

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO
Form 424B5
November 03, 2014
Table of Contents

Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5)
Registration No. 333-180969

The information in this preliminary prospectus supplement is not complete and may be changed. This preliminary prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are not an offer to sell these securities, and we are not soliciting an offer to buy these securities, in any state where the offer or sale is not permitted.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED NOVEMBER 3, 2014

Preliminary Prospectus Supplement

(To Prospectus dated April 26, 2012)

\$

Southwest Airlines Co.

% Notes Due 20

This is an offering by Southwest Airlines Co. of \$ principal amount of % Notes Due 20 , which we refer to in this prospectus supplement as the notes. The notes will bear interest at the rate of % per year and will mature on , 20 . Interest on the notes is payable on and of each year, beginning on , 2015.

In the event of a change of control triggering event, as defined in this prospectus supplement, the holders may require us to purchase for cash all or a portion of their notes at a purchase price equal to 101% of the principal amount of the notes, plus accrued and unpaid interest, if any. We may redeem some or all of the notes at any time. The redemption prices are discussed under the caption Description of Notes Redemption.

The notes will be unsecured and unsubordinated obligations of our company and will rank equally with all of our other unsubordinated indebtedness. The notes will not be entitled to the benefit of any sinking fund.

Investing in the notes involves risks. See **Risk Factors** on page S-5.

	Per Note	Total
Public Offering Price (i)	%	\$
Underwriting Discount	%	\$
Proceeds to Southwest Airlines Co. (before expenses) (i)	%	\$

(i) Plus accrued interest, if any, from November , 2014, if settlement occurs after that date.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The underwriters expect to deliver the notes to investors in book-entry form only through the facilities of The Depository Trust Company for the accounts of its participants, including Clearstream Banking, société anonyme, and Euroclear Bank, S.A./N.V., as operator for the Euroclear System, on or about November , 2014.

Joint Book-Running Managers

J.P. Morgan

**Morgan Stanley
November , 2014**

Citigroup

Table of Contents

This document is in two parts. The first part is this prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of this offering of notes. The second part is the accompanying prospectus, which gives more general information, some of which may not apply to this offering of notes. If the information about the offering varies between this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, you should rely on the information in this prospectus supplement.

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. We have not, and the underwriters have not, authorized anyone to provide you with different information. We are not, and the underwriters are not, making an offer of these securities in any state where the offer is not permitted. You should not assume that the information in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front cover page of this prospectus supplement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Prospectus Supplement	
<u>The Offering</u>	S-3
<u>Risk Factors</u>	S-5
<u>The Company</u>	S-8
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	S-8
<u>Capitalization</u>	S-9
<u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u>	S-10
<u>Description of Notes</u>	S-11
<u>Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations</u>	S-16
<u>Underwriting</u>	S-21
<u>Validity of Notes</u>	S-24
<u>Experts</u>	S-24
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	S-24
Prospectus	
<u>About this Prospectus</u>	1
<u>Forward-Looking Statements</u>	1
<u>About Southwest Airlines Co.</u>	1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	2
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	2
<u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u>	2
<u>Description of Debt Securities</u>	3
<u>Description of Capital Stock</u>	11
<u>Legal Matters</u>	12
<u>Experts</u>	12
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	12
<u>Incorporation of Certain documents by Reference</u>	13

Description of Debt Securities in the accompanying prospectus.

Use of Proceeds

The net proceeds from the offering of the notes will be used for general corporate purposes. See Use of Proceeds.

Further Issuances

We may create and issue further notes ranking equally and ratably with the notes offered by this prospectus supplement in all respects, so that such further notes may, but are not required to, be consolidated and form a single series with the notes offered by this prospectus supplement and will have the same terms as to status, redemption or otherwise.

S-3

Table of Contents

Trading	The notes will not be listed on any securities exchange or included in any automated quotation system. The notes will be new securities for which there is currently no public market.
Form and Denomination	The notes will be issued in minimum denominations of \$2,000 and any integral multiple of \$1,000 in book-entry form and will be represented by one or more permanent global certificates deposited with, or on behalf of, The Depository Trust Company (DTC) and registered in the name of a nominee of DTC. Beneficial interests in any of the notes will be shown on, and transfers will be effected only through, records maintained by DTC or its nominee and any such interest may not be exchanged for certificated securities, except in limited circumstances.
Trustee, Registrar and Paying Agent	Wells Fargo Bank, National Association.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

You should carefully review the information included elsewhere and incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and should particularly consider the following matters.

This prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, and the documents we incorporate by reference may contain statements that constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, or Exchange Act. Forward-looking statements are based on, and include statements about, our estimates, expectations, beliefs, intentions, and strategies for the future, and the assumptions underlying these forward-looking statements. Specific forward-looking statements can be identified by the fact that they do not relate strictly to historical or current facts and include, without limitation, words such as believe, anticipate, expect, intend, may, will, estimate, should, project, and similar expressions.

Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and involve risks and uncertainties that are difficult to predict. Therefore, actual results may vary materially from what is expressed in or indicated by our forward-looking statements or from historical experience or our present expectations. Known material risk factors that could cause these differences are set forth in our filings with the Securities Exchange Commission, or SEC, that are incorporated in this prospectus supplement by reference. Caution should be taken not to place undue reliance on our forward-looking statements, which represent our views only as of the dates of the respective documents. We undertake no obligation to update publicly or revise any forward looking statements to reflect subsequent events or circumstances. Additional information concerning these and other factors is contained in our filings with the SEC, including but not limited to our Forms 10-K, 10-Q and 8-K.

Risks Relating to the Notes

The notes are subject to prior claims of secured creditors, and if a default occurs we may not have sufficient funds to fulfill our obligations under the notes.

The notes are our general obligations, ranking equally with our other senior unsecured indebtedness and liabilities but effectively ranking below our secured indebtedness and structurally ranking below any debt and other liabilities of our subsidiaries. As of September 30, 2014, we had \$1,369 million of secured indebtedness. The indenture governing the notes permits us and our subsidiaries to incur additional secured debt. If we incur any additional secured debt, our assets and the assets of our subsidiaries that are security for that debt will be subject to prior claims by our secured creditors. In the event of our bankruptcy, liquidation, reorganization or other winding up, assets that secure debt will be available to pay obligations on the notes only after all debt secured by those assets has been repaid in full. Holders of the notes will participate in our remaining assets ratably with all of our unsecured and unsubordinated creditors, including our trade creditors.

If we incur any additional obligations that rank equally with the notes, including trade payables, the holders of those obligations will be entitled to share ratably with the holders of the notes in any proceeds distributed upon our insolvency, liquidation, reorganization, dissolution or other winding up. This may have the effect of reducing the amount of proceeds paid to you. If there are not sufficient assets remaining to pay all of these creditors, all or a portion of the notes then outstanding would remain unpaid.

Table of Contents

The limited covenants in the indenture for the notes and the terms of the notes do not provide protection against some types of important corporate events and may not protect your investment.

The indenture for the notes does not:

require us to maintain any financial ratios or specific levels of net worth, revenues, income, cash flow or liquidity and, accordingly, does not protect holders of the notes in the event that we experience significant adverse changes in our financial condition or results of operations;

limit our subsidiaries' ability to incur indebtedness, which would rank structurally senior to the notes;

limit our ability to incur any amount or type of indebtedness, including secured indebtedness that would rank effectively senior to the notes to the extent of the value of the assets securing that indebtedness;

limit our ability to engage in sale-leaseback transactions;

limit our ability to incur indebtedness that is equal in right of payment to the notes;

restrict our subsidiaries' ability to issue securities or otherwise incur indebtedness that would be senior to our equity interests in our subsidiaries;

restrict our ability to repurchase or prepay our securities; or

restrict our ability to make investments or to repurchase or pay dividends or make other payments in respect of our common stock or other securities ranking junior to the notes.

Furthermore, the indenture for the notes contains only limited protections in the event of a change in control. We could engage in many types of transactions, such as certain acquisitions, refinancings or recapitalizations that could substantially affect our capital structure and the value of the notes. For these reasons, you should not consider the covenants in the indenture as a significant factor in evaluating whether to invest in the notes.

To the extent we would be required to repurchase the notes upon a change of control triggering event, we may not have sufficient cash at such time to repurchase all the notes plus all other notes subject to a change of control triggering event repurchase obligation.

If specified in the terms of the applicable pricing supplement, the notes that we issue may require us to repurchase all or any part of such holder's notes upon the occurrence of a Change of Control Triggering Event, as defined herein. We have, and may in the future, issue notes and enter into additional debt instruments, that require us to repurchase or repay the principal amount of debt outstanding (plus, in certain circumstances a premium) upon the occurrence of a Change of Control Triggering Event or similar event. If such event were to occur, we may not have sufficient financial

resources available to satisfy all those obligations. Consequently we may not be able satisfy our obligations to repurchase your notes upon the terms of the indenture.

Ratings of the notes could be lowered or withdrawn in the future.

We expect that the notes will be rated by one or more nationally recognized statistical rating organizations. A rating is not a recommendation to purchase, hold or sell debt securities, since a rating does not predict the market price of a particular security or its suitability for a particular investor. Any rating organization that rates the notes may lower our rating or decide not to rate the notes in its sole discretion. The ratings of the notes will be based primarily on the rating organization's assessment of the likelihood of timely payment of interest when due and the payment of principal on the maturity date. Any downgrade or withdrawal of a rating by a rating agency that rates the notes could have an adverse effect on the trading prices or liquidity of the notes.

Table of Contents

An active trading market for the notes may not develop.

There is no existing market for the notes and we do not intend to apply for listing of the notes on any securities exchange or any automated quotation system. Accordingly, there can be no assurance that a trading market for the notes will ever develop or will be maintained. Further, there can be no assurance as to the liquidity of any market that may develop for the notes, your ability to sell your notes or the price at which you will be able to sell your notes. Future trading prices of the notes will depend on many factors, including prevailing interest rates, our financial condition and results of operations, the then-current ratings assigned to the notes and the market for similar debt securities.

Any trading market that develops would be affected by many factors independent of and in addition to the foregoing, including:

the time remaining to the maturity of the notes;

the outstanding amount of the notes;

the terms related to optional redemption of the notes; and

the level, direction and volatility of market interest rates generally.

The underwriters have advised us that they currently intend to make a market in the notes, but they are not obligated to do so and may cease market-making at any time in their sole discretion without notice.

