



Delaware Statewide Airport
COUNTING PROGRAM UPDATE
2025 Technical Report



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SECTION 1

Introduction



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 2008, the Delaware Aircraft Operations Counting Program has provided valuable data to airports for planning purposes. DelDOT utilizes this data for system planning, economic impact studies, annual reports, and funding considerations. Now that operational data is not available on the FAA's Form 5010, these operational counts have become more and more important to DelDOT. The following airports were surveyed in 2025:

- Chorman
- Delaware Airpark (NPIAS)
- Delaware Coastal (NPIAS)
- Jenkins
- Laurel
- Smyrna
- Summit

Analysis of aircraft operations counts data and production of this report for Laurel Airport (N06) and Chorman Airport (D74) were mostly funded via the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Improvement Program, Grant No. 3-10-0000-019-2023. The State of Delaware matched the remaining 10 percent. Analysis of aircraft operations counts data and production of this report for Delaware Airpark (33N), Delaware Coastal Airport (GED), Summit Airport (EVY), Chandelle Airport (0N4), and Jenkins Airport (15N), were entirely funded by the State of Delaware.

This year was the first time that DelDOT has surveyed Summit Airport. Previously, information was taken either from the FAA's 5010 or from the DVPRC aircraft operational noise counting programs. That program lapsed years ago and this year's survey by DelDOT was the first empirical data gathered from Summit Airport since before the Covid pandemic.

The sampling plan for Delaware airports involved the placement of a Rion Sound Level Meter NL-43 sound meter acoustical counter (SMAC) at each airport. The SMACs record noise events at each airport which are then processed with software provided by the manufacturer. The software uses the maximum decibel level of the event to determine if it was an aircraft operation. The operations are then manually checked for errors and extrapolated into seasonal and annual operations.

As of February 2025, the six noise counters were readied for use in surveying aircraft operations at all eligible Delaware airports. In the meantime, an additional method was used to estimate operations at airports with less than 4 quarterly surveys.



Figure 1: Sound Meter
Acoustical Counter

Delaware Statewide Airport
Counting Program Update



1.1. Non-Survey Estimation Method

With a lack of survey data for some quarters, a method was developed to estimate 2025 quarterly and annual aircraft operations. Table 1 shows the comparison of 2024 and 2025 operations at towered airports in and near Delaware. Included in the comparison are Wilmington/New Castle Airport, Easton/Newnam Field Airport, and Salisbury/Ocean City Wicomico Regional Airport.

Table 1: Towered Airport Operational Comparisons: 2024-2025

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
Easton					
2024	11,724	16,719	15,148	10,729	54,320
2025*	9,844	15,289	17,422	10,251	52,806
Wilmington/New Castle					
2024	11,040	12,282	12,501	10,993	46,816
2025*	11,482	10,665	13,035	11,310	46,492
Salisbury					
2024	13,879	18,313	23,181	25,413	80,786
2025*	22,457	22,650	23,798	22,284	91,189
Grand Totals					

Table 1: Towered Airport Operational Comparisons: 2024-2025

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024	36,643	47,314	50,830	47,135	181,922
2025*	43,783	48,604	54,255	43,845	190,487
2-yr Total	80,426	95,918	105,085	90,980	372,409
Seasonality	21.6%	25.8%	28.2%	24.4%	100.0%

* December 2025 operations estimates extrapolated from previous 2025 monthly data

One method to supply missing quarterly data was to use existing survey data for base quarters and apply seasonality percentages for the missing quarters. Depending upon the airport, either their own historical seasonality was used or, the seasonality of the towered airports in Table 1 could be applied.

Of course, there are potential issues with this methodology including:

- Lack of comparability between towered and non-towered airport activity patterns.
- Differing weather minimums between towered and non-towered airports.
- Perhaps other differences in based aircraft characteristics.

Despite these limitations, the operational totals represent the best available data and serve as a basis for comparison of aircraft activity at Delaware airports. The fact that averages were used instead of just looking at one airport helps damper the potential bias.

