

AA Opens Non-stop Flights from Dallas to MoBay

Claudine Housen, *Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

JAMAICA BECAME the first English-speaking Caribbean island to feature non-stop air travel from Dallas/Fort Worth in Texas, when it received American Airline flight 1232 at the Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay last week.

An auspicious occasion in the history of the airport, the 110 passengers were treated to a water salute, courtesy of MJB Airports Limited, as the Boeing 737-800 series aircraft pulled up at Gate 12 of the newly constructed Eastern Concourse shortly after 3: 28 p.m. last Friday.

GREETED BY STAFF

The disembarking passengers were also greeted by the American Airlines staff dressed in straw hats made to replicate the Texan cowboy hats, who sang folk songs and welcomed them to Jamaican soil.

In applauding the airline's decision to establish the route, Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook said that the flight heralds the opening up of new gateways for the island's tourism.

"The non-stop flight from Dallas will certainly open up the south-western United States, as well as the western United States to bring more visitors to Jamaica," he said.

"Also, in addition to the south-western and western United States, we think there is a great potential for Asia because there are several flights that American Airlines has into Dallas (from Asia) which could connect into this flight (Dallas to Montego Bay)."



American Airlines passengers are greeted with folk songs and cheers of 'Welcome to Jamaica' by the airline's employees after disembarking the airline's inaugural flight 1232 non-stop from Dallas/Fort Worth Texas to Montego Bay, last Friday

American Airlines Country Director for Jamaica, Yvonne Pearson, stated that the creation of a non-stop flight from Dallas, shows the airline's confidence in Jamaica's tourism product.

"When Paul Pennicook became the director of tourism, one of his first requests to American Airlines was to bring a flight from Dallas/Fort Worth," she recalled.

HONOURED

"At the time I thought it was impossible, (but today) Jamaica has the honour of being the first English-speaking Caribbean island to have a non-stop flight from Dallas, Fort Worth."

She added, "I think it is tremendous work on Paul's part and American Airlines' part. It is not our policy to over fly a hub and we have made a big exception for Jamaica and so we look forward to great things."

With bookings 20 points above the average start-up flights from American Airlines, the Dallas/ Fort Worth non-stop flight to Montego Bay is the airline's 34th non-stop international flight.

It will operate four days a week, Fridays to Mondays and will be added to the airline's four other daily flights to Montego Bay from Miami and New York.



PHOTOS BY CLAUDINE HOUSEN/ STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER -The first passenger to disembark American Airlines inaugural flight 1232 from Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, to Montego Bay, Gayle Eby, receives a dozen anthuriums from Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook, last Friday. Also in the photo are MJB Airports Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Jorge Sales (left), Country Director for Jamaica, Yvonne Pearson (centre back), and Mrs. Eby's husband, Frank. The non-stop flight from Dallas will operate four days per week from Friday to Monday.

February 8, 2006