

Jim Pillen Governor

STATE OF NEBRASKA

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May 1, 2024

The Honorable Joseph Biden President of the United States The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, D. C. 20500

Through: Regional Administrator Andrea Spillars FEMA Region VII Kansas City, Missouri, 68114

Dear President Biden:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare a major disaster for the state of Nebraska as a result of statewide severe weather including severe thunderstorms, high winds, hail, heavy rain, and tornadoes for the incident period of April 25 through April 27, 2024.

I am requesting Individual Assistance and Public Assistance Categories A & B for the counties of Douglas and Washington. Additionally, I request Hazard Mitigation for the entire state.

I declared (verbally) a state of emergency on April 27 and signed the Declaration on April 28 for an incident period of April 25 through 27, 2024 (see Attachment A).

The following counties in Nebraska have also declared a state of emergency:

Douglas, Greeley, Howard, Lancaster, Sherman, Washington, and the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska (as a pre-emptive measure)

Damages within the state include, but are not limited to, significant damage to homes and businesses, electrical distribution infrastructure and facilities, primarily in the form of electrical lines and power poles. There is significant damage to trees and structures along the tornado path. Measures to address debris management issues were initiated in communities and associated costs are being identified. The Ponca Tribe of Nebraska submitted a disaster declaration pre-emptively but have not yet identified damages. The State will continue to work with the Ponca Tribe to ensure any damages are included in a federal request.

Nebraska has exceeded the State threshold for requesting a federal disaster. The current estimate for public assistance damage in Douglas and Washington Counties is \$8.1 million. In coordination with FEMA, there is an estimated cost of approximately \$2.5 million on debris clean-up based on GIS evaluation of damaged areas. Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) serves both Washington and Douglas counties and has provided a very preliminary estimated damage cost of \$3 million in Douglas County and \$2.6 million in Washington County. The other counties that have submitted local declarations have provided very preliminary damage estimates adding approximately \$3.4 million to the total incurred in Douglas and Washington. The preliminary total estimate for this incident period is \$11.5 million. While it is known that the state has exceeded the threshold for the Public Assistance Program, the State and FEMA would like to better assess the damages and provide more accurate cost estimates before adding the other categories of work and additional counties to the Declaration.

Douglas and Washington county officials utilized staff trained in individual assistance damage assessment to conduct an assessment and identify the number of impacted homes. Currently, they have identified 166 destroyed homes, 196 homes with major damage, 144 with minor damage, and 264 affected.

The American Red Cross also utilized trained individuals to complete field assessments in Douglas and Washington counties; their preliminary damage assessments are not final but validate the other assessment(s).

FEMA and NEMA staff conducted a preliminary damage assessment for Individual Assistance by flying over the impacted areas of Douglas and Washington counties to view damaged homes. Additionally, NEMA provided imagery of home damage in Douglas and Washington counties to FEMA Region 7 which was reviewed and validated. Below is a chart breaking down the FEMA validated damages by county and by category.

Damage Level	Washington Validated	Douglas Validated	Total Validated
Destroyed	25	134	159
Major	18	31	49
Minor	14	57	71
Affected	12	76	88
Totals	69	298	367

Total Individual Assistance Validated Home Damages

Impacts:

Beginning on April 25, severe storms began impacting portions of the state. Subsequently, on April 26, tornado watch 140 was issued for 30 counties in eastern/northeastern Nebraska at 12:53 pm (also included multiple counties in Iowa). About that time severe thunderstorms began developing southwest of Lincoln near the Kansas and Nebraska border. The storms quickly became severe resulting in numerous reports of large hail, funnel clouds, torrential rainfall, and tornadoes lasting throughout the night. Tornado warnings were issued by 1:43 pm. There were 42 tornado warnings issued by the National Weather Service on April 26 for Nebraska counties. Below are impacts from just four of the 42 tornado warnings issued in the state.