1.2. Counter Rotation Schedule and Field Operations

The Delaware Aircraft Operations Counting Program relies on a structured counter rotation schedule to ensure consistent, repeatable data collection across the statewide airport system. Acoustic noise counters are deployed and retrieved through weekly field visits, with responsibility for day-to-day handling and deployment assigned to DelDOT Office of Aeronautics interns participating through a cooperative program with Delaware State University (DSU).

This arrangement provides DelDOT with a reliable and cost-effective means of collecting operational data while also offering practical field experience to DSU aviation and engineering students.

Program objectives

The counter rotation schedule is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Collect two-week acoustic samples at each airport during targeted sampling periods
- Maintain priority coverage at higher-activity airports

- Rotate spare counters among lower-activity airports to ensure periodic coverage
- Minimize travel time and staff effort through geographic grouping of airports

Airport coverage

The rotation schedule includes the following public-use airports:

- Smyrna Airport (38N)
- Laurel Airport (N06)
- Jenkins Airport (15N)
- Chandelle Airport (0N4)
- Chorman Airport (D74)
- Summit Airport (EVY)
- Delaware Airpark (33N)
- Delaware Coastal Airport (GED)

Delaware Coastal Airport requires separate counter placement to capture activity on both runway orientations.

Rotation strategy

Under the schedule, high-priority airports (Chorman, Summit, Delaware Airpark, and Delaware Coastal) are sampled on a recurring basis, with counters retrieved after two weeks of continuous operation. At the same time, spare counters are rotated among other airports to collect comparable two-week samples on a staggered basis.

Airports are grouped into northern and southern routes relative to the DelDOT base of operations to reduce travel time and improve efficiency. Weekly trips typically require between two and three hours, including travel and on-site servicing.

Weekly field schedule

The rotation follows a multi-week cycle that repeats throughout the year. A representative schedule includes:

- **Week 1:** Chorman and Delaware Coastal (placement of spare counter)
- **Week 2:** Chandelle (placement), Summit, and Delaware Airpark
- **Week 3:** Chorman, Delaware Coastal (retrieval), and Laurel (placement)
- **Week 4:** Chandelle (retrieval), Smyrna (placement), Summit, and Delaware Airpark
- **Week 5:** Chorman, Laurel (retrieval), Delaware Coastal, and Jenkins (placement)
- **Week 6:** Delaware Airpark, Summit, Smyrna (retrieval), and Chandelle (placement)
- **Weeks 7–9:** Continuation of the rotation pattern beginning at Week 5

This cycle ensures that each airport receives periodic acoustic sampling while maintaining continuous coverage at higher-priority locations

Oversight and data integrity

Interns are responsible for counter placement, retrieval, battery replacement, and initial data handling under the supervision of the DelDOT Office of Aeronautics. Data are subsequently reviewed, screened, and processed by DelDOT staff and consulting support to ensure consistency with established operational counting methodologies.

SECTION 2

Individual Airports



SECTION 2: INDIVIDUAL AIRPORTS

The observed sample data includes only takeoff events. Estimated average daily operations, estimated seasonal operations, and estimated annual operations are calculated from the observed takeoffs. The following tables show these metrics:

- Estimated Average Daily Operations: (Average Daily Takeoffs) x 2
- Estimated Seasonal Operations: (Estimated Average Daily Operations) x (Days in Season)
- Estimated Annual Operations = Winter + Spring + Summer + Fall Operations

On the following pages are sampling results of the acoustic counters for each sampled airport, along with seasonally adjusted estimates for non-sampled airports. As mentioned, airport operations recorded for 2023 and 2024 at three nearby towered airports were used to estimate growth or decline at Delaware airports. Operations from the Civil Air Terminal were provided by Delaware River and Bay Authority and were actual counts. New Castle Airport operations counts were taken from FAA control tower records. Summit Airport operations counts were derived from acoustic survey data collected in 2025, representing the first empirical measurement at the airport in several years.