Table of Contents

THE COMPANY

Southwest Airlines Co. operates Southwest Airlines, a major passenger airline that provides scheduled air transportation in the United States and selected near-international markets. Southwest Airlines Co. also currently operates AirTran Airways. We expect to reach a major milestone in 2014 by effectively completing the more than three-year full integration of AirTran Airways into Southwest. AirTran's final passenger service is scheduled to occur on December 28, 2014. We commenced service on June 18, 1971, with three Boeing 737 aircraft serving three Texas cities: Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio. We currently serve 93 destinations in 40 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and five near-international countries including Mexico (Cancun, Mexico City, and Cabo San Lucas), Jamaica (Montego Bay), The Bahamas (Nassau), Aruba (Oranjestad), and Dominican Republic (Punta Cana). The launch of international service on Southwest Airlines occurred on July 1, 2014, with service to Montego Bay, Nassau, and Oranjestad, with service to Cabo San Lucas and Cancun commencing on August 10, 2014, and service to Mexico City and Punta Cana beginning on November 2, 2014. In September 2014, we announced plans to add our first destination in Central America by commencing service to San Jose, Costa Rica beginning in March 2015, subject to government approval. At September 30, 2014, our active fleet consisted of 685 Boeing aircraft, including 648 Boeing 737 aircraft and 37 Boeing 717 aircraft.

Our financial results and the financial results for airlines in general can be seasonal in nature. In many years, our revenues, as well as our operating income and net income, have been better in our second and third fiscal quarters than in our first and fourth fiscal quarters. Air travel is also significantly affected by general economic conditions, the amount of disposable income available to consumers, unemployment levels, corporate travel budgets, and other factors beyond our control. These and other factors, such as the price of jet fuel in some periods, the nature of our fuel hedging program, the periodic volatility of commodities used by us for hedging jet fuel, and the requirements related to hedge accounting, have created, and may continue to create, significant volatility in our financial results.

Additional information about us is included in our reports and other documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. See [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

USE OF PROCEEDS

We expect our net proceeds from the offering of the notes to be approximately \$ million, after deducting the underwriting discount and our estimated offering expenses. We will use the net proceeds for general corporate purposes.

Table of Contents**CAPITALIZATION**

The following table sets forth our unaudited consolidated capitalization at September 30, 2014, and as adjusted for the issuance and sale of the notes (before underwriter's discount and estimated offering expenses). You should read this table in conjunction with our consolidated financial statements and the accompanying notes that are incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement. See [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

	Actual	As Adjusted
	(In millions)	
Debt (including current maturities of long-term debt):		
Revolving credit facility (1)	\$	\$
5.25% Notes due 2014 (2)	350	
5.75% Notes due 2016	314	
5.25% Convertible Senior Notes due 2016	114	
5.125% Notes due 2017	317	
Fixed-rate 717 Aircraft Notes payable through 2017 10.38% (2)	7	
French Credit Agreements due 2018 1.03%	41	
Fixed-rate 737 Aircraft Notes payable through 2018 7.02%	25	
Term Loan Agreement due 2019 6.315%	186	
Term Loan Agreement due 2019 6.84%	73	
Term Loan Agreement due 2020 5.223%	382	
Floating-rate 737 Aircraft Notes payable through 2020	309	
Pass Through Certificates due 2022 6.24%	355	
7.375% Debentures due 2027	135	
Capital Leases	139	
% Notes due 20 offered hereby		
Debt discount and issue costs, other	(14)	
Total debt	\$ 2,732	\$
Stockholders' equity:		
Common stock, \$1.00 par value; authorized 2,000,000,000 shares; issued and outstanding approximately 679,693,841 shares	808	
Capital in excess of par value	1,280	
Retained earnings	7,266	
Treasury stock	(1,833)	
Accumulated other comprehensive income	(92)	
Total stockholders' equity	7,429	
Total capitalization	\$ 10,161	\$

- (1) Our unsecured revolving credit facility provides for up to \$1 billion in borrowings. As of October 31, 2014, there were no borrowings outstanding under this facility.
- (2) These notes were repaid in full on October 1, 2014 from cash on hand.

S-9

Table of Contents**RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES**

The following table sets forth our consolidated ratio of earnings to fixed charges for the periods indicated:

Nine Months Ended		Year Ended December 31,				
September 30,		2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
2014	2013					
5.74	3.77	3.92	2.49	1.66	2.99	1.38

Earnings represent:

Income before income taxes, excluding the cumulative effect of accounting changes; plus

Fixed charges, excluding capitalized interest.

Fixed charges include:

Interest, whether expensed or capitalized; and

A portion of rental expense. Our management believes this is representative of the interest factor in those periods.

S-10

Table of Contents**DESCRIPTION OF NOTES**

We will issue the notes under the indenture referred to in the accompanying prospectus between us and Wells Fargo Bank, National Association, as trustee. The following description, together with the description in the accompanying prospectus under the caption Description of Debt Securities, is a summary of the material provisions of the notes and the indenture. It does not restate the indenture in its entirety. We urge you to read the indenture because it, and not this description, defines your rights as holders of the notes. We have filed a form of the indenture as an exhibit to our registration statement, which includes the accompanying prospectus. This description of the notes supplements, and, to the extent it is inconsistent, replaces, the description of the general provisions of the notes and the indenture in the accompanying prospectus. The notes are a series of our debt securities as that term is used in the accompanying prospectus.

With certain exceptions and pursuant to certain requirements set forth in the indenture, we may discharge our obligations under the indenture with respect to the notes as described under the caption Description of Debt Securities Defeasance in the accompanying prospectus.

Principal, Maturity and Interest

The notes will mature on _____, 20____. Although we are offering \$_____ million principal amount of the notes, we may from time to time, without notice to or the consent of the holders of the notes, increase the principal amount of this series of notes under the indenture and issue such increased principal amount (or any portion thereof), in which case any additional notes so issued will have the same form and terms (other than the date of issuance and, under certain circumstances, the date from which interest thereon will begin to accrue), and will carry the same right to receive accrued and unpaid interest, as the notes previously issued, and such additional notes will form a single series with the notes.

Interest on the notes will accrue at the rate of _____% per year and will be payable semi-annually on each _____ and _____ commencing _____, 2015. We will make each interest payment to the person in whose name the notes are registered at the close of business on the relevant _____ and _____ preceding the applicable interest payment date. Interest on the notes will be computed on the basis of a 360-day year comprised of twelve 30-day months. If any interest payment date, redemption date or maturity date falls on a day that is not a business day, the payment will be made on the next business day with the same force and effect as if made on the relevant interest payment date, redemption date or maturity date, and, unless we default on the payment, no interest will accrue for the period from and after the interest payment date, redemption date or maturity date. Business day means a day other than a Saturday, a Sunday or a day on which banking institutions in Dallas, Texas, are authorized or obligated to close.

Initially, all notes will be issued in global form as indicated under Book-Entry, Delivery and Form below. We may make payments on any notes that are later issued in certificated form at the corporate trust office of the trustee in Dallas, which is currently located at 750 N. Saint Paul Place, Suite 1750, Dallas, Texas 75201.

Redemption

We will have the right to redeem the notes, in whole or in part, at any time. If the notes are redeemed at any time prior to _____, 20____ (_____ month prior to the maturity date), the notes will be redeemed at a redemption price equal to the greater of (1) 100% of the principal amount of the notes to be redeemed and (2) the sum of the present values of the remaining scheduled payments of principal and interest on such notes (exclusive of interest accrued to the redemption date) discounted to the redemption date on a semi-annual basis (assuming a 360-day year consisting of twelve 30-day months) at the Treasury Rate plus _____ basis points, plus, in either case, accrued and unpaid interest on

the principal amount being redeemed to such redemption date. If the notes are redeemed on or after _____, 20____ (____ month prior to the maturity date), the notes will be redeemed at a redemption price equal to 100% of the principal amount of the notes to be redeemed plus accrued and unpaid

S-11

Table of Contents

interest thereon to the redemption date. In either case, the redemption is subject to the right of holders of record on the relevant record date to receive interest due on an interest payment date that is on or before the date of redemption.

For purposes of determining the redemption price, the following definitions are applicable:

Comparable Treasury Issue means the United States Treasury security selected by the Quotation Agent as having an actual or interpolated maturity comparable to the remaining term of the notes to be redeemed that would be utilized, at the time of selection and in accordance with customary financial practice, in pricing new issues of corporate debt securities of comparable maturity to the remaining term of such notes.

Comparable Treasury Price means, with respect to any redemption date, the average of the Reference Treasury Dealer Quotations for such redemption date.

Quotation Agent means one of the Reference Treasury Dealers appointed by us.

Reference Treasury Dealer means each of J.P. Morgan Securities LLC and Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC and their respective successors; provided, however, that if either of the foregoing shall cease to be a primary U.S. Government securities dealer in New York City (a **Primary Treasury Dealer**), we will substitute therefor another Primary Treasury Dealer.

Reference Treasury Dealer Quotations means, with respect to each Reference Treasury Dealer and any redemption date, the average, as determined by the company, of the bid and asked prices for the Comparable Treasury Issue (expressed in each case as a percentage of its principal amount) quoted in writing to the company and the trustee by such Reference Treasury Dealer at 3:30 p.m., New York City time, on the third business day preceding such redemption date.

Treasury Rate means, with respect to any redemption date, the rate per year equal to the semi-annual equivalent yield to maturity or interpolated yield (on a day count basis) of the Comparable Treasury Issue, calculated using a price for the Comparable Treasury Issue (expressed as a percentage of its principal amount) equal to the Comparable Treasury Price for such redemption date. The Treasury Rate will be calculated by the Quotation Agent on the third business day preceding the redemption date.

There will be no sinking fund for the notes.

Redemption Procedures

We will provide not less than 30 nor more than 60 days notice mailed to each registered holder of the notes to be redeemed. If the redemption notice is given and funds deposited as required, then interest will cease to accrue on and after the redemption date on the notes or portions of such notes called for redemption.

If fewer than all of the notes are to be redeemed at any time, selection of notes for redemption will be made by the trustee in compliance with the requirements of the principal national securities exchange, if any, on which the notes are listed or, if the notes are not listed on a national securities exchange, on a pro rata basis, by lot, or such other method as the trustee deems appropriate and fair (or such other method as the DTC may require), *provided, however*, that the notes will be redeemed only in the minimum denominations of \$2,000 and integral multiples thereof of \$1,000.

Table of Contents

Offer to Repurchase Upon a Change of Control Triggering Event

Upon the occurrence of a Change of Control Triggering Event, unless we have otherwise exercised our right to redeem the notes, each holder of notes will have the right to require us to purchase all or a portion of such holder's notes pursuant to the offer described below (the "Change of Control Offer"), at a purchase price equal to 101% of the principal amount thereof plus accrued and unpaid interest, if any, to the date of purchase, subject to the rights of holders of notes on the relevant record date to receive interest due on the relevant interest payment date.

