Operations, and Daily Operations.

Sam Ford is promoted to Vice President Operational Strategy & Performance, effective Feb. 1. Ford started his career at Southwest in 2007 in Financial Performance & Analysis (FP&A), where he supported Technology and Marketing, among other departments. Ford has also served in Leadership positions on the Company's Customer Support & Services and Operational Performance Teams, before most recently serving as Managing Director Operational Strategy & Performance.

Chris "CJ" Johnson is promoted to Vice President Ground Operations, effective Feb. 1. Johnson started his career as a Ramp Agent in Detroit in 1993, and has held Leadership roles as Manager in Orlando, Assistant Station Leader in Oakland, Station Leader in Birmingham, Sacramento, Los Angeles, and Phoenix, Station Director, Senior Station Director, and Senior Director of Labor Relations, before most recently serving as Managing Director Ground Operations.

Julia Landrum is promoted to Managing Director Financial Planning & Analysis (FP&A), effective Feb. 1. She will be responsible for ensuring the Company's business plan and budget remain in line with major Company initiatives; evaluating future trends and opportunities; and providing economic and industry analysis.

Vice President of Customer Relations/Rapid Rewards Jim Ruppel has announced his retirement and will move to an Advisor role, effective March 1. With 43 years of service at Southwest, Ruppel began his career as a Provisioning Agent and has served in a number of Leadership roles, including Manager of Central Baggage Claims, and Director of Customer Relations. Ruppel grew the Customer Relations/Rapid Rewards Team from two to more than 400 Employees. In his Advisor role, he will continue to share his invaluable institutional knowledge as the airline continues to adapt to best meet the needs of Customers in an ever-changing environment. With Ruppel's move to Advisor, Managing Director of Customer Experience Tony Roach will provide oversight of the Customer Relations/Rapid Rewards Department.

"I want to personally thank both Greg and Jim for their decades of servant Leadership and their many contributions to Southwest Airlines, and I'm delighted they will continue their service as trusted Advisors," said Southwest Airlines Chairman and CEO Gary Kelly. "We are incredibly fortunate to have such a strong Leadership bench to fill their big shoes and help lead Southwest Airlines as we embark on our milestone 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year."

#### ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

In its 50th year of service, Dallas-based [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 56,000 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. In 2021, Southwest will begin service to both Chicago (O'Hare) and Sarasota/Bradenton on Feb. 14; both Savannah/Hilton Head and Colorado Springs on March 11; both Houston (Bush) and Santa Barbara, Calif. on April 12; Fresno, Calif. on April 25; and Jackson, Miss. on June 6.

Southwest coined [Transfarency](#)<sup>®</sup> 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<sup>®</sup> 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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#### ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

[Southwest Airlines Co.](https://www.southwest.com) operates one of the world's most admired and awarded airlines, offering its one-of-a-kind value and Hospitality at 121 airports across 12 countries. Southwest took flight in 1971 to democratize the sky through friendly, reliable, and low-cost air travel and now carries more air travelers flying nonstop within the United States than any other airline(fn. 1). By empowering its more than 73,000(fn. 2) People to deliver unparalleled Hospitality, the maverick airline cherishes a passionate loyalty among more than 134 million Customers carried in 2025. Southwest leverages a unique legacy and mission to serve communities around the world including harnessing the power of its People and Purpose to put communities at the Heart of its success. Learn more by visiting [Southwest.com/citizenship](https://www.southwest.com/citizenship).

1. Based on U.S. Dept. of Transportation quarterly Airline Origin & Destination Survey as of Q4 2025
2. Fulltime-equivalent active Employees as of March 31, 2026

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