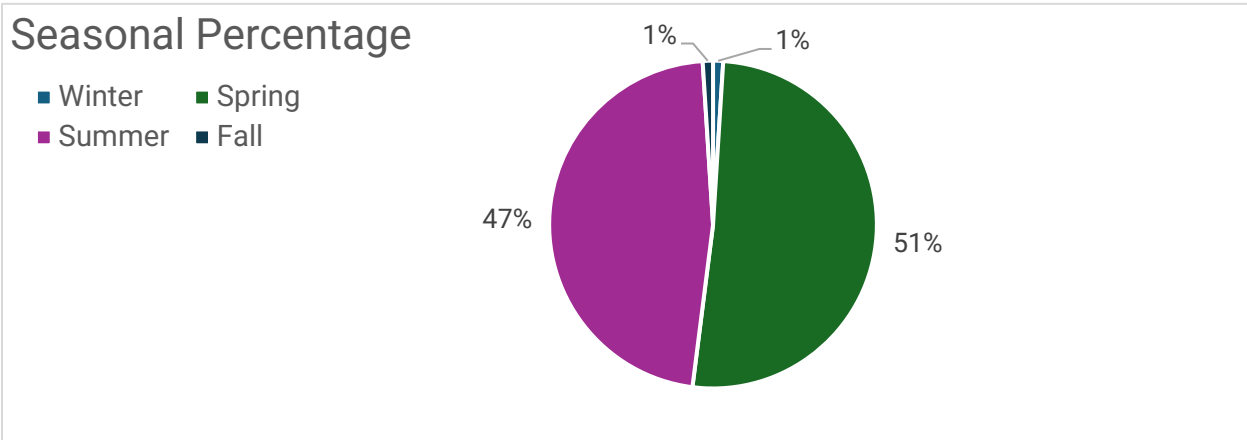


2.1. Chandelle Airport

Table 2: Chandelle Airport (ON4) Seasonally Adjusted Summary- 2025

Season	Year	Average Daily Operations	Total Seasonal Operations	Percentage of Annual Operations
Winter	2025	0.5	45	1%
Spring	2025	25.2	2,291	51%
Summer	2025	22.9	2,111	47%
Fall	2025	0.5	45	1%

Annual Operations: 4,492



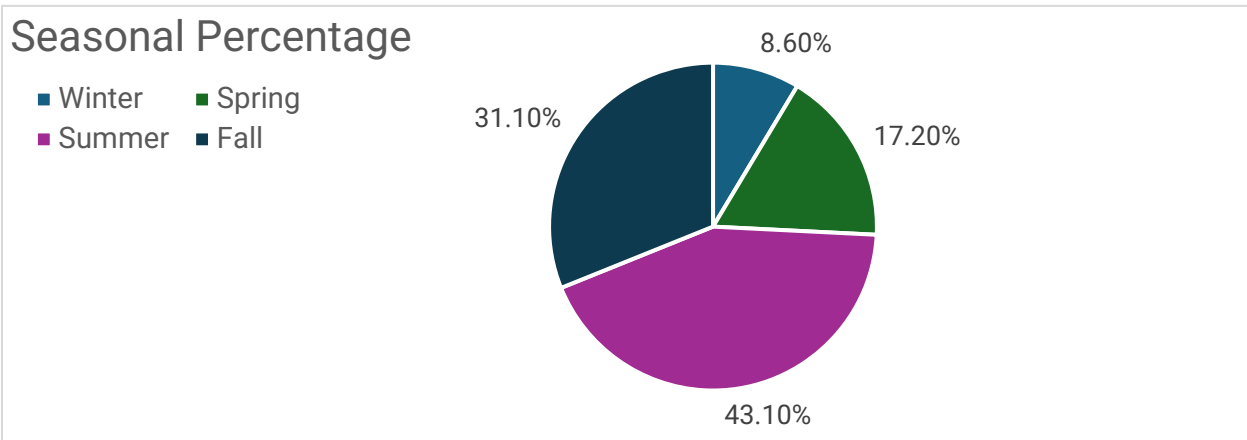


2.2. Chorman Airport

Table 3: Chorman Airport (D74) Seasonally Adjusted Summary- 2025

Season	Year	Average Daily Operations	Total Seasonal Operations	Percentage of Annual Operations
Winter	2025	10.4	946	8.6%
Spring	2025	20.9	1,902	17.2%
Summer	2025	51.8	4,766	43.1%
Fall	2025	37.8	3,440	31.1%