At 2:42 pm a funnel cloud was reported west/southwest of the city of Lincoln, the funnel cloud was reported over downtown Lincoln. There was a brief tornado touchdown on the northwest edge of Lincoln, however, the main tornado was on the northeast side of Lincoln. This tornado damaged public and private property as soon as it touched down and traveled 8.6 miles to the northeast (See Attachment C-1). A steel transmission powerline structure owned by the Lincoln Electric System was toppled almost immediately; power infrastructure was damaged along the tornado path. There were at least two businesses and 10 homesteads that sustained damages from the tornado. One business (Garner Industries) is a large manufacturing facility that had 70 employees inside the facility when the tornado struck. The roof collapsed on over half of the facility. County Emergency Management Officials initially requested Task Force 1 - Urban Search and Rescue but all employees were accounted for, and the request was cancelled. Interstate commerce was also impacted as multiple vehicles were blown over on Interstate 80 and a BNSF train had multiple rail cars pushed off the tracks as the tornado directly hit the train.

Approximately 40 minutes earlier, a tornado warning was issued for Greeley and Boone counties, two hours northwest of Lincoln. This EF-2 tornado was on the ground for 27.5 miles and the warning lasted one hour and six minutes and damaged homes and power infrastructure (See Attachment C-2). Public power districts in these two counties have reported an estimated \$2.1 million in damages. As tornado warnings continued to be issued across the eastern part of the state, damage to public and private infrastructure continued to increase.

At 3:30 p.m., a tornado warning was issued for Douglas and Washington counties. This tornado warning extended for 59 minutes in total, and the EF-3 Tornado traveled 31.2 miles (See Attachment C-3). This wedge tornado had a maximum width of one mile and traveled through Elkhorn, near Bennington (Douglas County) and between Kennard, Fort Calhoun, and Blair in Washington County. Although no community in Washington County was directly impacted, the path of the tornado traveled through residential areas. It is estimated that up to 450 residential structures in these two counties have been severely damaged or are destroyed. OPPD estimates \$3.6 million in damage in Douglas County and \$2 million in damage in Washington County. Debris clean-up just for Elkhorn has been estimated to be \$2.5 million, as stated previously.

At 4:58 p.m. another tornado warning was issued for eastern Douglas County and two counties in Iowa. This tornado formed and significantly impacted Eppley Airfield destroying four aircraft hangers and 31 planes on the east side of the airport (see Attachment C-4). The Airport Authority provided very rough estimate of several million in replacement costs. There will be some insurance coverage, but the coverage amount is not yet known. Because of the unknown estimate amount – nothing has been included for costs. There will be costs identified in the future.

These are just four of the tornadoes that impacted Nebraska during this event. The current estimated damage to public infrastructure across the state is approximately \$11.5 million. The costs will inevitably increase as debris removal as well as power district costs are more accurately gathered. The cost of the damaged or destroyed homes is many times higher than the estimated public infrastructure damage. The economic impact to Douglas and Washington counties will be tremendous due to the number and value of homes destroyed by the tornadoes. Most of the homes have very high market values and obviously high tax values that will be lost from each of the county's tax revenues until replacement homes can be built if they are rebuilt.

The other counties involved but not included yet in the Federal Disaster request have been impacted by multiple disasters over the years and are still working to recover from the financial impact of those events along with multiple events not included in a federal disaster declaration. The Public Power Districts other than Omaha Public Power are located in areas of the state with significantly lower populations. The significant damages and disaster costs puts substantially more pressure on them and often they are forced to pass the costs on to their rate payers – negatively impacting the population of the counties they serve.

Disaster History:

Nebraska has suffered five federally declared disasters since 2019, including the states' largest disaster DR 4420 declared in 2019 and COVID-19 (DR 4521). As a result of those disasters, the state has a current fiscal obligation of just under \$30,000,000 as a state match of those disasters. Nebraska is in the process of conducting PDA's with FEMA Region VII for an event that occurred April 6th and 7th. That event has an estimated total of \$8,472,653. Since 2020, Nebraska has also incurred over \$8M in costs responding to wildfires that were not declared as FMAGs.

