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**SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS LAUNCHES SERVICE TO O'HARE
First Airline to Provide Direct Service from Chicago to Africa**

Mayor Richard M. Daley and South African Airways today announced the start of commercial air service between O'Hare International Airport; to Dakar, Senegal; and Johannesburg, South Africa. It will be the first direct service from Chicago to Africa.

"This is a historic addition to Chicago's list of flight destinations," Daley said at a news conference at the airport. "I expect this new service to lead to valuable new commercial relationships between the Midwest and the continent of Africa, and it will definitely raise Chicago's profile as a center of international trade."

Beginning May 8, South African Airways will operate four flights a week between O'Hare and Johannesburg, with a brief stop in Dakar, Senegal, offering passengers the opportunity to connect to points throughout West Africa.

South African Airways will use its flagship Airbus 340 aircraft on the route. The Airbus 340 offers customers state-of-the-art amenities for long-haul travel, including a comfortable Economy Class cabin recently reconfigured to provide extra legroom, and a Premium Business Class cabin featuring the airline's award-winning 180-degree, lie-flat Business Class seat.

SAA was recently inducted as a member of the global Star Alliance network. The new service between Johannesburg and Chicago will more closely align the airline with United Airlines, fellow Star Alliance carrier.

"With this new air service, I expect more Chicago businesses will begin looking to Africa as they seek new markets for their products and services," Daley said. "And that will translate into jobs for the hard-working people of Chicago."

"The new direct flights will benefit African businesses, as well. They will have better access not just to Chicago, but the entire North American continent – because O'Hare offers more non-stop service to more North American cities than any other airport."

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South African Airways features the only direct service between the U.S. and South Africa with daily departures that offer travel convenience, award-winning service, and the quickest route to the U.S. The airline's Africa network is unsurpassed, featuring connections to more than 20 destinations within South Africa, and more than 20 cities across the continent.

The Chicago Airport System is self-supporting, using no local or state tax dollars for operations or capital improvements at O'Hare and Midway International airports. Together, Chicago's airports generate more than \$45 billion in annual economic activity and create 540,000 jobs for the region. Please visit www.flychicago.com to learn more about the Chicago Airport System.

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