Annual Operations: 11,054



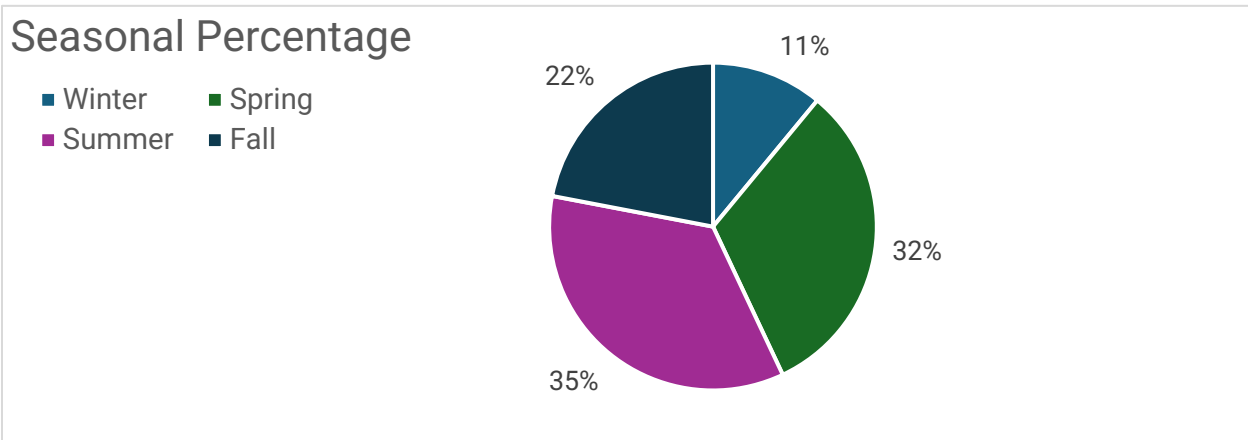


2.3. Delaware Airpark

Table 4: Delaware Airpark (33N) Seasonally Adjusted Summary- 2025

Season	Year	Average Daily Operations	Total Seasonal Operations	Percentage of Annual Operations
Winter	2025	27.0	2,457	11%
Spring	2025	77.4	7,043	32%
Summer	2025	83.5	7,682	35%
Fall	2025	53.4	4,869	22%

Annual Operations: 22,051





2.4. Jenkins Airport

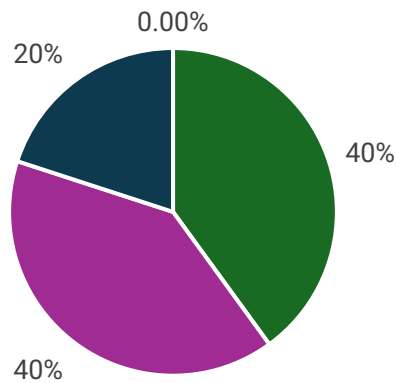
Table 5: Jenkins Airport (15N) Seasonally Adjusted Summary- 2025

Season	Year	Average Daily Operations	Total Seasonal Operations	Percentage of Annual Operations
Winter	2025	0	0	0.0%
Spring	2025	0.2	19	40%
Summer	2025	0.2	19	40%
Fall	2025	0.1	9	20%