Within 30 days following the date upon which the Change of Control Triggering Event occurred, or at our option, prior to any Change of Control but after the public announcement of the Change of Control, unless we have otherwise exercised our right to redeem the notes, we will be required to deliver a notice to each holder of notes, with a copy to the trustee, which notice will govern the terms of the Change of Control Offer. Such notice will state, among other things, the purchase date, which must be no earlier than 30 days nor later than 60 days from the date such notice is mailed, other than as may be required by law (the "Change of Control Payment Date"). The notice, if mailed prior to the date of consummation of the Change of Control, will state that the Change of Control Offer is conditioned on the Change of Control Triggering Event occurring on or prior to the Change of Control Payment Date. Holders of notes electing to have notes purchased pursuant to a Change of Control Offer must surrender their notes, with the form entitled "Option of Holder to Elect Purchase" on the reverse of the note completed, to the paying agent at the address specified in the notice, or transfer their notes to the paying agent by book-entry transfer pursuant to the applicable procedures of DTC, before the close of business on the third business day prior to the Change of Control Payment Date.

We will not be required to make a Change of Control Offer if a third party makes such an offer in the manner, at the times and otherwise in compliance with the requirements for such an offer made by us and such third party purchases all notes properly tendered and not withdrawn under its offer.

If holders of not less than 90% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding notes validly tender and do not withdraw the notes in a Change of Control Offer and we, or any third party making a Change of Control Offer in lieu of us, purchases all of the notes validly tendered and not withdrawn by such holders, we will have the right, upon not less than 30 nor more than 60 days' prior notice, given not more than 30 days following such purchase pursuant to the Change of Control Offer described above, to redeem all notes that remain outstanding following such purchase at a redemption price in cash equal to 101% of the principal amount thereof, plus accrued and unpaid interest, if any, to the date of redemption (subject to the right of holders of record on the relevant record date to receive interest on the relevant interest payment date).

We will comply with the requirements of Rule 14e-1 under the Exchange Act and any other securities laws and regulations thereunder to the extent those laws and regulations are applicable in connection with the repurchase of the notes as a result of a Change of Control Triggering Event. To the extent that the provisions of any such securities laws or regulations conflict with the change of control offer provisions of the notes, we will comply with those securities laws and regulations and will not be deemed to have breached our obligations under the change of control offer provisions of the notes by virtue of any such conflict.

Except as described above with respect to a Change of Control Triggering Event, the indenture will not contain any other provisions that permit the holders of the notes to require us to repurchase or redeem the notes in the event of a takeover, recapitalization or similar transaction.

Table of Contents

As used herein:

Below Investment Grade Rating Event means the rating on the notes is lowered by each of the Rating Agencies and the notes are rated below Investment Grade by each of the Rating Agencies on any day within the 60-day period (which 60-day period will be extended so long as the rating of the notes is under publicly announced consideration for a possible downgrade by any of the Rating Agencies) after the earlier of (1) the occurrence of a Change of Control or (2) public notice of the occurrence of a Change of Control or our intention to effect a Change of Control; provided that a Below Investment Grade Rating Event otherwise arising by virtue of a particular reduction in rating shall not be deemed to have occurred in respect of a particular Change of Control (and thus shall not be deemed a Below Investment Grade Rating Event for purposes of the definition of Change of Control Triggering Event) if the Rating Agencies making the reduction in rating to which this definition would otherwise apply do not announce or publicly confirm or inform the company and the trustee in writing at its request that the reduction was the result, in whole or in part, of any event or circumstance comprised of or arising as a result of, or in respect of, the applicable Change of Control (whether or not the applicable Change of Control shall have occurred at the time of the Below Investment Grade Rating Event).

Change of Control means the consummation of any transaction (including without limitation, any merger or consolidation) the result of which is that any person (as that term is used in Section 13(d)(3) of the Exchange Act), other than the company or its subsidiaries, becomes the beneficial owner (as defined in Rules 13d-3 and 13d-5 under the Exchange Act), directly or indirectly, of more than 50% of the combined voting power of our Voting Stock or other Voting Stock into which our Voting Stock is reclassified, consolidated, exchanged or changed measured by voting power rather than number of shares, other than any such transaction where:

- (a) our outstanding Voting Stock is reclassified, consolidated, exchanged or changed for other Voting Stock of ours or for Voting Stock of the surviving corporation, and
- (b) the holders of our Voting Stock immediately before that transaction own, directly or indirectly, not less than a majority of our Voting Stock or the Voting Stock of the surviving parent corporation immediately after such transaction and in substantially the same proportion as their ownership in us before the transaction.

Change of Control Triggering Event means the occurrence of both a Change of Control and a Below Investment Grade Rating Event.

Fitch means Fitch, Inc., also known as Fitch Ratings, and its successors.

Investment Grade means a rating of BBB- or better by Fitch (or its equivalent under any successor rating category of Fitch); a rating of Baa3 or better by Moody's (or its equivalent under any successor rating category of Moody's); and a rating of BBB- or better by S&P (or its equivalent under any successor rating category of S&P).

Moody's means Moody's Investors Service, Inc., a subsidiary of Moody's Corporation, and its successors.

Rating Agency means (1) each of Fitch, Moody's and S&P, and (2) if any of Fitch, Moody's or S&P ceases to rate the notes or fails to make a rating of the notes publicly available for reasons outside of our control, a nationally recognized statistical rating organization as defined in Section 3(a)(62) of the Exchange Act, selected by us (as certified by a resolution of our board of directors) as a replacement agency for Fitch, Moody's or S&P, or all of them, as the case may be.

S&P means Standard & Poor's Ratings Services, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., and its successors.

Voting Stock of any specified person as of any date means the capital stock of such person that is at the time entitled to vote generally in the election of the board of directors of such person.

S-14

Table of Contents

Ranking

The notes will be our direct, unsecured and unsubordinated obligations. The notes will rank *pari passu*, or equal in right of payment, with all of our other unsubordinated indebtedness and senior in right of payment to all of our future subordinated debt. The indenture contains no restrictions on the amount of additional indebtedness that we may issue under it.

Denominations

The notes will be issuable in denominations of \$2,000 and integral multiples of \$1,000.

No Listing

We do not intend to list the notes on any securities exchange.

Book-Entry, Delivery and Form

The notes will be issued initially in the form of a global security registered in the name of DTC or its nominee, or through the accounts that Clearstream Banking, société anonyme, or Euroclear Bank, S.A./N.V., as operator of the Euroclear System, maintains as a participant in DTC, as described under the caption "Description of Debt Securities - Global Securities" in the accompanying prospectus.

DTC has advised us as follows: DTC is a limited-purpose trust company organized under the New York Banking Law, a banking organization within the meaning of the New York Banking Law, a member of the Federal Reserve System, a clearing corporation within the meaning of the New York Uniform Commercial Code and a clearing agency registered pursuant to the provisions of Section 17A of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. DTC was created to hold securities of its participants and to facilitate the clearance and settlement of securities transactions among its participants in such securities through electronic book-entry changes in accounts of the participants, thereby eliminating the need for physical movement of securities certificates. DTC's participants include securities brokers and dealers (including the underwriters of the notes), banks, trust companies, clearing corporations and certain other organizations, some of which (and/or their representatives) own interests in DTC. Access to DTC's book-entry system is also available to others, such as banks, brokers, dealers and trust companies that clear through or maintain custodial relationship with a participant, either directly or indirectly.

Settlement for the notes will be made in same-day funds. We will make all payments of principal and interest on any notes held by DTC in immediately available funds. To the extent any notes are held by DTC, DTC will require secondary trading activity in the notes to be settled in immediately available funds.

Governing Law

The indenture provides that it and the notes will be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Texas.

Table of Contents

CERTAIN U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS

The following discussion summarizes certain U.S. federal income tax considerations that may be relevant to the acquisition, ownership and disposition of the notes. This discussion is based upon the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the Code), applicable U.S. Treasury Regulations promulgated thereunder, judicial authority and administrative interpretations, as of the date of this document, all of which are subject to change, possibly with retroactive effect, or are subject to different interpretations. We cannot assure you that the Internal Revenue Service, or IRS, will not challenge one or more of the tax consequences described in this discussion, and we have not obtained, nor do we intend to obtain, a ruling from the IRS or an opinion of counsel with respect to the U.S. federal tax consequences of acquiring, holding or disposing of the notes.

This discussion is limited to holders who purchase the notes in this offering for a price equal to the issue price of the notes (i.e., the first price at which a substantial amount of the notes is sold for cash other than to bond houses, brokers or similar persons or organizations acting in the capacity of underwriters, placement agents or wholesalers) and who hold the notes as capital assets (generally, property held for investment). This discussion does not address any U.S. federal tax considerations other than U.S. federal income tax considerations (such as estate and gift tax considerations), or the tax considerations arising under the laws of any foreign, state, local or other jurisdiction or any income tax treaty. In addition, this discussion does not address all tax considerations that may be important to a particular holder in light of the holder's circumstances, or to certain categories of investors that may be subject to special rules, such as:

dealers in securities or currencies;

traders in securities that have elected the mark-to-market method of accounting for their securities;

U.S. holders (as defined below) whose functional currency is not the U.S. dollar;

persons holding notes as part of a hedge, straddle, conversion or other synthetic security or integrated transaction;

former U.S. citizens or long-term residents of the United States;

financial institutions;

insurance companies;

regulated investment companies;

real estate investment trusts;

persons subject to the alternative minimum tax;

entities that are tax-exempt for U.S. federal income tax purposes; and

partnerships and other pass-through entities and holders of interests therein.

If an entity treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes holds notes, the U.S. federal income tax treatment of a partner of the partnership generally will depend upon the status of the partner and the activities of the partnership. If you are a partner of a partnership considering an investment in the notes, you are urged to consult your own tax advisor about the U.S. federal income tax consequences of acquiring, holding and disposing of the notes.

S-16

Table of Contents

INVESTORS CONSIDERING THE PURCHASE OF NOTES ARE URGED TO CONSULT THEIR OWN TAX ADVISORS REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF THE U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX LAWS TO THEIR PARTICULAR SITUATIONS AS WELL AS ANY TAX CONSEQUENCES OF THE PURCHASE, OWNERSHIP AND DISPOSITION OF THE NOTES UNDER OTHER U.S. FEDERAL TAX LAWS OR UNDER THE LAWS OF ANY STATE, LOCAL OR FOREIGN JURISDICTION OR UNDER ANY APPLICABLE INCOME TAX TREATY.