An Individual Assistance PDA in Nebraska was last requested in March 2019 for what was declared as DR 4420. Individual Assistance was declared in 29 counties across the state, representing over 7,028 registrations and over \$51 million in assistance to Nebraska citizens. Subsequently, a Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster declaration was also requested and granted with 6,483 loans totaling \$49,112,300 approved. Additionally, the National Flood Insurance Program received 1,026 claims, representing \$39,673,497 disbursed.

Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs):

On April 28, I requested Individual Assistance PDAs for damages potentially eligible under the Individual Assistance Program in Douglas and Washington counties. The assessments were completed on May 1, 2024. A team consisting of FEMA and Nebraska Emergency Management staff conducted the PDAs. More thorough public assistance damage assessments will be conducted in the near future.

Local Response:

City and county law enforcement officials responded to the event by providing traffic control as required, especially in communities with power loss. They have been controlling ingress and egress to the impacted areas. Local utility departments, public works, and road departments worked overtime, removing and clearing debris from streets, as well as restoring power and providing assistance to impacted citizens. Local entities have worked tirelessly to provide assistance to those impacted by the tornado events.

State Response:

Nebraska Emergency Management (NEMA) partially activated the State Emergency Operations Center bringing in some NEMA Staff. ESF Coordinators monitored the situation virtually and responded to requests/needs as they arose. Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy worked with local officials on debris removal operations as well as with utilities as necessary for restoring power systems. Nebraska State Patrol has and is providing assistance to local law enforcement with security and traffic control. Nebraska Department of Transportation has provided barricades and traffic control devices. Nebraska National Guard will be providing up to at least 70 soldiers to assist with access control and traffic flow in impacted areas. Other state agencies have been working to provide assistance to the impacted local jurisdictions.

Category A – There is approximately \$2,500,000 in Category A work. This includes debris removal activities.

Category B – unknown amount at this point in time but anticipated to be significant.

Category C – not identified at this time.

Category D – damage incurred but no estimates available at this time.

Category E – damages incurred but no estimates available at this time.

Category F – significant amounts, but, will be more thoroughly evaluated.

Category G – damages incurred but no estimates available at this time.

It is anticipated that all of these numbers will increase once a declaration is received.

Due to the information in this letter and from the Preliminary Damage Assessment, I respectfully request a Major Declaration of Disaster for Individual Assistance and Public Assistance Categories A and B for the following counties in Nebraska: Douglas and Washington.

Sincerely,

Jim Pillen Governor

Enclosures: FEMA Form 010-0-13 A: State of Nebraska Emergency Proclamation B: Nebraska Geospatial Damage Assessment sheet C: National Weather Service Event Summary pages

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
Federal Emergency Management Agency
REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION
MAJOR DISASTER OR EMERGENCY

