

IBM and Southwest Airlines to provide “RAPID CHECK-IN” Kiosks for getting to the gate with less wait

DALLAS, July 30, 2002 –

Southwest Airlines is teaming with IBM to offer the first of more than 250 airport self-service check-in kiosks that will be available nationwide. The first RAPID CHECK-IN kiosks are operating at Dallas' Love Field airport, with additional kiosks planned for San Antonio, Phoenix, Nashville, Houston Hobby, Chicago Midway, Oakland, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose, Sacramento, Orlando, and Baltimore/Washington.

Under the contract, valued at \$2 million, IBM is designing the self-service application, manufacturing, and installing more than 250 systems at many of Southwest Airlines' largest destination airports. The deal could expand to more units over the next year. The addition of self-service kiosks comes just a month after Southwest automated its flight check-in process, changing from plastic boarding cards to personalized paper, to help reduce the amount of time customers wait in airport lines. These measures are part of Southwest's commitment to improving the airport experience for its passengers following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

“In today's travel environment, people are seeking convenience, especially speed, to get through the airport,” said Dave Ridley, Southwest's vice president of ground operations. “We value face-to-face interaction with our customers, but want to offer more options to help speed them through the check-in process. The IBM kiosks allow us to give our

customers an alternative to standing in line, without sacrificing the overall level of service they receive from Southwest Airlines.”

Travelers with (electronic) ticketless reservations may use Southwest Airlines' new “RAPID CHECK-IN” kiosks (in English or Spanish) by simply swiping a credit card or Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards frequent flyer card to start the check-in process. The system can print a boarding pass, baggage tags (at ticket counter positions only), travel itinerary, or receipt. It also allows customers to add a Rapid Rewards account number to an itinerary so the member can receive frequent flyer credit for a particular flight.

In addition to being a customer convenience at the airport, Southwest Airlines views RAPID CHECK-IN as a brand extension of its popular southwest.com web site. “With nearly half of our customers purchasing tickets over the Internet, we lead the airline industry in online bookings. In addition, 85 percent of our customers are ticketless (electronic ticket). With this level of technical savvy out there, we are confident our customers will adapt easily to RAPID CHECK-IN,” Ridley added.

“By deploying its RAPID CHECK-IN kiosk program, Southwest will not only be able to offer its customers the convenience of self-service check-in, but can also free up some of its agents to focus on delivering face-to-face customer service, as well as more complex ticket transactions,” said Steve Orr, glob-

al airline segment executive, IBM Travel & Transportation Industry group. “Additionally, since the self-service kiosks take up less space than traditional check-in counters, they are proving beneficial in the new airport environment – where there are increasing space constraints resulting from the various new security measures. They also maximize traffic flow in otherwise constrained terminal buildings, resulting in lower costs to both airlines and airport operators.”

IBM, the global market leader in travel check-in kiosk systems, has developed self-service kiosks for a number of U.S. airlines as well as international carriers including Air Canada, Alitalia, British Airways, and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. IBM's Electronic Access team, which is part of IBM Global Services, provides worldwide support for all of IBM's self-service application software, middleware and kiosk hardware development.

Southwest Airlines proves to be one of the most elite players in the world of business, according to the July 2001 issue of FORTUNE. Southwest Airlines has continued to earn a place in the FORTUNE list of 500 Largest U.S. Corporations. In the year 2001, Southwest experienced its 29th consecutive year of profitability, job security, and plentiful profitsharing.

For more information on how RAPID CHECK-IN works, please see southwest.com/kiosks