

Illinois Weather Trivia for February

February 1

- 1905: The Weather Bureau opened a station in Peoria, at the current Bradley University campus. The station measured temperatures, wind speed and direction, precipitation, snowfall, and barometric pressure.
- 2008: A [major winter storm moved through the Ohio Valley](#) on January 31 and February 1. Most of the northern half of Illinois saw in excess of 6 inches of snow, with 9 to 12 inches from Springfield to Rantoul, as well as the western Chicago suburbs.

February 2

- 1997: After the near record January snowfall in Springfield, February was a major change. Only a trace of snow was noted during the month, tying the record for the least snowiest February. The record was first set in 1935, then tied in 1957 and 1987.
- 2011: A [widespread and unusually significant snowstorm](#) affected a large part of the nation as February began. Excessive snowfall totals of a foot were common in a large area, from Oklahoma northeast to Michigan, with widespread blizzard conditions. 3-day totals over central Illinois were in excess of a foot along and northwest of I-55, with totals as high as 18 inches in Winchester, 17 inches in Princeville, and 16 inches in Havana. Snowfall totals were enhanced by thunderstorms, which caused accumulation rates of 2 to 3 inches per hour. East of I-55, Tuscola and Taylorville reported 4 inches of sleet. Northeast winds on the 1st gusted from 45 to 65 mph, causing blizzard conditions, and resulted in the closure of nearly all of I-39 and I-155, as well as I-74 from Galesburg to Peoria. Closer to the I-70 corridor, ice accumulated from half to ¾ inch thick.

February 3

- 1883: An [extensive area of sleet and freezing rain](#) occurred on the 2nd and 3rd. Two-day precipitation totals (which included rain) ranged from 2 to 4 inches, but most of the sleet and freezing rain occurred late on the 2nd into the morning of the 3rd. Severe damage occurred to trees, telegraph wires, and telephone wires. Ice accumulation of as much as 1.25 inches thick was observed in Atlanta (Logan County). As temperatures fell below freezing following this system, the ice remained on the trees and exposed objects for as long as 11 days.
- 2012: An unusually mild winter was in progress, with temperatures averaging 4 to 6 degrees above normal. Several areas saw temperatures remain at or above zero the entire winter. Springfield had its first winter in 30 years where temperatures failed to fall below zero, and Peoria saw its first winter since 1997-98 without a below zero reading.

February 4

- 1996: A cold wave which began on January 29th peaked on this day in much of the region. Low temperatures across much of Illinois ranged from 15 to 25 below zero; in the northwest part of Illinois, a low of 35 below zero at Elizabeth tied the state's all-time record low (which has since been broken). In central Illinois, lows included 20 below zero at Lincoln, 19 below at Springfield and Peoria, 18 below at Decatur, and 17 below at Champaign.

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February 5

- 2008: A period of mild temperatures, and rain on top of a melting snow pack, led to widespread dense fog during the morning. This resulted in numerous school closures and many traffic accidents. One person was killed in Vermilion County in a traffic accident. In the afternoon, thunderstorms formed along a warm front, causing some severe weather south of I-70, with winds gusting from 60 to 70 mph. Flash flooding was reported on both sides of the front, due to the rain and the rapidly melting snow.

February 6

- 1982: Bitter cold was found across northern and central Illinois. Low temperatures of 20 degrees below zero or colder were noted from near Peoria east to Watseka, and also from the Quad Cities northeast to Rockford.

February 7

- 1904: A tornado touched down in the southern tip of Illinois, hitting the towns of Meridian and Villa Ridge, north of Cairo. Parts of some barns were carried over a mile. Another tornado in Clinton County picked up a home, turned it around, and returned it to the ground.
- 1979: A winter storm affected central and southern Illinois from the 6th through the 9th. The heaviest snowfall of 6 inches was reported near Decatur, Salem, and in the far southeast part of the state. Heavy snow of 5 inches was also found from near Mason City northwest to near Burlington, Iowa.