Certain Additional Payments

In certain circumstances (see Description of Notes Redemption and Description of Notes Offer to Repurchase Upon a Change of Control Triggering Event), we may be obligated to pay amounts on the notes that are in excess of interest or principal on the notes. These potential payments may implicate the provisions of the U.S. Treasury Regulations relating to contingent payment debt instruments. We do not intend to treat the possibility of paying such additional amounts as causing the notes to be treated as contingent payment debt instruments. It is possible that the IRS may take a different position, in which case, if such position is sustained, a holder might be required to accrue ordinary interest income at a higher rate than the stated interest rate and to treat as ordinary income rather than capital gain any gain realized on the taxable disposition of the notes. The remainder of this discussion assumes that the notes will not be treated as contingent payment debt instruments. You are encouraged to consult your own tax advisor regarding the possible application of the contingent payment debt instrument rules to the notes.

Tax Consequences to U.S. Holders

The following summary will apply to you if you are a U.S. holder of the notes. You are a U.S. holder for purposes of this discussion if you are a beneficial owner of a note and you are for U.S. federal income tax purposes:

an individual who is a U.S. citizen or U.S. resident alien;

a corporation that was created or organized in or under the laws of the United States, any state thereof or the District of Columbia;

an estate whose income is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source; or

a trust (1) if a court within the United States is able to exercise primary supervision over the administration of the trust and one or more United States persons have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust, or (2) that has a valid election in effect under applicable U.S. Treasury Regulations to be treated as a United States person.

Interest on the Notes

Interest on the notes generally will be taxable to you as ordinary income at the time it is received or accrued in accordance with your regular method of accounting for U.S. federal income tax purposes.

Disposition of the Notes

You will generally recognize capital gain or loss on the sale, redemption, exchange, retirement or other taxable disposition of a note equal to the difference, if any, between the proceeds you receive (excluding any proceeds attributable to accrued but unpaid interest, which will be taxable as ordinary interest income to the extent you have not previously included such amounts in income) and your adjusted tax basis in the note. The proceeds you receive will include the amount of any cash and the fair market value of any other property received for the note. Your adjusted tax basis in the note will generally equal the amount you paid for the note. Any gain or loss will be long-term capital gain or loss if you held the note for more than one year at the time of the sale, redemption, exchange, retirement or other taxable disposition. Long-term capital gains of individuals, estates and trusts currently are eligible for reduced rates of U.S. federal income tax. The deductibility of capital losses may be subject to limitation.

Table of Contents

Information Reporting and Backup Withholding

Information reporting generally will apply to payments of interest on, and the proceeds of the sale or other disposition (including a redemption, exchange or retirement) of, notes held by you, and backup withholding will apply to such payments unless you provide your taxpayer identification number, certified under penalties of perjury, as well as certain other information or otherwise establish an exemption from backup withholding. Backup withholding is not an additional tax. Any amount withheld under the backup withholding rules is allowable as a credit against your U.S. federal income tax liability, if any, and a refund may be obtained from the IRS if the amounts withheld exceed your actual U.S. federal income tax liability and you timely provide the required information or appropriate claim form to the IRS.

Additional Tax on Net Investment Income

An additional 3.8% tax is imposed on the net investment income of certain United States citizens and resident aliens, and on the undistributed net investment income of certain estates and trusts. Among other items, net investment income generally includes gross income from interest, and net gain from the disposition of property, such as the notes, less certain deductions. You are encouraged to consult your tax advisor with respect to this additional tax and its applicability in your particular circumstances.

Tax Consequences to Non-U.S. Holders

The following summary will apply to you if you are a non-U.S. holder of notes. You are a non-U.S. holder for purposes of this discussion if you are a beneficial owner of notes that is, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, an individual, corporation, estate or trust that is not a U.S. holder.

Interest on the Notes

Subject to the discussion of backup withholding and FATCA withholding, below, payments to you of interest on the notes generally will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax and will be exempt from withholding of U.S. federal income tax under the portfolio interest exemption if you properly certify as to your foreign status, as described below, and:

you do not own, actually or constructively, 10% or more of the total combined voting power of all classes of our stock entitled to vote;

you are not a controlled foreign corporation that is related to us (actually or constructively);

you are not a bank whose receipt of interest on the notes is in connection with an extension of credit made pursuant to a loan agreement entered into in the ordinary course of your trade or business; and

interest on the notes is not effectively connected with your conduct of a U.S. trade or business.

The portfolio interest exemption generally applies only if you also appropriately certify as to your foreign status. You can generally meet the certification requirement by providing a properly executed IRS Form W-8BEN or IRS Form

W-8BEN-E (or applicable successor form) to the applicable withholding agent. If you hold the notes through a financial institution or other agent acting on your behalf, you may be required to provide appropriate certifications to the agent. Your agent will then generally be required to provide appropriate certifications to the applicable withholding agent, either directly or through other intermediaries. Special rules apply to foreign partnerships, estates and trusts, and in certain circumstances certifications as to the foreign status of partners, trust owners or beneficiaries may have to be provided to the withholding agent. In addition, special rules apply to qualified intermediaries that enter into withholding agreements with the IRS.

If you cannot satisfy the requirements described above, payments of interest made to you will be subject to U.S. federal withholding tax at a 30% rate, unless you provide the applicable withholding agent with a properly

Table of Contents

executed IRS Form W-8BEN or IRS Form W-8BEN-E (or applicable successor form) claiming an exemption from (or a reduction of) withholding under the benefits of an income tax treaty, or the payments of interest are effectively connected with your conduct of a trade or business in the United States and you meet the certification requirements described below. (See *Income or Gain Effectively Connected with a U.S. Trade or Business.*)

The certifications described above and below must be provided to the applicable withholding agent prior to the payment of interest and must be updated periodically. If you do not timely provide the applicable withholding agent with the required certification, but you qualify for a reduced rate under an applicable income tax treaty, you may obtain a refund of any excess amounts withheld if you timely provide the required information or appropriate claim form to the IRS.

Disposition of the Notes

Subject to the discussion of backup withholding and FATCA withholding, below, you generally will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax on any gain realized on the sale, redemption, exchange, retirement or other taxable disposition of a note (such amount excludes any amount allocable to accrued and unpaid interest, which generally will be treated as interest and may be subject to the rules discussed above in *Interest on the Notes*) unless:

the gain is effectively connected with the conduct by you of a U.S. trade or business (and, if required by an applicable income tax treaty, you maintain a permanent establishment in the United States to which such gain is attributable); or

you are a non-resident alien individual who has been present in the United States for 183 days or more in the taxable year of disposition and certain other requirements are met.

If your gain is described in the first bullet point above, you generally will be subject to U.S. federal income tax in the manner described under *Income or Gain Effectively Connected with a U.S. Trade or Business.* If you are a non-U.S. holder described in the second bullet point above, you will be subject to a flat 30% (or lower applicable income tax treaty rate) U.S. federal income tax on the gain derived from the sale or other disposition, which may be offset by U.S. source capital losses.

Income or Gain Effectively Connected with a U.S. Trade or Business

If any interest on the notes or gain from the sale, exchange or other taxable disposition of the notes is effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business conducted by you, then the interest income or gain will be subject to U.S. federal income tax at regular graduated income tax rates generally in the same manner as if you were a U.S. holder unless an applicable income tax treaty provides for an exemption. Effectively connected interest income will not be subject to U.S. federal withholding tax if you satisfy certain certification requirements by providing to the applicable withholding agent a properly executed IRS Form W-8ECI (or IRS Form W-8BEN or IRS Form W-8BEN-E (or applicable successor form) if a treaty exemption applies) or successor form. In addition, if you are a corporation, that portion of your earnings and profits that is effectively connected with your U.S. trade or business may also be subject to a branch profits tax at a 30% rate, unless an applicable income tax treaty provides for a lower rate. For this purpose, interest received on a note and gain recognized on the disposition of a note will be included in earnings and profits if the interest or gain is effectively connected with the conduct by you of a U.S. trade or business.

Information Reporting and Backup Withholding

Payments to you of interest on a note, and amounts withheld from such payments, if any, generally will be required to be reported to the IRS and to you. Copies of the information returns reporting such interest payments and withholding may also be made available to the tax authorities of the country in which you reside or are established under the provisions of a specific treaty or agreement.

S-19

Table of Contents

Backup withholding generally will not apply to payments to you of interest on a note if the certification described in Tax Consequences to Non-U.S. Holders Interest on the Notes is duly provided or you otherwise establish an exemption, provided that the applicable withholding agent does not have actual knowledge or reason to know that you are a United States person.

Proceeds from the disposition of a note effected by the U.S. office of a U.S. or foreign broker will be subject to information reporting requirements and backup withholding unless you properly certify under penalties of perjury as to your foreign status on IRS Form W-8BEN or IRS Form W-8BEN-E (or other applicable or successor IRS Form W-8) and certain other conditions are met or you otherwise establish an exemption. Information reporting requirements and backup withholding generally will not apply to any proceeds from the disposition of a note effected outside the United States by a foreign office of a broker. However, unless such a broker has documentary evidence in its records that you are not a United States person and certain other conditions are met, or you otherwise establish an exemption, information reporting will apply to a payment of the proceeds of the disposition of a note effected outside the United States by such a broker if it has certain relationships with the United States.

Backup withholding is not an additional tax. Any amount withheld under the backup withholding rules is allowable as a credit against your U.S. federal income tax liability, if any, and a refund may be obtained from the IRS if the amounts withheld exceed your actual U.S. federal income tax liability and you timely provide the required information or appropriate claim form to the IRS.

Withholding on Payments to Certain Foreign Entities

Sections 1471 through 1474 of the Code and the U.S. Treasury Regulations and administrative guidance issued thereunder (referred to as FATCA) impose a 30% withholding tax on payments of interest on the notes and on the gross proceeds from the sale or other disposition of the notes (if such sale or other disposition occurs after December 31, 2016), if paid to a foreign financial institution or a non-financial foreign entity (each as defined in the Code) (including, in some cases, when such foreign financial institution or non-financial foreign entity is acting as an intermediary), unless: (i) in the case of a foreign financial institution, such institution enters into an agreement with the U.S. government to withhold on certain payments, and to collect and provide to the U.S. tax authorities substantial information regarding U.S. account holders of such institution (which includes certain equity and debt holders of such institution, as well as certain account holders that are foreign entities with U.S. owners); (ii) in the case of a non-financial foreign entity, such entity certifies that it does not have any substantial United States owners (as defined in the Code) or provides the withholding agent with a certification identifying its direct and indirect substantial United States owners (generally by providing an IRS Form W-8BEN-E); or (iii) the foreign financial institution or non-financial foreign entity otherwise qualifies for an exemption from these rules and provides appropriate documentation (such as an IRS Form W-8BEN-E). Foreign financial institutions located in jurisdictions that have an intergovernmental agreement with the United States with respect to these rules may be subject to different rules. Under certain circumstances, a beneficial owner of notes might be eligible for refunds or credits of such taxes.

