

CASE STUDY

How The Astro Makes the Call When Weather Threatens the Show

For a growing Omaha-area amphitheater, DTN Weather Hub supports safer decisions, better guest experiences, and fewer weather-related disruptions.

ABOUT THE ASTRO

The Astro Theater and The Astro Amphitheater, located in La Vista City Centre, Nebraska, in the Omaha metro area, combine an indoor theater with an outdoor amphitheater that holds 5,300 guests. Since opening in September 2023, The Astro has hosted roughly 85 events a year and welcomes 90,000 guests annually for concerts, comedy shows, holiday performances, and private rentals such as corporate events and charity galas. Events range from intimate gatherings of 35 guests to outdoor shows with 5,000 attendees.

BaiLeigh McCarthy, General Manager of The Astro, leads the event team responsible for safety and keeping events on schedule, rain or shine.

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THE CHALLENGE

Building a weather playbook from scratch

Nebraska weather can change quickly, bringing high winds, thunderstorms, tornado warnings, lightning, and extreme heat, sometimes in the same afternoon. When The Astro opened in 2023, it didn't have the luxury of historical venue data or precedent to guide weather decisions, particularly for the outdoor amphitheater.

McCarthy's team needed a way to establish clear, defensible thresholds for wind, lightning, rain, and heat and determine when to proceed, delay, move indoors, or evacuate.

"We have large amounts of people gathering for a show they're really excited about," McCarthy said. "Safety is a concern, but we also want to ensure they're comfortable and able to enjoy their experience."

WHY DTN

Setting the thresholds before the crowd arrives

The Astro uses DTN Weather Hub to track changing conditions that matter most to live events. Steve Tinnell, a senior account manager at DTN, worked with McCarthy and her team to connect specific weather thresholds to specific actions, from adding water stations to relocating a show.

Tinnell also helped tailor alerts to The Astro's indoor and outdoor spaces, so a wind warning that matters for the amphitheater doesn't create unnecessary noise for an indoor show. Each alert is tied to a specific action rather than a generic caution level, so staff know what to do when an alert sounds.

"DTN has given my team the confidence to make the big decisions: Are we moving it, delaying it, canceling it?" McCarthy said. "The platform gives us the framework to feel confident in the calls we have to make."

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FROM PLAN TO SHOWTIME

Putting preparedness into practice

One of The Astro's most impactful uses of DTN Weather Hub has been its Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) tool, a heat metric commonly used to help event organizers understand potential heat impacts. The team established WBGT thresholds and response plans tied to specific heat conditions. When those thresholds are met, staff can take proactive measures designed to protect guests and employees.

The plan was put to the test during a run of shows with temperatures approaching triple digits. The Astro's WBGT thresholds triggered an expanded response before guests arrived, including additional water stations and a relaxed policy on outside water bottles.

With more than 4,000 people on-site, the team recorded only three medical calls throughout the event. McCarthy noted that medical calls can range from something as minor as a bandage request to more serious heat-related concerns, making the low number particularly meaningful given the conditions.

"We were going up against triple-digit temperatures and still only needed minimal medical intervention," she said. "That's because we had DTN Weather Hub as a resource, and we were able to develop thresholds in partnership with Steve and DTN as a whole."

A 20-hour head start saved a show

In May, The Astro Amphitheater had roughly 20 hours' notice of severe storms expected the night of a show. Because expected attendance was small enough to accommodate indoors, the team moved the event inside before showtime.

The performance proceeded with only a brief shelter-in-place pause related to a nearby tornado warning, avoiding the full evacuation and likely cancellation that an outdoor event would have required.

The decision allowed guests to enjoy the performance while minimizing operational disruption and preserving revenue associated with the event.

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A 30-Minute Delay Preserved the Full Show

In April, The Astro delayed a concert by 30 minutes because of an approaching lightning threat. The team made the call early enough to adjust plans before guests entered the venue while still working within the amphitheater's noise curfew. The delay helped preserve the full concert rather than risk an interruption later in the evening.

For McCarthy, that is where weather intelligence delivers value beyond safety alone. "Safety is obviously number one for us, but DTN also helps us make better business decisions," she said. "Rather than offering a poor experience, we can delay, move, or adjust an event so guests still have a great experience while staying safe."

LOOKING AHEAD

As The Astro continues to grow, weather preparedness remains a critical part of how the venue operates. McCarthy said guest feedback, repeat attendance, and positive outcomes reinforce that the venue's approach is working.

By combining DTN Weather Hub with venue-specific thresholds and response plans, The Astro can make informed decisions that protect guests, support staff, and preserve the live event experience as conditions change.

"We have a platform we trust and a framework in place," McCarthy said.