February 8

- 1978: Meteorological winter is considered to be the months of December, January, and February. The late 1970's were some of the coldest winters on record in central Illinois. Peoria's record cold winter was in 1978-79, with an average temperature of 17 degrees. At Springfield, the coldest winter was the one before that, when an average temperature of 19.6 degrees was noted in the winter of 1977-78.

February 9

- 1870: The U.S. Congress authorized the War Department to take weather observations at key marine ports, assigning this function to the Army Signal Service. The intention was to provide advanced warning of storm systems that could adversely affect marine interests. This service was the forerunner to the current National Weather Service.

February 10

- 1932: Spring made a very early appearance across central Illinois. Peoria reported a high temperature of 74 degrees, setting a record for the month of February. Other record high temperatures for the date included 75 degrees at Springfield, 73 at Lincoln, 71 at Decatur, and 68 at Champaign.

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- 1959: A violent tornado moved from St. Louis into the Venice and Granite City areas of Illinois. While the greatest damage and casualties occurred in Missouri, some damage to factories was reported in Illinois.

February 11

- 1999: Severe thunderstorms quickly moved across central Illinois during the afternoon. These produced downed trees and power lines across many areas. The greatest damage occurred across Tazewell County. Six trucks were blown over on I-74 northeast of Morton, a roof was blown off a house in Delevan, and numerous outbuildings were damaged or destroyed.
- 2003: Thundersnow storms developed over eastern Iowa, and moved rapidly east into Illinois. As the storms moved into the area, damaging winds, lightning, and near whiteout conditions were reported with the passage of the storms. After the storms weakened and moved out, strong gradient winds briefly developed and moved east across the region. The high winds caused 13 freight cars of a 105 car train to leave the tracks near Ancona. One of the derailed cars was carrying battery acid, but no spill occurred. The high winds also created a rare phenomenon, called snow rollers, across much of central Illinois. The snow rollers ranged in size from golf ball size to over 30 inches long and a foot tall.
- 2006: A highly localized heavy snow event affected portions of central Illinois. Cold air aloft helped to produce intense snow showers, with Sangamon County hit hardest. The Springfield area received anywhere from 1 to 8 inches of snow, with the totals increasing from north to south across the city. A separate heavy snow band produced 7 inches in Pleasant Plains, but other areas of western Sangamon County saw nothing.
- 2008: A [major ice storm affected southern Illinois](#), between I-64 and the Ohio River. Ice thickness in excess of ¾ inches was common in this area, with locally higher amounts over an inch located south of Carbondale.

February 12

- 1978: A three-day snowstorm began across northern and central Illinois. The heaviest snowfall was found from near Champaign north to Pontiac, with 8-11 inches of snow being reported. During the winter of 1977-78, 18 severe winter storms moved across Illinois; this storm was the second of four which affected the state during February.
- 2007: [One of the most significant snowstorms in a decade](#) produced 8 to 15 inches of snow, in a large area of central Illinois. This began late on the 12th and continued until late on the 13th. The highest total of 17 inches was reported at Sidell, with 15.8 inches on the southwest side of Springfield. Wind gusts of 40 to 55 mph resulted in blizzard conditions.

February 13

- 1905: Extremely cold temperatures occurred across central Illinois. Decatur's low of 25 below zero is a record for the city; Springfield also established an all-time record low temperature of 24 degrees below zero. Peoria reported 26 below zero, the second coldest temperature in city history. Champaign's 25 below zero reading was also an all-

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time record, although it was tied in 1994.

February 14

- 1990: A winter storm blanketed northern Illinois with 6-12 inches of snow. Further south, a major ice storm was in progress. The worst conditions were reported in Macon, Champaign, and Vermilion Counties. Heavy ice accumulations stretched from Decatur, through Champaign/Urbana, then to Danville. Champaign reported 1.79 inches of precipitation, mostly in the form of freezing rain. Many trees and power lines were brought down by the heavy ice accumulation; power was out for several days in some areas. In Champaign County alone, \$12 million damage was reported.
- 1991: A winter storm produced near-blizzard conditions in central Illinois. Although only 2-3 inches of snow actually fell, northwest winds of 40 mph produced whiteout conditions. A 60 mile stretch of Interstate 57 north of Paxton was closed due to numerous accidents in low visibility; parts of I-55 near Bloomington and I-74 in Champaign were also closed for a time. Wind chills of 40-50 below zero accompanied the storm.

