

**From:** [Kathy Newby](#)  
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## Okaloosa County News Release

### **Okaloosa County Wants SouthwestToVPS County Commissioners Approve Resolution**

At the September 1 County Commission Meeting, commissioners approved a resolution in support of the community initiative of “SouthwestToVPS,” to help garner support and pledges which will assist in bringing Southwest Airlines to Northwest Florida Regional Airport. “This will be the best, most important initiative launched in Okaloosa County, economically and personally benefiting all residents,” stated Commission Chairman Bill Roberts. “We are the obvious selection for several reasons:”

1. We would be right in between Panama City and Pensacola, making only one location necessary; saving Southwest Airlines resources in terms of aircraft, ground personnel and equipment.
2. Because of our joint use with Eglin AFB, airport related costs are the lowest of any airport being considered on the Gulf Coast.
3. Northwest Florida Regional Airport’s upgraded facilities are ready for Southwest to move in ***today***.
4. We have the U.S. Army’s 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group and the new F-35, Joint Strike Fighter Initial Joint Training Site, along with their families coming soon and adding approximately 10,000 people. Combine that with all the other military installations that currently exist and the addition of 700 personnel, including family members for the V-22 Osprey at Hurlburt. (The 33<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing personnel loss was deducted from these figures.)
5. These military members travel constantly, and need competitive fares that Southwest can offer. Furthermore, these added families will bring more people coming to visit and more will decide to stay or retire here.

“This is a community effort to bring Southwest Airlines to Northwest Florida Regional Airport (VPS). ***The financial impact is far reaching and will result in tens of millions of dollars in annual economic stimulus.*** You cannot afford to not support this initiative,” stated Joe Fagundes, who is spearheading the campaign. Call your local chamber of commerce, visit [www.SouthwestToVPS.com](http://www.SouthwestToVPS.com) or search for Southwest To VPS facebook page.

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Kathy Newby  
Public Information Officer  
850.651.7270; fax 651.7551  
[knewby@co.okaloosa.fl.us](mailto:knewby@co.okaloosa.fl.us)  
[www.okaloosaf1.us](http://www.okaloosaf1.us)

1804 Lewis Turner Blvd., Suite 400  
Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547

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