Annual Operations: 47

Seasonal Percentage

- Winter
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall



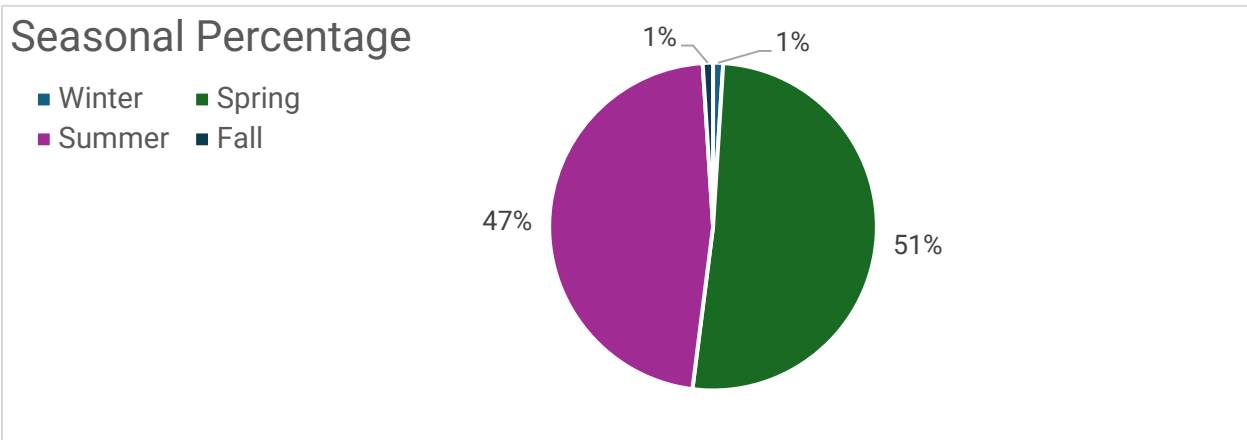


2.5. Chandelle Airport

Table 6: Chandelle Airport (ON4) Seasonally Adjusted Summary- 2025

Season	Year	Average Daily Operations	Total Seasonal Operations	Percentage of Annual Operations
Winter	2025	0.5	45	1%
Spring	2025	25.2	2,291	51%
Summer	2025	22.9	2,111	47%
Fall	2025	0.5	45	1%

Annual Operations: 4,492





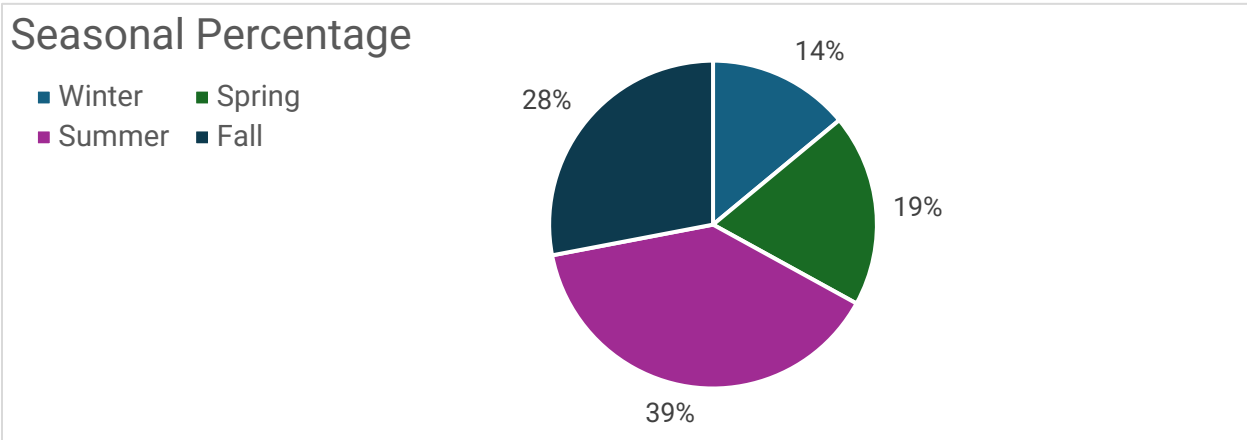
Counter Location

2.6. Smyrna Airport

Table 7: Smyrna Airport (38N) Seasonally Adjusted Summary- 2025

Season	Year	Average Daily Operations	Total Seasonal Operations	Percentage of Annual Operations
Winter	2025	5.3	482	14%
Spring	2025	7.2	655	19%
Summer	2025	14.6	1,344	39%
Fall	2025	10.6	965	28%

