



FAST GROWING ST. PETE-CLEARWATER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT CARES ABOUT WEATHER

St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport (PIE) is a public/military airport in Pinellas County, Florida. Known as the “birthplace of commercial air transportation,” PIE spans 1,900 acres and was included in the FAA National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems for 2017-2021. The airport has 14 gates that service 2 million passengers per year with an average of 310 operations per day. This small-hub commercial airport serves the Tampa Bay Area, which is a hot spot for severe weather activity including thunderstorms, flooding, and hurricanes.

INCOMPLETE PROTECTION AND DIFFICULT DECISION-MAKING

Airports are small cities in themselves, yet when it comes to weather most airports rely on local news or free weather apps which don’t cover their exact geographic area. In Clearwater, severe weather conditions like heat, wind, and thunderstorms are a daily threat to operations. Due to PIE’s location, there isn’t a typical direction for storms either. This made it very difficult for decision-makers to understand where daily thunderstorms were coming from, when they’d impact airport operations, and how intense they would be.

COMPLETE SOLUTION FOR OVERALL SAFETY

After a record-breaking year of serving 2 million passengers in 2017, PIE is now weather-ready for more unprecedented growth. While the airport used to rely on free weather applications and antiquated lightning prediction systems, PIE now utilizes a complete suite of weather intelligence products. Their comprehensive weather safety solution includes total lightning detection, meteorological support, and Sferic Maps and Mobile. These tools come in handy nearly every day. In 2017, there were 283 Cloud-to-Ground lightning strikes at PIE Airport. Earth Networks Total Lightning Network (ENTLN) also detected 4,423 total lightning strikes in the immediate area during that same timeframe.

WHY IT MATTERS

Weather is one of the biggest threats to airport operations, yet it’s highly predictable. With Earth Networks weather intelligence, PIE Airport gets real-time advanced weather information that helps them assist in human decision-making. This allows the team at PIE Airport to make better preparation plans and checklists based on advanced weather data. Now when severe weather rolls through the area, PIE Airport is ready to make more informed weather-related decisions and improve operational efficiency.

PIE GAINS OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY THROUGH WEATHER INTELLIGENCE SOLUTIONS

OVERVIEW

St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport is a busy travel hub in western Florida that utilizes Earth Networks comprehensive severe weather monitoring and alerting solutions to mitigate financial, operational, and human risk.

CHALLENGES

Airports are typically at risk from lightning strikes due to their open landscape and the presence of towers and antennas. Free weather tools that aren’t customizable led to poor weather-related decision-making.

SOLUTION

A comprehensive suite of weather monitoring sensors and tools that include total lightning detection, meteorological support, web-based weather visualization and alerts, and outdoor alerting complete with all-clear messages.

RESULTS

Improved decision-making and better on-time performance, streamlined operations, and safety on the tarmac, in the towers, and throughout the airport.

“The automated weather solution helped us in the long run. It provides real-time intelligence we need to make more informed weather-related decisions. And most importantly, it helps us plan for severe weather and improve our operational efficiency tremendously.”

– Mark Sprague, C.M. Deputy Director of Airport Operations and Facilities at St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport

