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Star Courier

INFORMING THE TRI-COUNTIES
FIVE DAYS A WEEK

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2026 | STARCOURIER.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Illinois leads U.S. in tornadoes, hail, wind



Lena continues cleanup efforts on April 20, just days after an EF2 tornado struck the Stephenson County village causing widespread damage to trees, electrical lines and structures. PROVIDED BY ERIN HENZE

IL has more reports in 2026 so far than any other state

Linda Roy
Galesburg Register-Mail | USA TODAY NETWORK

Illinois is leading the nation in tornado, hail and strong wind reports from Jan. 1 to April 19, 2026, according to AccuWeather.

The latest round of tornado activity happened on April 17, when multiple tornado warnings were issued stretching across central Illinois as a strong front moved northeast. Of the more than 40 tornadoes reported in Illinois, one of the strongest was an EF-2, based on the Enhanced Fujita Scale, that touched down and caused extensive damage in Lena, about 13 miles west of Freeport.

The Lena tornado traveled 12.5 miles and was on the ground for 31 minutes.

AccuWeather reported the tornado brought 130-mph winds, damaging more than 370 buildings in Lena, including 19 that were destroyed.

Another EF-2 tornado touched down near Table

Grove, about 17 miles southeast of Macomb.

The NWS tracked the tornado along Rifle Range Road, as winds reached 130 mph, as it caused tree damage in a path 500 yards wide, snapping off trees up to 2 to 3 feet in diameter just north of Rifle Range Road. The tornado curved northeast through mostly forested area, where additional tree damage occurred along with some out-building damage.

The March 10 supercell with deadly results

On March 10, a supercell storm was responsible for the spawning of a dozen tornadoes across Livingston and Kankakee counties in Illinois before moving into northern Indiana. The strongest of these was a NWS reported EF-3 tornado that tracked through southern Kankakee and Aroma Park, according to the U.S. National Weather Service.

See **TORNADOES**, Page 2A

GETTY IMAGES



Western Illinois University co-hosted the ACDA Central Region Conference in March 2026, bringing together 275 students to explore dance as personal and cultural power.

PROVIDED BY WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

'Dance as Power'

WIU, ISU co-host national conference

Nida Tazeen
Galesburg Register-Mail
USA TODAY NETWORK

Western Illinois University and Illinois State University co-hosted the American College Dance Association 2026 Central Region Conference in March, bringing together 22 colleges and universities from across the country.

The conference, centered on the theme "Dance as Power," explored the cultural, political, emotional and spiritual dimensions of dance as both an

See **DANCE**, Page 6A

AI explosion met with debate over regulation

Jenna Schweikert
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

As the artificial intelligence industry rapidly expands, state legislators appear poised to continue imposing regulations on the technology.

Committees in both chambers of the Illinois General Assembly have heard bills that would implement various restrictions and give recommendations on the use of AI in state

See **REGULATION**, Page 2A



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Volume 127 | No. 67
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