	Burden Disclosure Notice	
the form. This collection of information is requir unless it displays a valid OMB control number. for reducing the burden to: Information Collecti	sources, gathering and maintainin ed to obtain a benefit. You are no Send comments regarding the ac ons Management, Department of I	g the data needed, and completing and submitting t required to respond to this collection of information curacy of the burden estimate and any suggestions
-	achments satisfies legal requireme	ents for emergency and major disaster declaration
	espectively, as implemented at 44	C.F.R §§ 206.35 and 206.36. Failure to use this
2a. Name of State (as defined in Stafford Act 1	02, 42 U.S.C. § 5122) or Indian	2b. Population (as reported by
tribal government requesting declaration.		2020 Census) or estimated
State of Nebraska		population of Indian tribal government's damaged area(s). <u>1,961,504</u>
3. Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's	4. Designation of State or Tribal	Coordinating Officer upon declaration (if available)
Name	and phone number	
Jim Pillen	Lexy Hindt, 402-471-7182	
5. Designation of Governor's Authorized Repre phone number Ervin L. Portis, 402-471-7410	sentative or Tribal Chief Executive	e Representative upon declaration (if available) and
6. Declaration Request For: X Major Disas	ster (Stafford Act Sec. \Box (a))	rgency (Stafford Act Sec. 501
	Date offic 7, 2024 or Continuing agen y, 2024 cr seis	questing a "continuing" incident period, enclose an ial statement from a qualified Federal Government ncy acknowledged as a national authority in a specific lent field (e.g., United States Geological Survey for mic incidents, the National Weather Service for ding).
7b. Type of Incident (Check all that apply)		
Drought Earthquake Explos	sion 🗌 Fire 🗌 Flood	Hurricane Landslide Mudslide
Severe Storm (rain, high water, wind-driven, rain, hail, lightning)	Snowstorm (Must include Enclosure D: His Data)	storic and Current Snowfall 🔀 Straight-Line Winds
🗌 Tidal Wave 🔀 Tornado 🗌 Tropical 🛛		
Other (please specify)		<i>2</i> ⁻
enclosed Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive' During the period from the afternoon of April 23 which caused extensive damage to both public damaged or destroyed leaving citizens in need belongings and cleanup what used to be their amounts of power infrastructure were destroyed debris to be cleaned up. Numerous Public Po and tornadoes.	s cover letter. 5th through April 27th severe storr c and private property. Hundreds of a new place to live. Homeown home and local governments are p d by the tornadoes. In the afterma wer districts, communities and res	ers have to take time away from work to search for providing as much assistance as possible. Significant ath of the tornadoes; there are enormous amounts of sidents in NE sustained damages from the storms
security. Nat Guard providing soldiers for secu Environment and Energy is providing assistance assistance as needed. Local: City and County	ed Governor's or Tribal Chief Exec il 26 and 27 and is staying in cont supporting local law enforcement rity. NDOT providing road barricad ce to locals communities for debris law enforcement and Fire officials ons in area. Community utility deg g debris from roadways allowing e	cutive's cover letter. act with Local EMs, monitoring and providing with needs they have including traffic control and les and traffic signals and clean up. NE Dept of cleanup/staging locations as well as utility have and are responding by providing traffic control, partments, public works and road departments are mergency responders access to areas and are

10. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment*	
Individual Assistance Dates Performed Requested Apr 28, 2024 Start Apr 30, 2024 End May 1, 2024	
Individual Assistance Accessibility Problems (Areas that could not be accessed, and why) Due to Magnitude of impacts in highly populated areas of the State and the expediency at which the declaration request is nee be made; more rural areas of the state were not able to be assessed in person. Those rural areas will be assessed and if a dis declaration is received a request will be made to add those areas on.	
Image: Start Apr 30, 2024	
Public Assistance Accessibility Problems (Areas that could not be accessed, and why) Again, Due to magnitude of impacts in highly populated areas of the state and the expediency at which the declaration request needed to be made; permanent work categories of assistance have not been assessed. Staying out of the way of cleanup effor now.	is orts for
11. Programs and Areas Requested	
Individual Assistance N/A Individuals and Households Crisis Counseling Program Disaster Unemplo	yment
X All Disaster Case Management Disaster Legal Services Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Legal Services	ter
For the following jurisdictions, specify programs and areas (counties, parishes, independent cities; for Indian tribal government tribe(s) and/or tribal area(s)) If additional space is needed, please enclose additional documentation). For the Counties of Douglas and Washington the State is requesting ALL individual Assistance programs be activated.	, list
Please see Enclosure A: Supplemental Information for Individual Assistance for additional information in support of this re	quest*.
*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request	

