



U.S. has a looming sewage problem

INSIDE, 6A

YOUR NORTHWEST ILLINOIS NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1847

THE JOURNAL-STANDARD

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026 | JOURNALSTANDARD.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



Regular community events, from farmers markets to fireworks, build emotional ties to a place. GETTY IMAGES

Foster hometown pride to grow civic engagement

Local patriotism one cure for sour feelings about politics

Sean Richey
Georgia State University | THE CONVERSATION

Eileen Higgins won a historic victory in December. She became the first woman ever elected mayor of Miami, as well as its first Democratic mayor since 1997. • Although the stakes in the city's Dec. 9, runoff election were high, interest was not – 4 in 5 registered voters stayed home.

Low turnout is common in municipal elections across the country. While much of the nation's political attention stays focused on Washington, the leaders who control the nation's streets, schools and neighborhoods are typically chosen by a small fraction of citizens.

Although many Americans can identify their U.S. senators or members of Congress, far fewer can name even one of their local elected officials, such as a city council member. To cite one example, a North Carolina study found that 86% of state residents could not identify their own elected leaders, including local government officials.

See LOCAL PRIDE, Page 4A



Turnout in local elections regularly falls below 20%, often leaving critical decisions in the hands of small, unrepresentative groups, creating an electorate that's disproportionately White, elderly and affluent.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

People who loved their town were more likely to attend city council meetings, contact local officials, volunteer for campaigns and discuss local issues with friends. The same pattern held for civic participation – from volunteering with community groups to organizing neighborhood cleanups.

Bears are 'committed' to stadium in Indiana

Statement from team supports possible move

Tom Ackerman
Springfield State Journal-Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Despite recent work in Springfield, the Chicago Bears appear to be poised to leave the state.

Indiana lawmakers announced Feb. 19 that they have struck a deal to potentially locate the football team's new stadium Hammond, Indiana, pending the passage of the bill, according to a report from the IndyStar.

The Chicago Bears released a statement on Feb. 19 further supporting their possible move to northwest Indiana.

"The passage of SB 27 would mark the most meaningful step forward in our stadium planning efforts to date," the Bears wrote in a statement, speaking about Indiana legislation. "We are committed to finishing the remaining site-specific necessary due diligence to support our vision to build a world-class stadium near the Wolf Lake area in Hammond, Indiana."

See STADIUM, Page 2A

DOT threatens to cut \$128M in IL highway funding

Hannah Hudnall
Peoria Journal Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

The U.S. Department of Transportation is threatening to pull \$128 million in federal highway funding in Illinois due to the state issuing what the DOT called "illegal foreign licenses."

The department made the announcement Tuesday following a review of the state's non-domiciled commercial driver's license (CDL) program by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

The DOT said in its statement Tuesday that FMCSA found one-in-five non-domiciled CDLs in Illinois were

See HIGHWAY, Page 2A



Trusted by over 48,000 Wisconsin homeowners—no tricks, just reliable results you can count on.

RESIDENTIAL ROOFING CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR

ROOFING | SIDING | WINDOWS



Talk with a Trusted Expert
(815) 265-6529
LICENSE #: 080500016

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to journalstandard.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 183 | No. 39
To subscribe 815-232-0102
©2026 \$1.50