Annual Operations: 3,445



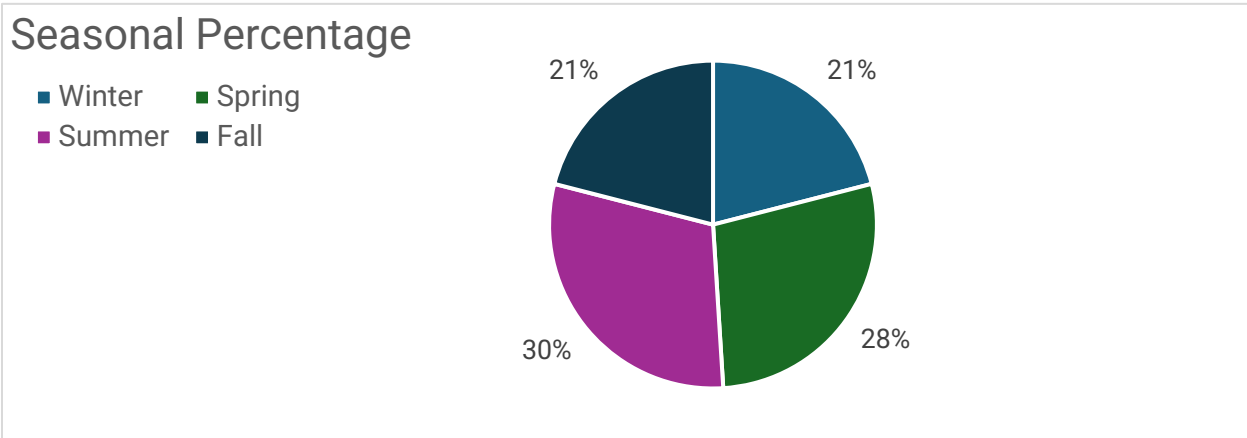


2.7. Delaware Coastal Airport

Table 8: Delaware Coastal Airport (GED) Seasonally Adjusted Summary- 2025

Season	Year	Average Daily Operations	Total Seasonal Operations	Percentage of Annual Operations
Winter	2025	88.5	8,054	21%
Spring	2025	118.3	10,765	28%
Summer	2025	126.5	11,638	30%
Fall	2025	92.9	8,454	21%

Annual Operations: 38,911





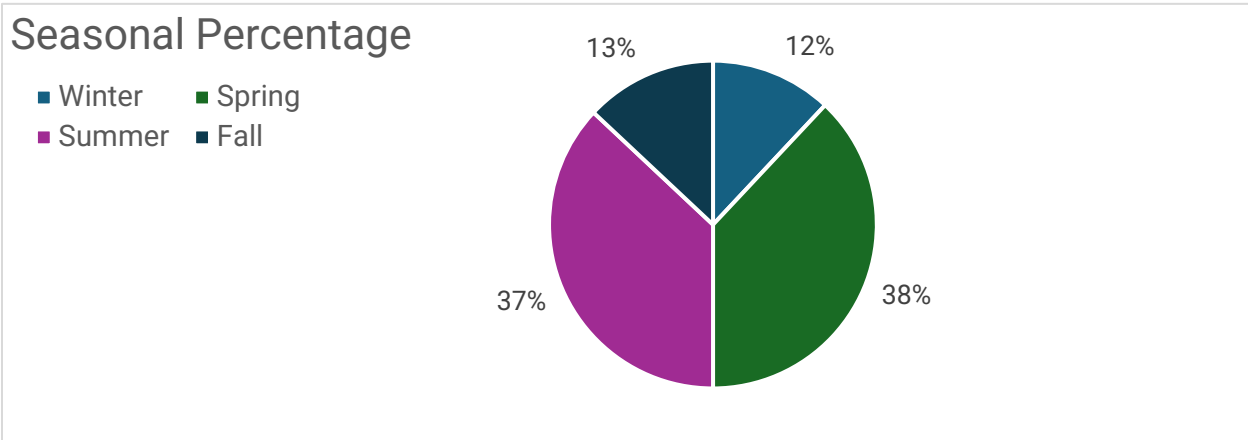
Counter Location

2.8. Laurel Airport

Table 9: Laurel Airport (N06) Seasonally Adjusted Summary- 2025

Season	Year	Average Daily Operations	Total Seasonal Operations	Percentage of Annual Operations
Winter	2025	6.6	597	12%
Spring	2025	20.8	1,891	38%
Summer	2025	20.0	1,841	37%
Fall	2025	7.1	647	13%

