

2009 Severe Weather Fact Sheet

National Weather Service Lincoln, IL

Hazardous Weather Impacts

- The **most storm-related fatalities** in the United States, over the past 30 years, **have been attributed to floods** (average of 99 each year); followed by lightning (62), and tornadoes (54).
- The devastating flooding of 2008 directly resulted in 6 fatalities in Illinois. Four of the fatalities occurred in vehicles trying to cross a flooded roadway. This was the most since the Great Flood of 1993.
- Tornadoes in Illinois have killed 202 people, and injured nearly 4,100 since 1950.
- Average annual damage from tornadoes, hurricanes and floods in the U.S. is about \$14 billion.

Central / Southeast Illinois Severe Weather Statistics

- In 2008, **83%** of all severe weather events (*damaging winds, tornadoes and large hail*) in central and southeast Illinois had advance warning by the NWS in Lincoln, with an **average lead time of 19 minutes**.
- The **peak of our severe weather season** extends from **March 20th through September 3rd**.
- During the 10 year period from 1999 through 2008, severe weather has occurred six times on two calendar dates: **May 31st and August 18th**.
- Of the top 15 counties with the most tornadoes in the state, 10 are in central or eastern Illinois. These are:

Logan (ranked #2), McLean (#3), Sangamon (#4), Tazewell (#5), Woodford (#8), Macon (#10), Champaign (#11), Piatt (#12), Coles (#13) and Douglas (#15).

[Data based on tornadoes per 100 square miles from 1950-2008]

- More than 2,150 volunteer weather spotters were trained in 35 central and eastern Illinois counties last year. More than 600 were new trainees.

Economic and Other Impacts of Weather Forecasts & Warnings

- The cost of NWS services for the average central or southeast Illinois household is only about \$7.50 per year. *(Based on NWS and Census Bureau statistics)*
- NWS Implementation of storm based warnings for smaller areas, and portions of counties, resulted in a **77% reduction in false alarms across central and eastern Illinois in 2008**. It is projected that this improvement will save U.S. businesses and the public nearly \$100 million in sheltering costs each year (e.g. lost business, lost productivity, etc...).
- Economists have estimated that improved *El Nino/La Nina* forecasts have resulted in annual savings of nearly \$300 million for U.S. agriculture by altering planting decisions.

The National Weather Service mission:

The National Weather Service provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. The NWS is the sole United States OFFICIAL voice for issuing warnings during life-threatening weather situations.

Visit our Internet homepage at: www.weather.gov/Lincoln for the latest weather and river forecasts, warnings, current conditions, radar & satellite imagery, and climate information.