



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Ralph S. Northam

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Office of the Governor

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**Governor Northam Announces New Airline to
Establish Operations in Norfolk, Creating 116
New Jobs**

*~ Low-cost carrier Breeze Airways to invest \$5.2 million at Norfolk
International Airport ~*

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam today announced that Breeze Airways, a new U.S.-based airline providing low-cost, nonstop service to mid-size markets, will invest \$5.2 million to establish an operations center in the City of Norfolk. The company targets underserved and unserved cities without nonstop service and has identified dozens of route opportunities from Norfolk International Airport. Norfolk will be one of Breeze Airways' first four operations bases in the United States, and the airline also plans to offer flights out of Richmond International

Airport. Virginia successfully competed with several other locations for the project, which will create 116 new jobs.

“Aviation has long been ingrained in the Hampton Roads economy, and the arrival of Breeze Airways is another sign of this region’s growing position as a commercial flight hub,” **said Governor Northam**. “The post-pandemic world will offer increasing opportunities for travel and tourism, and the addition of this new low-cost carrier at Norfolk International Airport will be a catalyst for economic growth, welcoming visitors to our Commonwealth with convenient, nonstop service to often overlooked markets. We are honored that Breeze Airways has selected Virginia as one of its first domestic locations and look forward to building a strong and successful partnership with the company.”

Headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, Breeze Airways is a start-up airline established by David Neeleman, a founder of multiple airlines, including JetBlue. Its targets include inbound travel, local leisure and business travel, and millennial travelers. Breeze Airways will operate mostly in markets in which no other airlines currently compete. All employees, which will include airline crew and aircraft maintenance workers, will remain local. The company plans to offer flights beginning in June 2021.

“The City of Norfolk and Hampton Roads provide fertile ground for a new, niche airline like Breeze Airways,” **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Brian Ball**. “Norfolk International Airport will be a prime launch point to reach the company’s growing customer base and provide more travel options for Virginians, and we are confident that Breeze Airways will find success in the Commonwealth.”

“We welcome Breeze Airways to our Commonwealth,” **said Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine**. “Our airports serve as gateways to the world, and this new airline, with a focus on unserved and underserved communities, will increase accessibility, expand markets and support Virginia’s growing economy.”

“Breeze is excited to be announcing two destinations in Virginia: Norfolk and Richmond,” **said David Neeleman, Founder and CEO of Breeze Airways**. “Norfolk, particularly, is a strong inbound destination with a significant number of unserved markets that will provide Breeze with many years of growth opportunities. We’re looking forward to providing Virginians with low fares and nonstop service, getting them where they’re going in half the time, usually for about half the price.”

“The addition of Breeze Airways will be a gamechanger not only for Norfolk, but for the Commonwealth as a whole, connecting the 757 Region with nonstop service to more than 40 route opportunities,” **said Rita McClenny, President and CEO of Virginia Tourism Corporation**. “This new gateway will boost visitation from important markets, while also introducing the Commonwealth to new audiences, including travelers, businesses, students, and the military. This new addition will provide visitors with convenient access to one of the Commonwealth’s most exciting and beautiful regions, giving them a chance to discover for themselves why Virginia is for Lovers.”

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership worked with the City of Norfolk, Norfolk Airport Authority, Virginia Department of Aviation, Hampton Roads Alliance, Hampton Roads Workforce Council, VisitNorfolk, and Virginia Tourism Corporation to secure the project for the Commonwealth. Governor Northam approved a \$400,000 grant from the Commonwealth's Opportunity Fund to assist the City of Norfolk with the project. The company is also eligible to receive benefits from the Major Business Facility Job Tax Credit for new, full-time jobs created.

“Norfolk is a Mid-Atlantic destination for inbound travel, tourism, and business travel,” **said City of Norfolk Mayor Kenneth Cooper Alexander**. “We are excited that Breeze has decided to establish an operations center and the City will gain new direct nonstop routes, bringing new jobs and increased tourism. As the major airport serving southeast Virginia and northeast North Carolina, Norfolk remains our region's primary link to the world's global transportation network.”

“It is our pleasure to welcome Breeze Airways to Norfolk International Airport,” **said Robert Bowen, Executive Director of the Norfolk Airport Authority**. “Our community will react very favorably to the company's style of service, and we look forward to being the front door to a wonderful business and vacation destination for visitors.”

“Breeze Airways' decision to invest and locate in the City of Norfolk will improve both the quality and market reach of our regional air service,” **noted Doug Smith, President and CEO of the Hampton Roads Alliance**. “As a result, our region will be better equipped to recruit other businesses to establish operations in Hampton Roads and, just as importantly, attract the talented workforce required to meet the needs of these businesses. We are honored to have worked alongside our state and local partners on this project.”

“On behalf of the Workforce Council, we are excited to be part of the team to attract Breeze Airways to our region,” **said Shawn Avery, President and CEO of the Hampton Roads Workforce Council**. “We are confident that our diverse and skilled workforce is set up perfectly to fill the careers that Breeze will require to get them off the ground and flying.”

“This is very exciting news as we head into summer, traditionally our busiest season, and at a time when traveler sentiment indicates post-pandemic demand will be exceptionally strong,” **said Kurt Krause, President and CEO of VisitNorfolk**. “Congratulations to the leadership and staff of Breeze for having the vision to launch a new air carrier during this time of economic revitalization and recognizing the importance of key hub markets such as Norfolk.”

“Breeze Airways choosing Norfolk as one of five cities in which to establish an operations center is a testament to the continued growth of the greater Hampton Roads region as a business hub and travel destination,” **said Senator Lynwood Lewis**. “The investment being made by the company and by the Commonwealth, as well as continued support from the City of Norfolk, has the potential to directly connect the greater Hampton Roads region to people across the country. This is a great development for the future of Norfolk and the region.”

“As COVID-19 restrictions ease and people become more comfortable traveling again, I am excited Breeze Airways will provide a budget-friendly travel option as well as good jobs for

constituents of the 90th district,” **said Delegate Angelia Graves.** “This project is another great example of Virginia attracting creative and innovative companies, and I look forward to Breeze’s success in the Commonwealth.”

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