February 15

- 1993: A winter storm dumped heavy snow on central and southern Illinois. Snowfall totals in excess of 6 inches were reported south of a line from Quincy to Springfield to Paris. The heaviest snowfall, 10-12 inches, fell between Carbondale and the Mississippi River. The total snowfall in Springfield from the storm was 7.6 inches.

February 16

- 1976: Severe thunderstorms developed across parts of central Illinois during the late afternoon hours. A tornado touched down in Pana, in Christian County, destroying a home and damaging about 50 others. The storms also produced strong winds in Macoupin, Montgomery, Shelby, and Coles Counties. Damage occurred to trees, power lines, and some buildings as a result.
- 2003: A [long-lasting sleet storm affected southern Illinois](#). The precipitation was almost all sleet south of the Marion/Carbondale area, where an inch or two was reported. Along and north of a Carbondale to Harrisburg line, there was more snow, with total accumulations of sleet and snow in the 3 to 6 inch range. The storm occurred on the Presidents Day weekend. Most schools and businesses scheduled to be open on Presidents Day were closed. Franklin County officials reported about 25 accidents in that county alone, none of which involved injuries.

February 17

- 1994: Unseasonably mild weather spread across central Illinois, which continued until the 20th. High temperatures during the period were in the lower to mid 60s, values which are more typical for April rather than February.
- 2000: A major winter storm exiting the Southern Rockies moved through the Mississippi Valley, and into the Great Lakes. The storm system resulted in a variety of weather, ranging from heavy snow to freezing rain and rain. Widespread heavy snow occurred in

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northern Illinois, where amounts ranged from 5 to 10 inches, with some 12 inch totals in the Chicago area. Further south, an ice storm affected central parts of Illinois, near the Illinois River Valley, from late in the evening on the 17th through the late afternoon hours of the 18th. A quarter to half an inch of ice resulted in numerous reports of downed power lines and tree limbs, extended power outages and traffic accidents. One traffic accident in Woodford County, attributed to an icy road, resulted in one serious injury.

- 2014: A winter storm produced a variety of weather across the area. Areas along and north of I-74 saw 3 to 5 inches of snow, while an extensive mixture of freezing rain and sleet changed over to snow further south. Ice accumulations of around $\frac{1}{4}$ inch were reported along the I-72 corridor and east to Danville. During the late afternoon, snow rollers formed as wet snow accumulated on the icy ground, then were blown into log-shaped "snowballs."

February 18

- 1993: The low temperature in Springfield fell to 15 degrees below zero. This day, and the previous day, were the only two days in 1993 that had a low temperature below zero.

February 19

- 1888: Severe thunderstorms over southern Illinois spawned a violent tornado which touched down in Jefferson County and devastated the southeast half of Mount Vernon. The tornado killed 24 people, injured 80 others, and destroyed or damaged 300 homes and 50 businesses. Overturned wood stoves ignited many fires in the wreckage. This currently stands as the 9th deadliest Illinois tornado on record.

February 20

- 2014: A powerful late winter storm brought severe weather to parts of the Midwest. Over central and southern Illinois, 11 tornadoes were reported, mainly between the I-72 and I-70 corridors, although none occurred as far south as Murphysboro. The strongest one touched down near Nokomis, and moved northeast past Pana to north of Tower Hill. It was on the ground for 22 miles, and was rated at EF-2 intensity with a peak wind of 115 mph. Even behind the storms, wind gusts of 45 to 65 mph persisted well into the evening, and the gust of 64 mph at Springfield set its February record.