Under the applicable Treasury Regulations, FATCA withholding generally will apply to all U.S.-source withholdable payments without regard to whether the beneficial owner of the payment would otherwise be entitled to an exemption from imposition of withholding tax pursuant to an applicable income tax treaty with the United States or U.S. domestic law. We will not pay additional amounts to holders of the notes in respect of any amounts withheld under FATCA.

THE PRECEDING DISCUSSION OF CERTAIN U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS IS FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY AND IS NOT TAX ADVICE. WE URGE YOU TO CONSULT YOUR OWN TAX ADVISOR REGARDING THE PARTICULAR U.S. FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL AND

**FOREIGN TAX CONSEQUENCES OF PURCHASING, HOLDING AND DISPOSING OF OUR NOTES,
INCLUDING THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANY PROPOSED CHANGE IN APPLICABLE LAWS.**

S-20

Table of Contents**UNDERWRITING**

Subject to the terms and conditions stated in the underwriting agreement dated the date of this prospectus supplement, each underwriter named below, for whom J.P. Morgan Securities LLC and Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC are acting as representatives, has agreed severally and not jointly to purchase, and we have agreed to sell to that underwriter, the aggregate principal amount of notes set forth opposite the underwriter's name in the following table:

Underwriters	Principal Amount of Notes
J.P. Morgan Securities LLC	\$
Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC	
Citigroup Global Markets Inc.	
 Total	 \$

The underwriting agreement provides that the obligations of the underwriters severally and not jointly to purchase the notes included in this offering are subject to approval of legal matters by counsel and to other conditions. The underwriters reserve the right to withdraw, cancel or modify offers to the public and to reject orders in whole or in part. The underwriters are obligated to purchase all the notes if they purchase any of the notes. The underwriting agreement also provides that if an underwriter defaults, the purchase commitments of non-defaulting underwriters may be increased or the offering of the notes may be terminated.

The underwriters propose to offer the notes directly to the public at the public offering price set forth on the cover page of this prospectus supplement and to certain dealers at the public offering price less a concession not to exceed % of the principal amount of the notes. The underwriters may allow, and any such dealer may reallow, a concession not to exceed % of the principal amount of the notes. After the initial offering of the notes to the public, the representatives may change the public offering price and other selling terms.

We estimate that our total expenses for this offering, other than underwriting discounts and commissions, will be approximately \$750,000. The underwriters have agreed to reimburse us for certain expenses incurred in connection with this offering.

We have agreed to indemnify the underwriters against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, or to contribute to payments the underwriters may be required to make because of any of those liabilities.

A prospectus in electronic format may be made available on websites maintained by one or more underwriters, or selling group members, if any, participating in this offering. The representatives may agree to allocate a number of the notes to underwriters for sale to their online brokerage account holders. Internet distributions will be allocated by the representatives to underwriters that may make Internet distributions on the same basis as other allocations. Other than the prospectus supplement and accompanying prospectus in electronic format, the information on the underwriters web sites is not part of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus.

The underwriters and their respective affiliates are full service financial institutions engaged in various activities, which may include securities trading, commercial and investment banking, financial advisory, investment management, investment research, principal investment, hedging, financing and brokerage activities. Certain of the underwriters and their respective affiliates perform, and may perform in the future, various financial advisory,

investment banking and commercial banking services from time to time for us and our affiliates, for which they receive, or will receive, customary fees and expense reimbursement. In particular, Morgan Stanley Senior Funding, Inc., an affiliate of Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC, is syndication agent for our revolving credit facility and each of JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., an affiliate of J.P. Morgan Securities LLC, and Citibank, N.A., an affiliate of Citigroup Global Markets Inc., is a co-administrative agent for our revolving credit

S-21

Table of Contents

facility. Citibank, N.A. is also the paying agent for our revolving credit facility. The underwriters and their affiliates also may be lenders under the revolving credit facility.

In connection with the issuance of the notes, we may enter into interest rate swap agreements with financial institutions, which may include one or more of the underwriters or their respective affiliates. In addition, in the ordinary course of their various business activities, the underwriters and their respective affiliates may make or hold a broad array of investments and actively trade debt and equity securities (or related derivative securities) and financial instruments (including bank loans) for their own account and for the accounts of their customers and may at any time hold long and short positions in such securities and instruments. Such investments and securities activities may involve securities and/or instruments of ours or our affiliates. The underwriters and their respective affiliates may also make investment recommendations and/or publish or express independent research views in respect of such securities or financial instruments and may hold, or recommend to clients that they acquire, long and/or short positions in such securities and instruments.

New Issue of Notes

There are currently no public trading markets for the notes. We have not applied and do not intend to apply to list the notes on any securities exchange or to arrange for the notes to be quoted on any quotation system. The underwriters have advised us that they intend to make a market in the notes. However, they are not obligated to do so and may discontinue any market-making in the notes at any time in their sole discretion. Therefore, we cannot assure you that liquid trading markets for the notes will develop, that you will be able to sell your notes at a particular time or that the price you receive when you sell will be favorable.

Price Stabilization and Short Positions

In connection with the offering, the underwriters are permitted to engage in transactions that stabilize the market price of the notes. Such transactions consist of bids or purchases to peg, fix or maintain the price of the notes. If the underwriters create a short position in the notes in connection with the offering, i.e., if they sell more notes than are on the cover page of this prospectus supplement, the underwriters may reduce that short position by purchasing the notes in the open market. Purchases of a security to stabilize the price or to reduce a short position could cause the price of the security to be higher than it might be in the absence of such purchases. Neither we nor any of the underwriters makes any representation or prediction as to the direction or magnitude of any effect that the transactions described above may have on the price of the notes. In addition, neither we nor any of the underwriters makes any representation that the underwriters will engage in these transactions or that these transactions, once commenced, will not be discontinued without notice.

The underwriters also may impose a penalty bid. This occurs when a particular underwriter repays to the underwriters a portion of the underwriting discount received by it because the representatives have repurchased notes sold by or for the account of such underwriter in stabilizing or short covering transactions.

Sales Outside the United States

The notes may be offered and sold in the United States and certain jurisdictions outside the United States in which such offer and sale is permitted.

European Economic Area

In relation to each Member State of the European Economic Area that has implemented the Prospectus Directive (as defined below) (each, a Relevant Member State), each underwriter has represented and agreed that with effect from and including the date on which the Prospectus Directive is implemented in that Relevant Member State (the Relevant Implementation Date) it has not made and will not make an offer of notes described in this prospectus supplement to the public in that Relevant Member State other than:

- (1) to any legal entity which is a qualified investor as defined in the Prospectus Directive;

S-22

Table of Contents

(2) to fewer than 100 or, if the Relevant Member State has implemented the relevant provision of the 2010 PD Amending Directive (as defined below), 150 natural or legal persons (other than qualified investors as defined in the Prospectus Directive) subject to obtaining the prior consent of the representatives of the underwriters for any such offer; or

(3) in any other circumstances falling within Article 3(2) of the Prospectus Directive; provided that no such offer of notes above shall require the publication by us or any underwriter of a prospectus pursuant to Article 3 of the Prospectus Directive.

Each purchaser of notes described in this prospectus supplement located within a Relevant Member State will be deemed to have represented, acknowledged and agreed that it is a qualified investor within the meaning of Article 2(1)(e) of the Prospectus Directive.

For the purposes of this provision, the expression an offer to the public in relation to any notes in any Relevant Member State means the communication in any form and by any means of sufficient information on the terms of the offer and the notes to be offered so as to enable an investor to decide to purchase or subscribe to the notes, as the same may be varied in that Relevant Member State by any measure implementing the Prospectus Directive in that Relevant Member State, and the expression Prospectus Directive means Directive 2003/71/EC, and includes any relevant implementing measure in the Relevant Member State and the expression 2010 PD Amending Directive means Directive 2010/73/EU.

United Kingdom

This document is for distribution only to persons who (i) have professional experience in matters relating to investments falling within Article 19(5) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2005 (as amended, the Financial Promotion Order), (ii) are persons falling within Article 49(2)(a) to (d) (high net worth companies, unincorporated associations etc) of the Financial Promotion Order, (iii) are outside the United Kingdom, or (iv) are persons to whom an invitation or inducement to engage in investment activity (within the meaning of section 21 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (the FSMA)) in connection with the issue or sale of any securities may otherwise lawfully be communicated or caused to be communicated (all such persons together being referred to as relevant persons). This document is directed only at relevant persons and must not be acted on or relied on by persons who are not relevant persons. Any investment or investment activity to which this document relates is available only to relevant persons and will be engaged in only with relevant persons.

We have not authorized and do not authorize the making of any offer of notes through any financial intermediary on our behalf, other than offers made by the underwriters with a view to the final placement of the notes as contemplated in this prospectus supplement. Accordingly, no purchaser of the notes, other than the underwriters, is authorized to make any further offer of the notes on our behalf or on behalf of the underwriters.

Each underwriter has represented and agreed that:

(1) it has only communicated or caused to be communicated and will only communicate or cause to be communicated an invitation or inducement to engage in investment activity (within the meaning of Section 21 of the FSMA) received by it in connection with the issue or sale of the notes in circumstances in which Section 21(1) of the FSMA does not apply to us; and

- (2) it has complied and will comply with all applicable provisions of the FSMA with respect to anything done by it in relation to the notes in, from or otherwise involving the United Kingdom.

S-23

Table of Contents

VALIDITY OF NOTES

The validity of the notes will be passed upon for us by Vinson & Elkins L.L.P., Dallas, Texas, and for the underwriters by Jones Day, Dallas, Texas.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements of Southwest Airlines Co. appearing in Southwest Airlines Co.'s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2013, and the effectiveness of Southwest Airlines Co.'s internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2013, have been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, as set forth in their reports thereon, included therein, and incorporated herein by reference. Such financial statements are incorporated herein in reliance upon the reports of Ernst & Young LLP pertaining to such financial statements and the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting as of the respective dates given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and special reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any documents we file at the SEC's public reference room, 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference room. Our SEC filings are also available to the public on the SEC's web site at www.sec.gov and through the New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005, on which our common stock is listed.

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus the information we file with them, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, and later information that we file with the SEC will automatically update and supersede this information as well as the information included in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and any future filings made with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14, or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (excluding any information furnished pursuant to Item 2.02 or 7.01 of Form 8-K) until we sell all the notes.

Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2013, including those portions of our Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A filed on April 4, 2014 that are specifically incorporated by reference into such Annual Report on Form 10-K;

Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the periods ended March 31, 2014, June 30, 2014, and September 30, 2014; and

Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on May 19, 2014, and November 3, 2014.

We make available free of charge on or through our Internet website, www.southwest.com, our Annual Reports on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, Current Reports on Form 8-K and amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file such material with, or furnish it to, the SEC. Information contained on our Internet website

is not part of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus.

S-24

Table of Contents

You may obtain any of the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus from the SEC through the SEC's website at the address provided above. You also may request a copy of any document incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus (excluding any exhibits to those documents, unless the exhibit is specifically incorporated by reference in this document), at no cost, by writing or telephoning us at the following address:

Southwest Airlines Co. c/o Investor Relations

P. O. Box 36611, HDQ-6IR

2702 Love Field Drive

Dallas, Texas 75235

(214) 792-4908

S-25

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS

Southwest Airlines Co.

DEBT SECURITIES

and

COMMON STOCK

We may offer and sell our unsecured debt securities and shares of our common stock from time to time in amounts, at prices and on terms that we will determine at the time of the offering.

We may offer and sell these securities to or through one or more underwriters, dealers and agents, or directly to purchasers, on a continuous or delayed basis.

We will provide specific terms of these securities and the manner in which we will sell them in supplements to this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and any prospectus supplement carefully before you invest.

Our common stock is listed for trading on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol LUV.

INVESTING IN OUR SECURITIES INVOLVES RISK. YOU SHOULD CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE RISK FACTORS THAT ARE REFERENCED UNDER THE HEADING RISK FACTORS ON PAGE 2 OF THIS PROSPECTUS BEFORE YOU MAKE ANY INVESTMENT IN OUR SECURITIES.

NEITHER THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION NOR ANY STATE SECURITIES COMMISSION HAS APPROVED OR DISAPPROVED OF THESE SECURITIES OR DETERMINED THAT THIS PROSPECTUS IS TRUTHFUL OR COMPLETE. ANY REPRESENTATION TO THE CONTRARY IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE.

The date of this prospectus is April 26, 2012.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<u>About this Prospectus</u>	1
<u>Forward-Looking Statements</u>	1
<u>About Southwest Airlines Co.</u>	1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	2
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	2
<u>Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u>	2
<u>Description of Debt Securities</u>	3
<u>Description of Capital Stock</u>	11
<u>Legal Matters</u>	12
<u>Experts</u>	12
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	12
<u>Incorporation of Certain Documents by Reference</u>	13

You should rely only on the information contained in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement or information contained in documents that you are referred to in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with information different from that contained in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement. We are offering to sell the securities only in jurisdictions where offers and sales are permitted. The information contained in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement is accurate only as of the date on the front of those documents, regardless of the time of delivery of the documents or any sale of the securities.

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement on Form S-3 that we have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which we refer to as the SEC, utilizing a shelf registration process. Under this shelf registration process, we may offer and sell any combination of the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we offer the securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement and attach it to this prospectus. The prospectus supplement will contain specific information about the terms of the offering and the securities being offered at that time. The prospectus supplement also may add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. In this prospectus, Southwest, we, us, our and the company each refers to Southwest Airlines Co. and its consolidated subsidiaries, unless the context indicates otherwise.

To the extent information in this prospectus is inconsistent with information contained in a prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in the prospectus supplement. You should read both this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, together with additional information described under the heading Incorporation of Certain Documents by Reference.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus, any prospectus supplement delivered with this prospectus and the documents we incorporate by reference may contain statements that constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. Forward-looking statements are based on, and include statements about, Southwest's estimates, expectations, beliefs, intentions, and strategies for the future, and the assumptions underlying these forward-looking statements. Specific forward-looking statements can be identified by the fact that they do not relate strictly to historical or current facts and include, without limitation, words such as believe, anticipate, expect, intend, may, will, estimate, should, project, and similar expressions.

Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and involve risks and uncertainties that are difficult to predict. Therefore, actual results may vary materially from what is expressed in or indicated by Southwest's forward-looking statements or from historical experience or Southwest's present expectations. Known material risk factors that could cause these differences are set forth in our filings with the SEC that are incorporated in this prospectus by reference or that are stated in a prospectus supplement to this prospectus under the caption Risk Factors. Caution should be taken not to place undue reliance on the company's forward-looking statements, which represent the company's views only as of the dates of the respective documents. The company undertakes no obligation to update publicly or revise any forward-looking statements to reflect subsequent events or circumstances.

ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

Southwest Airlines Co. operates Southwest Airlines, a major passenger airline that provides scheduled air transportation in the United States. Our wholly-owned subsidiary, AirTran Airways, Inc., operates the passenger airline AirTran Airways, which provides scheduled air transportation in the United States and selected international markets. Our principal executive offices are located at 2702 Love Field Drive, P.O. Box 36611, Dallas, Texas 75235, and our telephone number is (214) 792-4000. We maintain a website on the Internet at <http://www.southwest.com>. Information that you may find on this website is not part of this prospectus.

Additional information about us is included in our reports and other documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus. See Incorporation of Certain Documents by Reference.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

An investment in our securities involves risks. Before you invest in our securities, you should carefully consider the risk factors included in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K, subsequent Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and those that may be included in the applicable prospectus supplement, as well as the cautionary notes regarding forward-looking statements included or incorporated by reference herein, together with all of the other information included in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement and the documents we incorporate by reference.

If any of these risks were to materialize, our business, results of operations, cash flows and financial condition could be materially adversely affected. In that case, our ability to pay interest on, or the principal of, any debt securities may be reduced, the trading price of our securities could decline and you could lose all or part of your investment.

USE OF PROCEEDS

We intend to use the net proceeds from any offering of the securities for general corporate purposes, unless otherwise specified in the prospectus supplement relating to a specific issuance of securities. Such general corporate purposes may include, among other possible uses, the repayment of short-term or long-term indebtedness and capital expenditures.

RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

The following table sets forth our historical ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the periods indicated:

	Year Ended December 31,					Three Months Ended
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	March 31, 2012
Earnings represent:	4.69	1.85	1.38	2.99	1.66	2.32

Income before income taxes, excluding the cumulative effect of accounting changes; plus

Fixed charges, excluding capitalized interest.

Fixed charges include:

Interest, whether expensed or capitalized; and

A portion of rental expense. Our management believes this is representative of the interest factor in those periods.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

We will issue the debt securities under a contract called the indenture between us and Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., which acts as trustee. We may issue as many distinct series of debt securities under the indenture as we wish.

The trustee has two main roles. First, the trustee can enforce your rights against us if we default. There are some limitations on the extent to which the trustee acts on your behalf, described later in this section under **Default and Related Matters Remedies if an Event of Default Occurs**. Second, the trustee performs administrative duties for us, such as sending you interest payments, transferring your debt securities to a new buyer if you sell and sending you notices.

The indenture and its associated documents contain the full legal text of the matters described in this section. The indenture and the debt securities are governed by Texas law. A copy of the indenture may be obtained from us as described below under **Incorporation of Certain Documents by Reference**.

This section summarizes the material terms of the debt securities that we expect will be common to all series, although the prospectus supplement which describes the terms of each series of debt securities may also describe differences with the material terms summarized here.

Because this section is a summary, it does not describe every aspect of the debt securities. This summary is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to all the provisions of the indenture, including definitions of certain terms used in the indenture. In this summary, we describe the meaning for only the more important terms. You must look to the indenture for the most complete description of what is described in summary form in this prospectus.

This summary also is subject to and qualified by reference to the description of the particular terms of your series described in the prospectus supplement. Those terms may vary from the terms described in this prospectus. The prospectus supplement relating to each series of debt securities will be attached to the front of this prospectus. There may also be a further prospectus supplement, known as a pricing supplement, which contains the precise terms of debt securities you are offered.

We may issue the debt securities as original issue discount securities, which will be offered and sold at a substantial discount below their stated principal amount. The prospectus supplement relating to the original issue discount securities will describe federal income tax consequences and other special considerations applicable to them. The prospectus supplement relating to specific debt securities will also describe any special considerations and certain additional tax considerations applicable to such debt securities.

In addition, the specific financial, legal and other terms particular to a series of debt securities are described in the prospectus supplement and any pricing supplement relating to the series. The prospectus supplement relating to a series of debt securities will describe the following terms of the series:

the title of the series of debt securities;

any limit on the aggregate principal amount of the series of debt securities;

the person to whom interest on a debt security is payable, if other than the holder on the regular record date;

the date or dates on which the series of debt securities will mature;

the rate or rates, which may be fixed or variable, per annum at which the series of debt securities will bear interest, if any, and the date or dates from which that interest, if any, will accrue;

Table of Contents

the place or places where the principal of (and premium, if any) and interest on the debt securities are payable;

the dates on which interest, if any, on the series of debt securities will be payable and the regular record dates for the interest payment dates;

any mandatory or optional sinking funds or similar provisions;

the date, if any, after which and the price or prices at which the series of debt securities may, in accordance with any optional or mandatory redemption provisions, be redeemed and the other detailed terms and provisions of those optional or mandatory redemption provisions, if any;

if other than denominations of \$1,000 and any of its integral multiples, the denominations in which the series of debt securities will be issuable;

the applicability of the provisions described under **Defeasance**;

if the series of debt securities will be issuable only in the form of a global security, the depository or its nominee with respect to the series of debt securities and the circumstances under which the global security may be registered for transfer or exchange in the name of a person other than the depository or the nominee; and

any other special feature of the series of debt securities (including its convertibility into our common stock).

Legal Ownership

Street Name and Other Indirect Holders. Investors who hold debt securities in accounts at banks or brokers will generally not be recognized by us as legal holders of debt securities. This is called holding in street name. Instead, we would recognize only the bank or broker, or the financial institution the bank or broker uses to hold its debt securities. These intermediary banks, brokers and other financial institutions pass along principal, interest and other payments on the debt securities, either because they agree to do so in their customer agreements or because they are legally required to. If you hold debt securities in street name, you should check with your own institution to find out:

how it handles securities payments and notices;

whether it imposes fees or charges;

how it would handle voting if required;

whether and how you can instruct it to send you debt securities registered in your own name so that you can be a direct holder as described below; and

how it would pursue rights under the debt securities if there were a default or other event triggering the need for holders to act to protect their interests.

