

# Warm Spell Expected To Last

BY CARLA K. JOHNSON  
Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Break out the beach towels, flip-flops and baseball bats: Warm weather is arriving early across much of the U.S., even in northern states where perplexed residents are swapping their snow shovels for golf clubs.

The unseasonably warm weather was pushing throngs of people outside to play Tuesday from the Plains to New England, where March is feeling like May with temperatures ranging from the high 60s to low 80s — smashing dozens of record highs.

Boaters were cruising along the river in downtown Chicago amid one of Illinois' warmest winters on record. Golfers were smacking balls at a central Minnesota course that opened weeks earlier than last year.

And an ice-breaking mission on Maine's Kennebec River on Tuesday was the shortest in recent memory — because the Coast Guard found no ice.

"It's almost like we skipped winter and now we're going to skip spring, too," said Gino Izzi, a senior meteorologist at the National Weather Service's Chicago office.

Forecasters are predicting that temperatures will likely remain unusually high through March.

Izzi said the weather pattern is a random but normal fluctuation. A jet stream moving north to south on the West Coast is pushing an opposite, seesaw effect in the rest of the nation. Atmospheric patterns, including the Pacific phenomenon known as La Nina, have

kept cold air bottled up over Canada and contributed to the warmer winter in snow-acustomed parts of the continental U.S.

Tuesday's warm weather was raising some concerns, including upping the risk of wildfires. The usually warm, dry and windy conditions prompted six North Dakota counties to declare fire emergencies and institute burn bans.

Another effect of rising temperatures: Americans' belief in global warming, according to a December poll that found 62 percent of people believed the Earth was getting warmer, an increase from previous polls. Nearly half of them based that belief on personal weather observations, University of Michigan and Muhlenberg College researchers found.

In Minnesota, golfers were greeting the sunshine at the Eagle Valley Golf Course in suburban St. Paul that opened Tuesday — weeks earlier than last year's chilly, soggy spring start. Within an hour of its post-lunch opening, dozens of players were on the course, head golf pro Dan Moris said.

"We're hoping this is a sign of good things to come," Moris said.

The ice rink was empty at Chicago's iconic Millennium Park, where crowds were instead strolling and admiring the reflection of the skyline in a large, mirror-surfaced sculpture known as the Bean.

Nearby, new city residents Katie and Chris Anderson left work early to spend their second wedding anniversary on a tennis court. They said they were surprised by the weather because of Chicago's legendary cold winter.

"I was really nervous about moving here," Katie Anderson said. Her husband added: "We expected the worst."

In Boston, pedestrians traded puffy jackets and knit hats for short sleeves. At a tanning salon in the city's Seaport District, a pair of flip-flops sat in front of one tanning booth, and a pair of sneakers rested by another.

"Everyone definitely has spring fever," employee B-Jay Angiulo said, adding that it was a good sign for business that two of the six tanning booths were full before 5 p.m. "I think the sun's out so people want to get a little spring color going on."

In Tennessee, where temperatures since December have been 4 degrees above normal, tourism officials said the weather should help their industry, including the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, country music attractions in Nashville and Elvis Presley's Graceland home in Memphis.

"People get out when the weather is nice," said Susan Whitaker, the state's tourism commissioner.

In downtown Washington, most of the benches at a local park were filled with people enjoying the weather. Taylor Jantz-Sell, a government employee, had brought some reading she needed to do to the park.

"This is my favorite time of year, watching the blossoms come out," she said, adding that she'd seen daffodils and crocuses, and ran to work Tuesday morning because of the weather.

"It's a sign of good things to come," she said.

## Animal Group Offended By Neb. Gov's Speech

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska-chapter head of a national animal welfare group said she was offended by language used by Gov. Dave Heineman when he vowed to force her organization out of the state.

Jocelyn Nickerson, state director of the Humane Society of the United States, hand-delivered a letter to Heineman's office on Monday urging the governor to "get off your soapbox" and embrace a discussion about animal welfare.

The letter followed Heineman's comments last week in a speech to cattlemen in Lexington. Referring to the Humane Society, Heineman told the cattlemen: "We're going to kick your ass and send you out of the state."

The comment drew a standing ovation, *The Lincoln Journal Star* reported.

In an interview after she dropped off her letter, Nickerson told the newspaper she took the governor's remarks personally.

"We have 51,000 members in the state who all love animals," said Nickerson, who was named the Humane Society's first Nebraska state director in 2010. "And where does the governor want us to go?"

Heineman has had hostile relations with the national animal advocacy group since at least 2010, when Humane Society President Wayne Pacelle stopped in Lincoln. The Humane Society of the United States is a separate entity from local and state humane societies.

Pacelle said he visited Lincoln to talk to agriculture leaders about gestation crates for hogs and other common livestock confinement practices that his group opposes.

Pacelle has said the Humane Society of the United States has no immediate plans to try to put a ballot issue regulating treatment of animals before Nebraska voters, as the group has done in other states.

Heineman and prominent livestock groups have argued the Humane Society is opposed to modern agriculture.

On Monday, Heineman spokeswoman Jen Rae Hein issued a statement from the governor saying the national animal rights group is "anti-agriculture, and I am going to continue to stand with Nebraska's farmers and ranchers to fight this leftist organization that wants to destroy the No. 1 industry in our state."

# A+ Students of the Week



### Olivia Boese

**Parents:** Ted & Cindy Boese  
**Grade:** 9th  
**School:** Freeman Academy  
**Favorite Subject:** Spanish & Bible  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Being in an all-school play, "Fiddler on the Roof." It was a good experience and a chance to get to know the older students better.



### Ryan Haggerty

**Parents:** Dan and Heather Haggerty  
**Grade:** 8th  
**School:** Freeman Academy  
**Favorite Subject:** Algebra & Social Studies  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Going to the state soccer tournament.



### Gabriel Eisenbeis

**Parents:** Tim and Anita Eisenbeis  
**Grade:** 10th  
**School:** Freeman Academy  
**Favorite Subjects:** Math, Bible & Biology  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** One of my favorite memories was when our soccer team made it into the state soccer tournament.



### Chris Miller

**Parents:** Craig & Jenelle Miller  
**Grade:** 11th  
**School:** Freeman Academy  
**Favorite Subjects:** Biology & Math  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Going to state in soccer and track.



### Brittany Ries

**Parents:** Duane & Donna Ries  
**Grade:** 12th  
**School:** Freeman Academy  
**Favorite Subject:** Bible & Music  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** My favorite memory is going on choir tour to Salem, Oregon, with my chamber choir. The time spent site-seeing and building stronger friendships with choir members was amazing and worth the many hours we had to travel.



### Jaime Tschetter

**Parents:** Pam Tieszen & Gary Tschetter  
**Grade:** 12th  
**School:** Freeman Academy  
**Favorite Subject:** Biology II & Bible  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Spirit Week



### Gabby Hutchison

**Parents:** Dave and Carmen Hutchison  
**Grade:** 7th  
**School:** Irene-Wakonda Junior High School  
**Why nominated?** Kind and always has a smile, empathetic to her classmates, always willing to volunteer and help out and organized.  
**Favorite Subjects:** Geography & Life Science  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Going to Aurthor's Christmas Movie at the Viborg Theaters for A and B Honor Roll Fun Day.



### Hope Johnson

**Parents:** Sheldon & Brandi Johnson  
**Grade:** 6th  
**School:** Irene-Wakonda  
**Why nominated?** She is a hard worker who always strives to be and do her best. She is kind and helpful to her fellow classmates.  
**Favorite Subjects:** Writing & Spelling  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** When I got my first report card with all A's on it.



### Levi Larsen

**Parents:** Lyle & Ann Larsen  
**Grade:** 4th  
**School:** Irene-Wakonda Elementary  
**Why nominated?** Levi was nominated for his outstanding academics and extra-curricular involvement.  
**Favorite Subjects:** Math & Spelling  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** How I saved up my Lee cash and had the most in the class.



### Emma McDonald

**Parents:** Jay & Brandy McDonald  
**Grade:** 3rd  
**School:** Irene-Wakonda  
**Why nominated?** Emma is a nice young lady that works hard in all her subjects. She is also responsible at her studies, will help other students and puts in extra time on her reading.  
**Favorite Subjects:** Math  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Watching Mrs. L's snake eat a mouse.



### Amy Morman

**Parents:** Dean & Ruth Morman  
**Grade:** 9th  
**School:** Irene-Wakonda High School  
**Why nominated?** Positive attitude, hard worker, takes pride in her work and is friendly.  
**Favorite Subjects:** Geometry, Science & P.E.  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Running at the state track meet as an 8th grader.



### Tate Nielsen

**Parents:** Shawn & Tamie Nielsen  
**Grade:** 5th  
**School:** Irene-Wakonda  
**Why nominated?** Tate has worked hard all year. He has set goals for himself and has gone above and beyond in his efforts to achieve them. He has grown in his studies and has become one of the top students in his class.  
**Favorite Subjects:** Math & Science  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Going to Wakonda for the first time.



### Michael Saffel

**Parents:** Martin & Vicki Saffel  
**Grade:** 10th  
**School:** Irene-Wakonda  
**Why nominated?** Self motivated, goal oriented, sets high standards and has excellent academic ability.  
**Favorite Subjects:** Algebra II  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Going through debate in English.



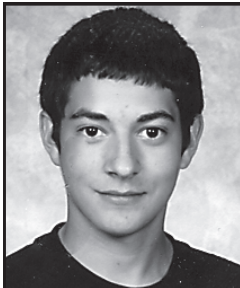
### Samantha Smith

**Parents:** Marshall & Sheryl Smith  
**Grade:** 12th  
**School:** Irene-Wakonda High School  
**Why nominated?** Great kid with a wonderful future ahead, very friendly.  
**Favorite Subjects:** Anatomy or Science classes  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** My favorite memory is spending a week in Nashville for FCCLA.



### Maria Van Driel

**Parents:** Pete & Sharon Van Driel  
**Grade:** 8th  
**School:** Irene-Wakonda  
**Why nominated?** Goal oriented, focused, great work ethic and well-mannered.  
**Favorite Subjects:** P.E., Health, Shop & Driver's Ed  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Playing liebro for the high school B team.



### Jake Vollmer

**Parents:** Jason & Rochelle Vollmer  
**Grade:** 11th  
**School:** Irene-Wakonda  
**Why nominated?** Focused, very personable, positive leader to his peers, great athlete and attitude.  
**Favorite Subjects:** Pre-Calculus, History & Accounting I  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Making it to State Cross Country three years in a row, and finishing 2nd as a team the last two years.



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