

Northern exposure:

How MSP quickly upgraded its remote weather sensing — with time to spare before winter



The challenge: Modernize runway condition assessment and reporting without disruption

Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP) accommodates nearly 40 million travelers per year and is a major U.S. hub. In such a cold and variable climate, airport officials rely on accurate present-weather and forecast data for decisions about ice and snow abatement, surface maintenance, closures, and other operational factors.

With 15-year-old Vaisala technology at the end of its planned lifespan, MSP needed to upgrade and modernize — without adding complexity or disrupting operations.

The solution: A modernized Runway Weather Information System using a Vaisala RWS200 and Navigator software

An existing Vaisala customer, MSP was ready to upgrade its equipment to the latest generation. After evaluating other vendors (including an onsite test campaign), MSP again chose Vaisala. They say this was in part because Vaisala had a track record of delivering on its promises.

Their RWS200 deployment, which used familiar Navigator software for displaying the data, was a convenient match for the airport's existing infrastructure. It included a number of upgrades, including remote updating and troubleshooting by Vaisala technicians, which decreased the amount of time human workers need to spend out on the runway.

The client:

Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP)

Industry:

International air travel

Vaisala provided:

RWS200 Road and Runway Weather Station

Navigator software

MSP ordered the system in May 2018 and had it up and running in the fall — a smooth upgrade before the wintry weather set in.



**The benefits:
Reliable weather
reporting and new options
for innovation**

With the new RWS200/Navigator integration, MSP gets the right kind of data at the right time. “The nice thing about the system,” says Ostrom, “is that it’s giving us information 24/7. There’s peace of mind knowing that when I pull up the application, I can see at those specific locations what the conditions are.”

The upgrade has also made MSP better equipped to innovate and develop new solutions. For example, the airport is working with Vaisala in piloting a mobile runway condition reporting tool as part of TALPA reporting requirements. They are also planning a fuller integration of their various technologies.

“One of the benefits [of the new RWS200] was an extra set of eyes out there from Vaisala looking at the data remotely for us. If something is bad, they might even catch it before we catch it.”

*John Ostrom,
Manager, Airside
Operations, MSP*

“One of the things we appreciate is that Vaisala is willing to listen to users and help them paint what the future is going to look like,” Ostrom says.

For now, the airport has the weather data it relies on the most. And there are clear skies ahead.

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