

The major benefit I see at this time is that I am able to see real-time weather from our airport, no matter where I am at. At present, not even the FAA has that capability, from any of their systems. All of their information is at least 5 minutes old when it first becomes available. To explain that, just look at the weather reports that are available through the Flight Service Stations. Their readings are taken at five minutes until the hour, and sometimes they are available on the hour, but most of the time it will take until 5 minutes past the hour until all information is available. Then you must wait until the next hour until so called (current) weather is again available. By going directly to the National Weather Service offices, you are able to get this same information, although in a different format, on the hour and at twenty and forty minutes past each hour, and that is usually available within 10 minutes of the actual measurement. Here you will be told that this information is not intended for flight planning purposes, as this is the raw data as the NWS has recorded it.

With Stanwyck's software loaded on a computer here at the airport, this data is never more than 60 seconds old. Visible on the main screen, you have the current wind as well as the past five minutes, so you have an instant view of what the last five minute trend is for the wind. The data shown on the left side of the main screen shows digitally the weather conditions and the up and down arrows show the trend for; wind speed, altimeter, density altitude, temperature, dew point, and relative humidity. It is true that you can get this from the FSS, but only after they have studied the past reports. No place I am aware of can this information be read as easily and completely as on this system. There is some of the data such as relative humidity, wind chill and heat index, and crosswind component, that are computations, which some pilots can do in their head, but I cannot. Therefore it sure is nice to be able to see it displayed. It makes planning for a flight much easier and quicker.

As a pilot, I had to learn the temperature and dew point given in Celsius, but when I have the opportunity, I get it in Fahrenheit, as that is what I grew up with. I realize that the FAA will never change that and that is OK with me, but I am just very happy to be able to see it both ways.

Thunderstorm information is in a class all by itself. I believe I am still the only airport that shows this information, but I will bet in the near future there will be more of them. Until we got this system, I did not realize that the system was reporting this information out to 50 nautical miles, but only shows to 30 nm on the original display. Also Mr. Stanwyck has decided to show the number of lightening strikes in each sector, instead of just color coding the sector to show occasional, moderate or intense activity. The sensor is reporting this information, why not display it? The more information that is available to pilots, hopefully they can make a more informed decision about their flight.

Also the block at the bottom of the screen "INFO:" -Wow, what a great way to be able to show NOTAMS, that the FSS in all their infinite wisdom deems to have so little importance that they feel it is a LOCAL NOTAM, and the only way to get it from FSS is to call the FSS that services that airport, and specifically ask for it. It would make much more sense if it were DISSEMINATED NOTAM so it could be in the system when the pilot does his flight planning. In my case, I get quite a bit of traffic from the west (Denver Center), south (Ft Worth Center), and from the southwest (Albuquerque Center), and Albuquerque gets handed off to Ft Worth. All these flights are on approach to this airport already when they get handed off to Kansas City Center, in time to call on Unicom to inform other traffic here that they are arriving. I defy you to find just one flight crew that has the time to call Wichita Flight Service when they are on the approach into here and get the LOCAL NOTAM! Where Mr. Stanwyck, has designed the software to also color code the "INFO" it makes it possible to grab the attention of the viewer to show him the importance of this note.

Harry Bartel
Hugoton Airport
Hugoton, KS
620.544.7600
kc0mzm@pld.com