11. Programs and Areas Requested (Continued)
Public Assistance N/A X Debris Removal (Category A) X Emergency Protective Measures (Category B) Permanent Work (Categories C-G)* Image: Control of the second sec
For the following jurisdictions, specify programs and areas (counties, parishes, independent cities; for Indian tribal government, list tribe(s) and/or tribal area(s)). If additional space is needed or your request includes different categories of work for different jurisdictions; please enclose additional documentation. Category A and B is being requested for Douglas and Washington Counties.
Category A and D is being requested for Douglas and Washington Counties.
For States, identify Federally-recognized Tribes included in the requested counties (if applicable).
Please see Enclosure B: Supplemental Information for Public Assistance for additional information in support of this request*.
Indemnification for Debris Removal Activity
I do not anticipate the need for debris removal.
I anticipate the need for debris removal, which poses an immediate threat to lives, public health and safety. Pursuant to Sections 403 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170b & 5173, the State or Indian tribal government agrees to indemnify and hold America for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State or Indian tribal government agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.
Request for Direct Federal Assistance
I do not request direct Federal assistance at this time.
☐ I request direct Federal assistance for work and services to save lives and protect property, and:
a. I request the following type(s) of assistance:
b. List of reasons why State and local or Indian tribal government cannot perform, or contract for, required work and services.
a la consider so with 44 C E D. C 200 200, the State on Indian tribal sourcement concer that it will with respect to direct Enders!
c. In accordance with 44 C.F.R. § 206.208, the State or Indian tribal government agrees that it will, with respect to direct Federal assistance: (1) Provide without cost to the United States all lands, easements, and rights-of-ways necessary to accomplish the approved work; (2) Hold and save the United States free from damages due to the requested work, and shall indemnify the Federal Government against any claims arising from such work; (3) Provide reimbursement to FEMA for the non-Federal share of the cost of such work in accordance with the provisions of the FEMA-State or FEMA-Tribe Agreement ; and (4) Assist the performing Federal agency in all support and local jurisdictional matters.
Request for Snow Assistance
X N/A I request snow assistance.
Snow assistance for the following jurisdictions (Specify counties, independent cities or tribes and/or tribal areas).
Please see Enclosure D: Historic and Current Snowfall Data for additional information in support of this request*.
*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request

11. Programs and Areas Requested (Continued)
Hazard Mitigation* X Statewide OR
For the following specific counties, parishes, independent cities or tribes and/or tribal areas.
12. Mitigation Plan Information*
13. Other Federal Agency Programs
I do not anticipate requirements from Other Federal I do anticipate requirements from Other Federal Agencies I do anticipate requirements from Other Federal
Please see Enclosure C: Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs for additional information in support of this request*.
14. Findings and Certifications
I certify the following:
a. I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local government or Indian tribal government and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary.
b. In response to this incident, I have taken appropriate action under State or tribal law and have directed the execution of the State or Tribal Emergency Plan on Apr 27, 2024 in accordance with the Stafford Act.
c. The State and local governments, or Indian tribal government will assume all applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.
15. List of Enclosures and Supporting Documentation
X Cover Letter X Enclosure A (Individual Assistance)* X Enclosure B (Public Assistance)*
Enclosure C (Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs)
X Additional Supporting Documentation State Disaster Proclamation, NWS Tornado Reports
*
Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's Signature
If anyone except the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive signs this document, please provide the documentation that establishes that this individual has the legal authority to act on behalf of the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive.
*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request

Proclamation

STATE OF NEBRASA

WHEREAS,

WHEREAS,

NOW, THEREFORE,

I HEREBY DIRECT.

I FURTHER DIRECT

I HEREBY AUTHORIZE,

OR REQUEST

Beginning on the 25th day of April, 2024, and continuing through the 27th day of April, 2024, a series of strong storms moved across Nebraska. These severe storms brought thunderstorms, strong winds, multiple tornados, and heavy rains. The storms have caused significant damage to private and public property and infrastructure in the counties of Douglas, Lancaster, and Washington, necessitating an emergency response beyond the resources of the affected area.

The actions necessary to assist in meeting the emergency conditions and subsequent impacts of these events present a burden on the storm impacted areas and required state resources.