February 21

- 1997: A storm system moving through the central U.S. brought copious rainfall to parts of northern and central Illinois on the 20th and 21st. A large area of the state from Quincy to Chicago reported in excess of 3 inches of rain, with local amounts to near 4 inches. Peoria reported a two-day rainfall total of 3.58 inches, which is about 2-1/2 times the normal for the entire month of February.
- 2008: An [ice and sleet storm](#) occurred across far southern portions of Illinois. Ice accumulations of $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch were reported along the Ohio River, while sleet accumulated up to 2.5 inches in depth near Mount Vernon.

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February 22

- 1994: Heavy snow fell across northern Illinois, beginning the afternoon of the 22nd and continuing into the next day. Snowfall totals included 9.6 inches at Moline, 9.3 inches at Rockford, 9.1 inches at Chicago, and 10 inches at Romeoville. Strong northeast winds caused considerable blowing and drifting of the snow.

February 23

- 2003: A [short but intense snowstorm](#) was noted across southern Illinois, as surface low pressure tracked from Arkansas to Kentucky. Between 5 and 7 inches of snow fell across Lawrence County, southward to a Carbondale to Carmi line. Visibility was less than one quarter mile during the heaviest snow bursts, and was accompanied by thunder and lightning in a few spots.

February 24

- 1930: The high temperature of 78 degrees in Springfield established the city's February high temperature record; Decatur also recorded a month record high of 75 degrees. Peoria's high of 71 was a record for the date, and the low of 54 was the warmest February low temperature on record. Champaign also established a record high of 70 degrees.

February 25

- 1956: Overnight violent tornadoes in the St. Louis area moved across the Mississippi River into St. Clair County. One passed through Dupou, destroying or damaging 30 homes. A second tornado tore apart much of the southwest part of Summerfield. Each tornado killed 3 people. Other tornadoes later in the night affected Clinton, Richland, and Lawrence Counties.
- 1993: Areas of central and southern Illinois that were affected by a winter storm earlier in the month received another blast of heavy snow. Snowfall totals included 13 inches at Quincy and 10-12 inches in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Springfield's storm total was 6.9 inches.

February 26

- 1996: Central Illinois experienced weather more typical of mid spring rather than late winter. Regional high temperatures were in the lower and mid 70s. A high of 75 degrees at Lincoln was a record for the month; other record highs for the date were established at Springfield, with 74 degrees, and Decatur, with 73. Severe thunderstorms moved through the region during the evening hours, producing hail as well as an 80 mph wind gust that extensively damaged the Macon County Fairgrounds near Decatur.
- 1997: The second major rainstorm in a week affected central and eastern Illinois. The heaviest rainfall, of over 2 inches, was found in east central parts of the state east of I-57. Rainfall of 1.63 inches at Springfield and 1.28 inches in Peoria fell on top of already saturated ground, further aggravating river flooding across the area.

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February 27

- 1876: A tornado moved across Madison County for 7 miles, peaking at an estimated F3 intensity, and destroying 11 homes, two churches, and a school in the western part of New Douglas. The death toll of 3 included a preacher during a church service, and two people in a funeral procession.

February 28

- 1900: Extremely heavy snow fell over central Illinois. Peoria reported 18 inches of snow during a 24-hour period on the 27-28th, the city's all-time record. A total of 15 inches at Springfield stood as the all-time record for over a century.
- 2017: A total of 16 tornadoes occurred across Illinois. Several tornadoes north of I-72 were the farthest north occurring tornadoes in February on record for the state. [Strong \(EF3\) tornadoes affected Naplate and Ottawa](#) in La Salle County, killing two people, while [a third in Washburn](#) spent much of its time in open farmland. In [southern Illinois](#), one EF4 tornado moved in from Missouri and was on the ground for 50 miles, while a second tornado (EF3) took a 45 mile path from southeast Illinois into Indiana.

February 29

- 2000: Severe thunderstorms moved across parts of west central Illinois. In Scott County, a grain silo in Riggston was blown over, and a semi trailer rolled into a field. In Morgan County, a metal storage building near Concord lost its roof, and several trees were blown down. In Logan County, two mobile homes in Broadwell lost part of their roofs.