

SMU Cox CEO Sentiment Survey™ Names American Airlines CEO as 2015 CEO of the Year

Dallas (SMU) 11-17-2015 – Doug Parker, chairman and chief executive officer of American Airlines Group, is the 2015 “CEO of the Year,” according to the results of this year’s CEO Sentiment Survey™ conducted by SMU Cox School of Business. Dallas-Fort Worth area CEOs and presidents vote for their peers in the annual survey, which also measures the local, national and global business climate and economy. The CEO of the Year honor was announced at a reception co-hosted with D CEO Magazine Tuesday, November 17 at the Cox School on the SMU campus.

Parker became CEO of American Airlines following the merger of US Airways and American Airlines in 2013, which made American the world’s biggest airline. He previously served as chairman and CEO of US Airways. Prior to the merger of US Airways and America West Airlines in 2005, he was chairman, president and CEO of America West, and before that, he served in leadership roles with Northwest Airlines. Parker has long been a proponent of airline industry consolidation. He held a number of financial management positions with American Airlines from 1986 to 1991.

“It is a privilege to lead the American team and I am honored by this award,” said Parker. “My role at American is simply to enable our 100,000 team members who are doing a phenomenal job of taking care of our customers. In that spirit, this award truly reflects their efforts, and I am humbled to accept it on their behalf.”

Survey responses determined Parker, a finalist in last year’s CEO Sentiment Survey, to be this year’s top CEO. Five other CEOs were also given special recognition at Tuesday’s reception. In alphabetical order by last name, they are:

- Mark Haidar, founder and CEO of Dallas-based tech company Vinli!, honored as “Startup CEO,” at the helm of a company in business for no more than three years;
- Mark Layman, chairman and CEO of Balfour Beatty Construction Services, honored as “Changemaker CEO,” a chief executive who took the helm of a company and made an immediate impact;
- Jim Lentz, CEO of Toyota North America, honored as “Newcomer CEO,” a chief executive who has been in North Texas for no more than two years;
- Nancy Nasher, co-owner of NorthPark Center, honored as “Philanthropist CEO,” a chief executive who goes beyond his or her corporate post to support local nonprofits and civic organizations;
- Restaurateur, entrepreneur and philanthropist Phil Romano, honored as “Community Impact CEO” for changing the face of West Dallas with the Trinity Groves development.

The December issue of D CEO Magazine, which features Parker’s photo on the cover, was also unveiled at the reception. The issue features the complete results of the annual SMU Cox Sentiment Survey™, also available online at: smu.edu/Cox/TheCoxNetwork/CEOSurvey. This year marks the ninth annual survey of area business leaders about their economic outlook for the coming year. The survey is compiled and conducted by SMU Cox professors Miguel Quiñones, O. Paul Corley Distinguished Chair of Organizational Behavior, and Robert Rasberry, assistant professor of management and organizations. Invitations to participate in the annual SMU Cox CEO Sentiment Survey™ are sent annually to a comprehensive list of DFW-area CEOs, presidents and business owners.

In the 2015 survey, “negative expectations for the world economy have ballooned to the highest level we have ever recorded,” said Quiñones. “A massive 60 percent of respondents [of the nearly two

hundred CEOs who participated] now believe the world economy will decline in the coming year.” The concern for the global economy colors the overall outlook for the U.S. economy, too, with only 29 percent of respondents predicting national economic improvement, a significant decrease from the 45 percent who predicted improvement in the 2014 survey.

The survey has historically yielded an optimistic outlook for the DFW region, but again, the global outlook took a toll on the local outlook in this year’s survey, with a drop from 78 percent of last year’s respondents to only 53 percent this year predicting improvement for the local economy in the year to come. Nonetheless, the survey indicated that 70 percent of participating area CEOs met or exceeded expectations for 2015. The SMU Cox CEO Sentiment Survey™ also examines other factors that pertain to the outlook for DFW businesses, rates the DFW area and explores leadership issues.

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