Under the provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-829.40, which confers emergency responsibilities and powers upon the Governor, I, Jim Pillen, as Governor of the State of Nebraska, do hereby declare that a state of emergency exists within the storm affected or impacted areas in the state of Nebraska.

The Nebraska Adjutant General, who also serves as State Disaster Coordinator, to activate appropriate State emergency plans and to take such steps as he deems necessary to meet this emergency, and to continue these actions until such time as the threat to life and property created by this situation has been alleviated.

State and appropriate federal agencies to cooperate with and support the the Adjutant General of Nebraska upon his request, as may be appropriate and lawful.

The Adjutant General of Nebraska to activate such elements of State Government and Emergency Management resources as are appropriate to deal with this emergency and to expend such funds, within the limitations of availability, from the Governors Emergency Fund to support these actions.

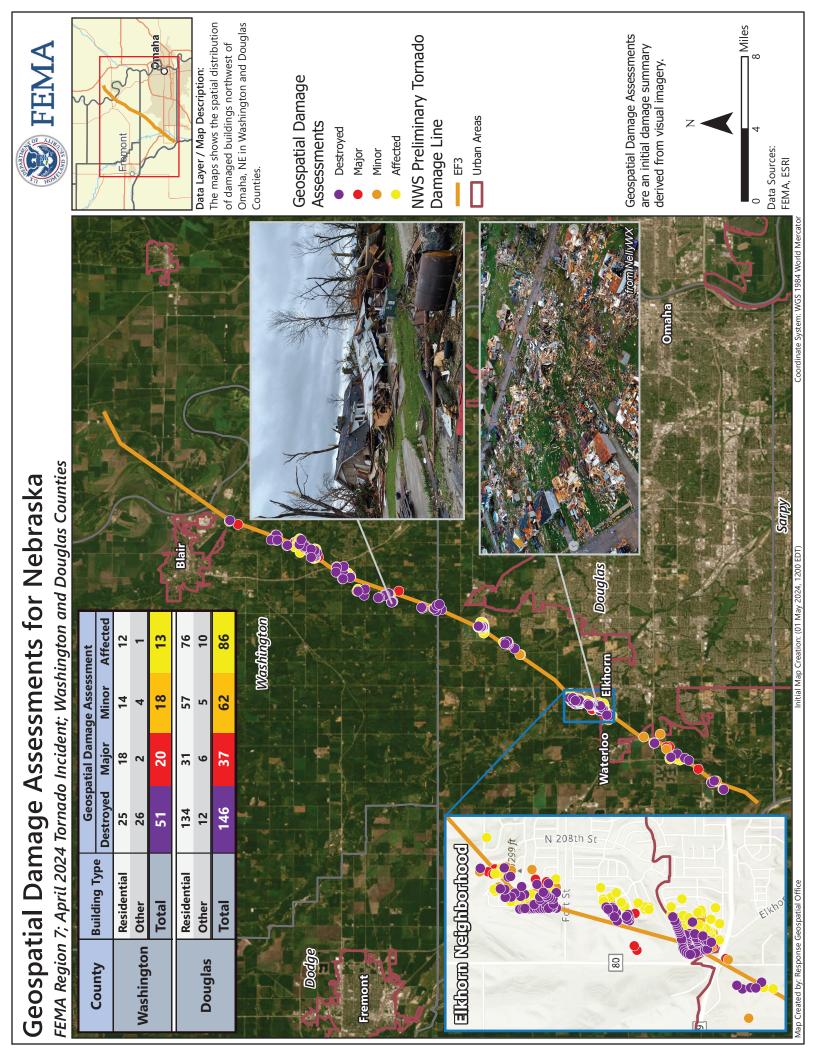
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand and cause the Seal of the State of Nebraska to be affixed this the 28th day of April 2024.

Done at the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, and this 28th day in April in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand Twenty-four.

