

Southwest Airlines changing rapid rewards program

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Southwest Airlines is converting its popular Rapid Rewards loyalty program to a points-based system with accrual based on how much money a customer spends for a ticket.

The Dallas-based airline, the busiest at Las Vegas' McCarran International Airport, is unveiling the new system today with the conversion scheduled to occur March 1.

Customers won't lose credits they've accrued when the conversion takes place because Southwest will automatically convert credits to points.

Information on the new system is available at newrapidrewards.com.

"We're looking at this as an extension of currency," said Southwest CEO Gary Kelley in an embargoed media briefing Wednesday morning.

Under the new system, customers will accrue points whenever they buy a ticket on the airline's website with higher multiples for higher levels of Southwest's three-tiered pricing. For the airline's "Wanna Get Away" fares – the least expensive tickets Southwest sells – customers will earn six points for every dollar spent.

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