Edgar Filing: SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO - Form 424B5

Direct Holders. Our obligations, as well as the obligations of the trustee and those of any third parties employed by us or the trustee, run only to persons who are registered as holders of debt securities. As noted above, we do not have obligations to you if you hold debt securities in street name or other indirect means, either because you choose to hold debt securities in that manner or because the debt securities are issued in the form of global securities as described below. For example, once we make payment to the registered holder, we have no further responsibility for the payment, even if that holder is legally required to pass the payment along to you as a street name customer but does not do so.

Global Securities

What is a Global Security? A global security is a special type of indirectly held security, as described above under **Legal Ownership** **Street Name and Other Indirect Holders**. If we choose to issue debt securities in the

Table of Contents

form of global securities, the ultimate beneficial owners can only be indirect holders. We do this by requiring that the global security be registered in the name of a financial institution we select and by requiring that the debt securities included in the global security not be transferred to the name of any other direct holder unless the special circumstances described below occur. The financial institution that acts as the sole direct holder of the global security is called the depository. Any person wishing to own a debt security must do so indirectly by virtue of an account with a broker, bank or other financial institution that in turn has an account with the depository. The prospectus supplement indicates whether your series of securities will be issued only in the form of global securities.

Special Investor Considerations for Global Securities. As an indirect holder, an investor's rights relating to a global security will be governed by the account rules of the investor's financial institution and of the depository, as well as general laws relating to securities transfers. We do not recognize this type of investor as a holder of debt securities and instead deal only with the depository that holds the global security.

If you are an investor, you should be aware that if debt securities are issued only in the form of global securities:

You cannot get debt securities registered in your own name.

You cannot receive physical certificates for your interest in the debt securities.

You will be a street name holder and must look to your own bank or broker for payments on the debt securities and protection of your legal rights relating to the debt securities. See *Legal Ownership – Street Name and Other Indirect Holders*.

You may not be able to sell interests in the debt securities to some insurance companies and other institutions that are required by law to own their securities in the form of physical certificates.

The depository's policies will govern payments, transfers, exchanges and other matters relating to your interest in the global security. We and the trustee have no responsibility for any aspect of the depository's actions or for its records of ownership interest in the global security. We and the trustee also do not supervise the depository in any way.

Special Situations when Global Security will be Terminated. In a few special situations described in the next paragraph, the global security will terminate and interests in it will be exchanged for physical certificates representing debt securities. After that exchange, the choice of whether to hold debt securities directly or in street name will be up to you. You must consult your own bank or broker to find out how to have your interests in debt securities transferred to your own name, so that you will be a direct holder. The rights of street name investors and direct holders in the debt securities have been previously described under *Legal Ownership* in the subsections entitled *Street Name and Other Indirect Holders* and *Direct Holders*.

The special situations for termination of a global security are:

When the depository notifies us that it is unwilling, unable or no longer qualified to continue as depository and a successor depository is not appointed by us within 90 days.

When we notify the trustee that we wish to terminate the global security.

When an event of default on the securities has occurred and has not been cured, disregarding for this purpose any requirement of notice or that the default exists for a specified period of time. (Default is discussed later under *Default and Related Matters*.) The prospectus supplement may also list additional situations for terminating a global security that would apply only to the particular series of debt securities covered by the prospectus supplement. When a global security terminates, the depository (and not us or the trustee) is responsible

for deciding the names of the institutions that will be the initial direct holders.

Table of Contents

IN THE REMAINDER OF THIS DESCRIPTION YOU MEANS DIRECT HOLDERS AND NOT STREET NAME OR OTHER INDIRECT HOLDERS OF DEBT SECURITIES. INDIRECT HOLDERS SHOULD READ THE PREVIOUS SUBSECTION ENTITLED STREET NAME AND OTHER INDIRECT HOLDERS.

Overview of Remainder of this Description

The remainder of this description summarizes:

Additional Mechanics relevant to the debt securities under normal circumstances, such as how you transfer ownership and where we make payments;

Your rights in several *Special Situations*, such as if we merge with another company, or if we want to change a term of the debt securities via *Modification and Waiver*;

A *Defeasance* clause and a *Satisfaction and Discharge* provision, each of which may allow for us to be completely released from our payment and other obligations on the debt securities; and

Your rights if we *Default*.

Additional Mechanics

Form, Exchange and Transfer. The debt securities will be issued:

only in fully registered form;

without interest coupons; and

in denominations that are even multiples of \$1,000.

You may have your debt securities divided into more debt securities of smaller denominations or combined into fewer debt securities of larger denominations, as long as the total principal amount is not changed. This is called an exchange.

You may exchange or transfer debt securities at the office of the trustee. The trustee acts as our agent for registering debt securities in the names of holders and transferring debt securities. We may change this appointment to another entity or perform these functions ourselves. The entity performing the role of maintaining the list of registered holders is called the security registrar. It will also perform transfers.

You will not be required to pay a service charge to transfer or exchange debt securities, but you may be required to pay for any tax or other governmental charge associated with the exchange or transfer. The transfer or exchange will only be made if we and the security registrar are satisfied with your proof of ownership.

If we have designated additional transfer agents, they are named in the prospectus supplement. We may cancel the designation of any particular transfer agent. We may also approve a change in the office through which any transfer agent acts.

If the debt securities are redeemable, we may block the transfer or exchange of debt securities for a period beginning 15 days before the day we mail the notice of redemption, in order to freeze the list of holders to prepare the mailing. We may also refuse to register transfers or exchanges of debt securities selected for redemption, except that we will continue to permit transfers and exchanges of the unredeemed portion of any debt

Edgar Filing: SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO - Form 424B5

security being partially redeemed.

Payment and Paying Agents. We will pay interest to you if you are a direct holder listed in the trustee's records at the close of business on a particular day in advance of each due date for interest, even if you no longer

Table of Contents

own the debt security on the interest due date. That particular day, usually about two weeks in advance of the interest due date, is called the regular record date and is stated in the prospectus supplement. Holders buying and selling debt securities must work out between them how to compensate for the fact that we will pay all the interest for an interest period to the one who is the registered holder on the regular record date. The most common manner is to adjust the sales price of the securities to pro rate interest fairly between buyer and seller. This prorated interest amount is called accrued interest.

We will pay interest, principal and any other money due on the debt securities at the corporate trust office of the trustee in Dallas, Texas. You must make arrangements to have your payments picked up at or wired from that office. We may also choose to pay interest by mailing checks. However, if the debt securities are represented by a global security, we will make payments to the depository by wire.

STREET NAME AND OTHER INDIRECT HOLDERS SHOULD CONSULT THEIR BANKS, BROKERS OR OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR INFORMATION ON HOW THEY WILL RECEIVE PAYMENTS.

We may also arrange for additional payment offices, and may cancel or change these offices, including the use of the trustee's corporate trust office. These offices are called paying agents. We may also choose to act as our own paying agent. We must notify you of changes in the paying agents for any particular series of debt securities.

Notices. We and the trustee will send notices regarding the debt securities only to direct holders, using their addresses as listed in the trustee's records.

Regardless of who acts as paying agent, all money paid by us to a paying agent that remains unclaimed at the end of two years after the amount is due to direct holders will be repaid to us. After that two-year period, you may look only to us for payment and not to the trustee, any other paying agent or anyone else.

Special Situations

Mergers and Similar Events. We are generally permitted to consolidate or merge with another entity. We are also permitted to sell or convey all or substantially all of our assets to another entity. However, we may not take any of these actions unless all of the following conditions are met:

Where we consolidate or merge out of existence or sell or convey all or substantially all of our assets, the other entity must be organized under the laws of a state or under federal law, and it must agree to be legally responsible for the debt securities.

Immediately after the merger, sale of assets or other transaction, we must not be in default on the debt securities. A default for this purpose would also include any event that would be an event of default if the requirements for giving us default notice or our default having to exist for a specific period of time were disregarded.

Modification and Waiver

There are three types of changes we can make to the indenture and the debt securities.

Changes Requiring Your Approval. First, there are changes that cannot be made to your debt securities without your specific approval. Following is a list of those types of changes:

extend the stated maturity of the principal or interest on a debt security;

reduce any amounts due on a debt security;

Table of Contents

reduce the amount of principal payable on an original discount security upon acceleration of the maturity of the debt security following a default;

impair your right to sue for payment; and

reduce the percentage of the principal amount of debt securities of any series or all series (voting as one class) the consent of which is needed to modify or amend the indenture.

Changes Requiring a Vote. The second type of change to the indenture and the debt securities is the kind that requires a vote in favor by the holders of debt securities owning at least a majority of the principal amount of the particular series affected. Most changes fall into this category, except for clarifying changes and certain other changes that would not adversely affect the interests of holders of the debt securities described in the next paragraph. We may obtain a waiver of a past default from the holders of debt securities owning a majority of the principal amount of the particular series affected. However, we cannot obtain a waiver of a payment default unless we obtain an individual consent to the waiver from every holder.

Changes Not Requiring Approval. The third type of change to the indenture and the debt securities does not require any vote by holders of debt securities. This type is limited to clarifications and certain other changes that would not adversely affect the interests of holders of the debt securities. Holders of debt securities will also not be eligible to vote if the debt securities have been fully defeased as described below under Defeasance.

STREET NAME AND OTHER INDIRECT HOLDERS SHOULD CONSULT THEIR BANKS, BROKERS OR OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR INFORMATION ON HOW APPROVAL MAY BE GRANTED OR DENIED IF WE SEEK TO CHANGE THE INDENTURE OR THE DEBT SECURITIES OR REQUEST A WAIVER.

Absence of Restrictive Covenants

The indenture does not contain any promises by us on how we will operate our business, and does not restrict our ability to incur debt or grant liens on our assets. If we determine to include such a promise for the benefit of a particular series of debt securities, such promise, or restrictive covenant, will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to that series of debt securities.

Defeasance

We may be completely released from our payment and other obligations on the debt securities. The following discussion of defeasance will be applicable to your series of debt securities only if we choose to have them apply to that series. If we do so choose, we will state that in the prospectus supplement.

If there is a change in federal tax law, or if we obtain a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service, as described below, we can legally release ourselves from any payment or other obligations on the debt securities, called full or legal defeasance, if we put in place the following arrangements for you to be repaid:

We must deposit in trust for your benefit and the benefit of all direct holders of the debt securities a combination of money and U.S. government or U.S. government agency notes or bonds that will generate enough cash to make interest, principal and any other payments on the debt securities on their various due dates.

There must be a change in federal tax law or a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service that lets us make the above deposit without causing you to be taxed on the debt securities any differently than if we did not make the deposit and just repaid the debt securities. Under current federal tax law, the deposit and our legal release from the debt securities would be treated as though we took back your debt securities and gave you your share of the cash and notes or bonds deposited in trust. In that event, you could recognize gain or loss on the debt securities you give back to us.