Attest:

Robert B. Evnen, Secretary of State State of Nebraska

Jim Pillen, Governor State of Nebraska



Tornado - Lincoln / Waverly Areas

Lancaster County

Date	4/26/2024
Time (Local)	2:52 - 3:04 pm
EF Rating	EF-3
Est. Peak Winds	158 mph
Path Length	8.6 miles
Max Width	700 yards
Injuries/Deaths	3/0

This tornado tracked from northeast Lincoln to north of Waverly.

Waverby Based



Downloadable KMZ File



Downed Power Lines North of 84th and Havelock in Lincoln NWS Damage Survey







Damage to Manufacturing Cars Flipped Facility Between Lincoln and And Waverly NWS Da

Cars Flipped Between Lincoln and Waverly NWS Damage Survey Derailed Train Between Lincoln and Waverly NWS Damage Survey

Track Map

Tornadoes

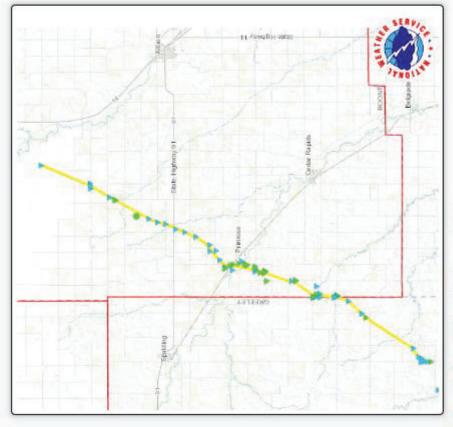
Tornado - Wolbach / Primrose Areas

Greeley and Boone Counties

Date	4/26/2024
Time (Local)	2:04 - 3:10 pm
EF Rating	EF-2
Est. Peak Winds	130 mph
Path Length	27.5 miles
Max Width	500 yards
Injuries/Deaths	Unknown / 0
Summary:	

This tormado developed in rural southeast Greeley County before tracking north-northeast to just west of Primrose before ending in rural Boone County southwest of Petersburg.





🗸 EFO 🗸 EF1 🗸 EF2 🟹 EF3 👿 EF4 💟 EF5 💽 TSTM 🚷 UKN Downloadable KMZ File



Broken Power Poles Near Primrose NWS Damage Survey



Damage to Home Near Primrose NWS Damage Survey



Damage Around 10 Miles West-Northwest of NWS Damage Survey Albion

Tornado - Elkhorn / Bennington / Blair Areas

Douglas, Washington, and Harrison Counties

Date	4/26/2024
Time (Local)	3:30 - 4:29 pm
EF Rating	EF-3
Est. Peak Winds	16 <mark>5 mph</mark>
Path Length	31.2 miles
Max Width	1 mile or (1760 yards)
Injuries/Deaths	Unknown / 0
Summary:	

Summary:

This tornado developed in western Douglas County, south of West Center Rd and tracked northeast through the northwest part of the Omaha metropolitan area, and then to the immediate south of Blair before crossing the Missouri River prior to dissipating southwest of Modale, IA.





Downloadable KMZ File



Elkhorn - 216th and West Maple NWS Damage Survey





Elkhorn - 216th and West Maple NWS Damage Survey





Elkhorn - 216th and West Maple NWS Damage Survey





Elkhorn - 216th and West Maple NWS Damage Survey



Track Map

Tornado - Eppley Airfield / Crescent IA Areas

Douglas, Pottawattamie, and Harrison Counties

Date	4/26/2024
Time (Local)	4:58 - 5:27 pm
EF Rating	EF-3
Est. Peak Winds	152 mph
Path Length	16.1 miles
Max Width	516 yards
Injuries/Deaths	unknown / 0
Summary:	

Crescent, IA before dissipated just north of the This tormado developed at Omaha's Eppley Airfield and moved northeast to just east of Harrison-Pottawattamie County line.







Downloadable KMZ File



Eppley Airfield NWS Damage Survey





Eppley Airfield NWS Damage Survey

Eppley Airfield NWS Damage Survey

Eppley Airfield NWS Damage Survey