Annual Operations: 4,975



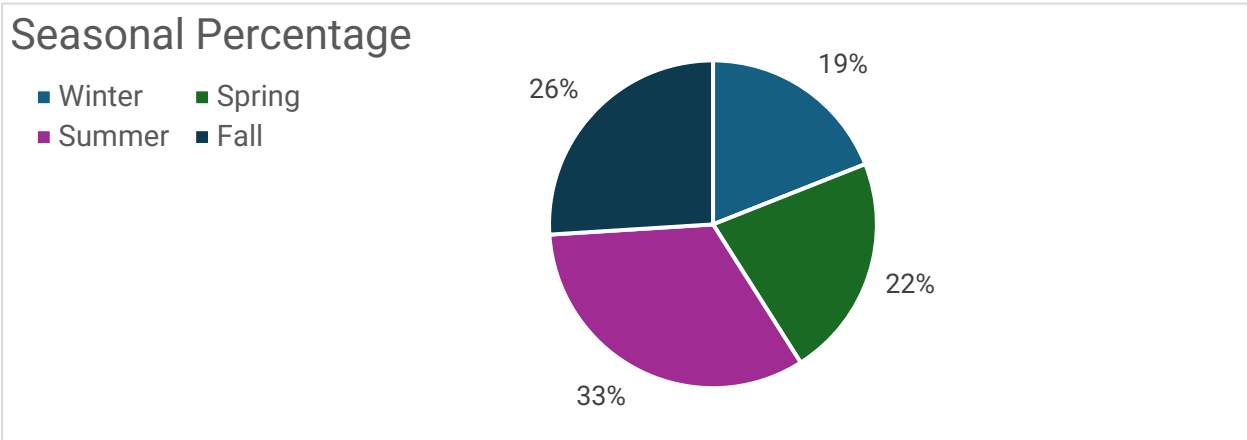


2.9. Summit Airport

Table 10: Summit Airport (EVY) Seasonally Adjusted Summary- 2025

Season	Year	Average Daily Operations	Total Seasonal Operations	Percentage of Annual Operations
Winter	2025	33.3	3,030	19%
Spring	2025	37.0	3,367	22%
Summer	2025	56.1	5,161	33%
Fall	2025	44.0	4,004	26%

Annual Operations: 15,562



SECTION 3

Summary Results





SECTION 3: SUMMARY RESULTS

Table 10 presents a summary of the 2025 operation counts and compares them to 2024 levels. Overall, there was a Statewide decrease of almost 10 percent in aircraft operations (15,757 fewer operations). Because the estimates from Summit Airport had no survey data supporting them for at least five years prior to 2025, it could be that its operations were close to the survey estimate of 15,562 for years, and that the totals for the State were inflated in the past. This shows the importance of the operations survey program and how it can provide better data for analysis and planning.

Table 11: Summary of Aircraft Operations Counts: 2024-2025

Airport	2024	2025	Change	% Change
Chandelle Airport	4,290	4,492	202	4.7%
Chorman Airport	9,503	11,054	1,551	16.3%
Civil Air Terminal, Dover AFB	226	226	0	0.0%
Delaware Airpark	26,767	22,051	-4,716	-17.6%
Delaware Coastal Airport	39,869	38,911	-958	-2.4%
Jenkins Airport	46	47	1	2.2%
Laurel Airport	4,751	4,975	224	4.7%
New Castle Airport	46,816	46,492	-324	-0.7%
Smyrna Airport	3,290	3,445	155	4.7%
Summit Airport	27,454	15,562	-11,892	-43.3%
Total	163,012	147,255	-15,757	-9.7%



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