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## **Mesa Airlines and Southern Airways Express Create Pathway for Career Development with New Mesa-Southern Cadet Training Program**

**PHOENIX – March 14, 2017** – Mesa Airlines, Inc. and Southern Airways Express today announced the launch of the Mesa-Southern Pilot Cadet Training Program, a newly-formed partnership providing career progression for Southern Airways pilots and a pipeline to future employment for qualified candidates at Mesa Airlines. The five-year agreement will provide up to \$15,000 in combined forgivable loans to Cadets and allow them to accrue Mesa longevity while flying for Southern.

“In response to the enactment of ill-conceived and financially punitive government regulations recently imposed on aspiring commercial pilots, Mesa and Southern Airways are working together to make the path to an airline career more accessible to qualified candidates,” said Mesa CEO Jonathan Ornstein. “We look forward to partnering with Southern on this new and innovative program.”

New hire first officer Cadets with fewer than 1,000 flight hours will receive a \$10,000 loan from Mesa and, upon reaching 1,000 hours and upgrading to captain, a \$5,000 loan from Southern.

Current Southern First Officers will remain full-time pilots at Southern until they reach 1,800 flight hours, or at least 550 hours as a Captain, whichever is first. Cadets will begin accruing longevity for both pay, vacation and employee travel purposes at Mesa upon enrolling in the program.

“Southern Airways is excited to join Mesa in this innovative partnership which will provide a full-career pathway to new pilots at two of the fastest-growing airlines in the United States,” said Stan Little, Chairman and CEO of Southern. “Since both companies operate hubs at Dallas-Fort Worth and at Washington-Dulles, this alliance is a natural fit.”

Mesa recently announced the expansion of its partnership with United Airlines with the addition of 12 new Embraer 175 aircraft scheduled for delivery in 2017. These aircraft will bring Mesa's E175 fleet count to 60 and the Company's total number of large regional jets to 145. Mesa's United Express fleet will total 80 aircraft, including 20 CRJ700s and the company's American Eagle fleet comprises 64 Bombardier CRJ900 aircraft.

Mesa continues to develop innovative programs to address the challenges of burdensome federal regulations on the regional airline industry, particularly the Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Administration Extension Act of 2010, which led to further regulations for new hire pilots to have 1500 hours of total time, a standard based on zero scientific evidence and many times greater than every other country in the world. In fact, under the new regulations, foreign pilots who do not qualify to fly for U.S. carriers, fly everything from regional aircraft to jumbo jets into U.S. airspace, landing in American cities every day. While Mesa is hopeful changes will soon be made to these counter-productive government policies, the company will continue to find ways to provide opportunities, growth, and job security for its employees.

The delivery of the 12 additional aircraft is scheduled to begin in May 2017 and will create more than 500 new commercial aviation career opportunities. For more information and to apply, go to [www.mesa-air.com](http://www.mesa-air.com).

### **About Mesa Airlines**

A multiple-time recipient of *Air Transport World's* Regional Airline of the Year Award, Phoenix-based Mesa Airlines operates as American Eagle from hubs in Phoenix and Dallas/Fort Worth and as United Express from Washington Dulles and Houston. Founded on a mesa in New Mexico in 1982 by Larry and Janie Risley, Mesa currently operates 133 aircraft, with more than 600 daily system departures to 124 cities, 38 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, Mexico, and the Bahamas. The airline will add 17 additional Embraer 175 aircraft to its fleet in 2017. The company has approximately 3,100 employees and plans to hire an additional 1,000 in the next two years. For more information, go to [www.mesa-air.com](http://www.mesa-air.com) or visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/mesaairlines](http://www.facebook.com/mesaairlines).

### **About Southern Airways Express**

Founded in 2013, Southern Airways Express has quickly grown to become one of the largest commuter airlines in the United States. Operating a fleet of Cessna Caravans and Grand Caravans, Southern serves 22 cities with over 125 peak-day departures from hubs at Baltimore, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Memphis, Pittsburgh, and Washington-Dulles. For more information, go to [www.iFlySouthern.com](http://www.iFlySouthern.com) or visit us on all major social media sites.