Table of Contents

We must deliver to the trustee a legal opinion of our counsel confirming, among other things, the tax law change described above. If we are able to fully defease the debt securities, as described above, you would have to rely solely on the trust deposit for repayment on the debt securities. You could not look to us for repayment.

Satisfaction and Discharge

The indenture will cease to be of further effect as to all debt securities of any series when either:

we have delivered to the trustee for cancellation all debt securities of that series that have been authenticated (except for lost, stolen or destroyed debt securities that have been replaced or paid and debt securities for whose payment money has already been deposited in trust and subsequently returned to us); or

all debt securities of that series have become due and payable or will become due and payable at their stated maturity within one year or are to be called for redemption under arrangements satisfactory to the trustee, and in any case we have deposited with the trustee as trust funds money in an amount sufficient to pay the entire indebtedness of all these debt securities to their stated maturity or redemption date; and we have paid all other sums payable by us under the indenture with respect to that series.

Notwithstanding any satisfaction and discharge or any defeasance with respect to the debt securities of any series, your rights of transfer and exchange, your rights to replace lost, stolen or destroyed debt securities, the rights and obligations of the trustee and your rights as beneficiaries with respect to the trust funds deposited with the trustee would survive.

Default and Related Matters

Ranking. The debt securities are not secured by any of our property or assets. Accordingly, your ownership of debt securities means you are one of our unsecured creditors. The debt securities are not subordinated to any of our other debt obligations and therefore they rank equally in contractual right of payment with all of our other unsubordinated indebtedness.

Events of Default. You will have special rights if an event of default occurs and is not cured, as described later in this subsection.

What is an Event of Default? The term "event of default" means any of the following:

We do not pay the principal or any premium on a debt security when due.

We do not pay interest on a debt security within 30 days of its due date.

We remain in breach of any other covenant or agreement in the indenture for 90 days after we receive a notice of default stating we are in breach. The notice must be sent by either the trustee or holders of at least 25% of the outstanding principal amount of debt securities of the affected series.

We default on any indebtedness for borrowed money totaling over \$50,000,000 and our obligation to repay such indebtedness is accelerated, and this repayment obligation remains accelerated for 10 days after we receive a notice of default by the trustee or holders of at least 25% of the outstanding principal amount of the affected debt securities.

We file for bankruptcy, or certain other events in bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization occur.

Edgar Filing: SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO - Form 424B5

Remedies if an Event of Default Occurs. If an event of default has occurred and has not been cured, the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the debt securities of the affected series may declare

Table of Contents

the entire principal amount (or, in the case of original issue discount securities, the portion of the principal amount that is specified in the terms of the affected debt security) of all the debt securities of that series, plus accrued interest, to be due and immediately payable. This is called a declaration of acceleration of maturity. However, a declaration of acceleration of maturity may be cancelled, but only before a judgment or decree based on the acceleration has been obtained, by the holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the debt securities of the affected series.

Reference is made to the prospectus supplement relating to any series of debt securities which are original issue discount securities for the particular provisions relating to acceleration of the maturity of a portion of the principal amount of original issue discount securities upon the occurrence of an event of default and its continuation.

Except in cases of default, where the trustee has some special duties, the trustee is not required to take any action under the indenture at the request of any holders unless the holders offer the trustee reasonable protection from expenses and liability, called an indemnity. If reasonable indemnity is provided, the holders of a majority of the aggregate principal amount of the securities of all series affected (voting as one class) may direct the time, method and place of conducting any lawsuit or other formal legal action seeking any remedy available to the trustee. The trustee is required, within 90 days of acquiring knowledge of a default with respect to the debt securities of any series, to give you notice of the default, unless the default has been cured or waived before it gives the notice; however, the trustee may withhold notice of any non-payment default if it determines that withholding notice is in the interest of the holders of debt securities of that series.

Before you bypass the trustee and bring your own lawsuit or other formal legal action or take other steps to enforce your rights or protect your interests relating to the debt securities, the following must occur:

You must give the trustee written notice that an event of default has occurred and remains uncured.

The holders of at least 25% of the outstanding principal amount of all the securities of the relevant series must make a written request that the trustee take action because of an event of default, and must offer reasonable indemnity to the trustee against the cost and other liabilities of taking that action.

The trustee must have not taken action for 60 days after receipt of the above written request and offer of indemnity and no directions inconsistent with the above written request must have been given to the trustee during such period.

However, you are entitled at any time to bring a lawsuit for the payment of money due on your debt security on or after its due date.

STREET NAME AND OTHER INDIRECT HOLDERS SHOULD CONSULT THEIR BANKS, BROKERS OR OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO GIVE NOTICE OR DIRECTION TO OR MAKE A REQUEST OF THE TRUSTEE AND TO MAKE OR CANCEL A DECLARATION OF ACCELERATION.

We will furnish to the trustee every year a written statement of certain of our officers certifying that to their knowledge we are in compliance with the indenture and the debt securities, or else specifying any default and indicating the nature and status of the default.

Concerning the Trustee

The trustee under the indenture is Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

The indenture contains certain limitations on the right of the trustee, should it become a creditor of ours, to obtain payment of claims in certain cases, or to realize for its own account on certain property received in respect of any such claim as security or otherwise. The trustee will be permitted to engage in certain other transactions;

Table of Contents

however, if after an event of default has occurred and is continuing, the trustee acquires any conflicting interest (as described in the indenture) it must eliminate such conflict or resign.

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

General

We are incorporated in the State of Texas. The rights of our shareholders are generally covered by Texas law and our articles of incorporation and bylaws (each as amended and restated and in effect on the date hereof). The terms of our capital stock are therefore subject to Texas law, including the Texas Business Organizations Code (the "TBOC"), and the common and constitutional law of Texas. Our articles of incorporation were filed as Exhibit 3.1 to our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009 and our bylaws were filed as Exhibit 3.1 to our Current Report on Form 8-K filed on November 20, 2009. You are encouraged to read these documents.

We are authorized to issue 2,000,000,000 shares of common stock, \$1.00 par value, of which 767,684,913 shares were outstanding on April 23, 2012. Our common stock is traded on the NYSE under the symbol "LUV". We are not currently authorized to issue shares of preferred stock.

Voting Rights

Holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote per share in the election of directors and on all other matters submitted to a vote at a meeting of shareholders. No shareholder has the right of cumulative voting.

With respect to any matter other than the election of directors or a matter for which the affirmative vote of the holders of a specified portion of the shares entitled to vote is required by Texas law or our articles of incorporation, the act of the shareholders shall be the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the shares entitled to vote on, and voted for or against, the matter at a meeting of shareholders at which a quorum is present; provided that, for purposes thereof, all abstentions and broker nonvotes shall not be counted as voted either for or against such matter. Directors shall be elected by a majority of the votes cast by the holders of shares entitled to vote in the election of directors at a meeting of shareholders at which a quorum is present; provided that, if the number of nominees exceeds the number of directors to be elected, directors shall be elected by a plurality of the votes cast. For purposes thereof, (i) a majority of the votes cast means that the number of votes cast for a director must exceed the number of votes cast against that director, and (ii) abstentions and broker nonvotes shall not be counted as votes cast either for or against any nominee for director.

Dividend Rights

Holders of our common stock are entitled to dividends when, as and if declared by our board of directors out of funds legally available therefor.

Liquidation Rights

In the event of our liquidation, the holders of our common stock will be entitled to share ratably in any assets remaining after payment of all debts and other liabilities.

Certain Business Combination Restrictions

Section 21.606 of the TBOC restricts certain business combinations between us and an affiliated shareholder (beneficial ownership of 20% or more of the voting power of our stock entitled to vote for directors) for three years after the shareholder becomes an affiliated shareholder. The restrictions do not apply if the board of

Table of Contents

directors approved the transaction that caused the shareholder to become an affiliated shareholder or if the business combination is approved by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of our voting stock that is not beneficially owned by the affiliated shareholder at a meeting of shareholders called for that purpose within six months of the affiliated shareholder's acquiring the shares. Although we may elect to exclude ourselves from the restrictions imposed by Section 21.606, our articles of incorporation do not currently do so.

Other

Our common stock has no preemptive or conversion rights and is not entitled to the benefits of any redemption or sinking fund provision. The outstanding shares of our common stock are fully paid and non-assessable.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is Wells Fargo Shareowner Services at 161 N. Concord Exchange, South St. Paul, MN 55075.

LEGAL MATTERS

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, the validity of the securities will be passed upon for us by Vinson & Elkins L.L.P., Houston, Texas, and will be passed upon for any agents, dealers or underwriters by counsel named in the applicable prospectus supplement.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements of Southwest Airlines Co. appearing in Southwest Airlines Co.'s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011, and the effectiveness of Southwest Airlines Co.'s internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2011, have been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, as set forth in its reports thereon, included therein, and incorporated herein by reference. Such consolidated financial statements are incorporated herein by reference in reliance upon such reports given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We have filed a registration statement with the SEC under the Securities Act of 1933 that registers the offer and sale of the securities covered by this prospectus. The registration statement, including the exhibits, contains additional relevant information about us. The rules and regulations of the SEC allow us to omit some information included in the registration statement from this prospectus.

In addition, we file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any documents we file at the SEC's public reference room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference room. Our SEC filings are also available to the public on the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov> and through the New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005. Our common stock is listed for trading on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol LUV.

Table of Contents

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference the information we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus, and later information that we file with the SEC will automatically update and supersede this information, as well as the information included in this prospectus. We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and any future filings made with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14, or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (excluding any information furnished pursuant to Item 2.02 or 7.01 on any Current Report on Form 8-K) until we sell all the securities:

Our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011;

Our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarterly period ended March 31, 2012; and

The description of our common stock contained in our Current Report on Form 8-K filed February 1, 2011, including any subsequently filed amendments and reports updating such description.

We make available free of charge on or through our Internet website, www.southwest.com, our Annual Reports on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, Current Reports on Form 8-K and amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file such material with, or furnish it to, the SEC. Information contained on our Internet website is not part of this prospectus.

You may obtain any of the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus from the SEC through the SEC's website at the address provided above. You also may request a copy of any document incorporated by reference in this prospectus (excluding any exhibits to those documents, unless the exhibit is specifically incorporated by reference in this document), at no cost, by writing or telephoning us at the following address:

Southwest Airlines Co. c/o Investor Relations

P.O. Box 36611, HDQ-6FC

2702 Love Field Drive

Dallas, Texas 75235

(214) 792-4908

Table of Contents

\$

Southwest Airlines Co.

% Notes Due 20

Prospectus Supplement

November , 2014

Joint Book-Running Managers

J.P. Morgan

Morgan Stanley

Citigroup