

## INSIDE



### SLOPPY SHUTOUT

Lafayette battled Shannon — and the elements — Friday night. The Commodores, thanks to a great showing by the defense, ended up earning a 10-0 win. For more on the game, see today's Sports section on **Page 1B**.

### TITANIC TURNAROUND

Jake Locker and the Tennessee Titans rallied to defeat the San Diego Chargers for the first time in franchise history Sunday afternoon. For more on the Titans' win and to see what else happened in the NFL, see **Page 4B** in Sports.

### SHEDDING LIGHT

Registration is now underway for students and community members invited to raise funds and awareness as well as shed light on the darkness of depression. The fourth annual Walk Out of the Darkness walk will be held at 1 p.m. Oct. 13 in the Lyceum Circle at the University of Mississippi. Read more about the walk on **Page 5A**.

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## Floods wash up mysterious casket

**AZTEC, N.M. (AP)** — Flooding in New Mexico washed up an unexpected item in one small city — a casket.

The Daily Times reports that the rusty casket washed up in an arroyo near Aztec Speedway during the recent flooding in northwestern New Mexico.

The casket's appearance mystified Aztec Well Servicing employees, and when an employee opened it he found what he thought were bones.

But Aztec Police Sgt. Joseph Gonzalez said nothing but trash, towels and junk were inside.

Anti-zoning advocate Carl Bannowsky, who lives near where the body-less coffin was found, says he's sure the mysterious casket is his.

He says one of his three caskets washed away during a recent monsoon rain.

Bannowsky says he collects old cars but had purchased the casket at an auction in the 1980s.



## BURNS-BELFRY RESTORED



Maralyn Bullion (left) and the Rev. Arthur Herod cut the ribbon at the dedication of the Burns-Belfry Museum & Multicultural Center on Saturday.

## Museum, multicultural center opens

### Dedication ceremony held Saturday

BY ALYSSA SCHNUGG  
Staff Writer

Saturday was a day for many in the community to see the fruits of the labor of many people dedicated for several years to restoring the Burns-Belfry building and bringing it back to life as a new museum and multicultural center for all area residents to enjoy.

It was also a day for memories and Herbert Wiley had many of the old building that was home to the congregation now known as the Burns United Methodist Church until 1974.

"It's a reflection of all my years growing up coming here," he said outside of the church after a dedication ceremony Saturday evening. "Seeing my granddaddy singing in the choir and my mom in the choir ... it just means so much to me."

The dedication ceremony for the Burns-Belfry Museum & Multicultural Center began at 5 p.m. in the parking lot of the old church. Jim Pryor, project leader and member of the Oxford-Lafayette County Heritage Foundation, said the renovation project was made possible only through the dedication and commitment by numerous people in the community.

### The past — and future

"This project, this center, is about looking at the



The Rev. Dr. LeRoy Wadlington speaks at the dedication of the Burns-Belfry Museum & Multicultural Center on Saturday.

past but planning for the future," he said during the ceremony.

The church was built in 1910 on the site where Oxford freedmen first built their own house of worship after the Civil War.

John Grisham purchased the building and used it as an office until he moved. A group of citizens approached Grisham about the future use of the building, and the best-selling author agreed to donate the structure in 2002 to the community to be restored.

Saturday's ceremony was the culmination of more than a decade of work by the Oxford-Lafayette County Heritage Foundation, a local preservation group, and the Oxford Development Association, a historically black community organization.

The foundation has raised about \$1.27 million from state and federal grants and private donations. Another \$150,000 is still needed to complete the project.

Ray Neilsen, former chairman of Ameristar Casinos and current chairman of the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation, was inspired by the building's history and the effort to preserve it. He has so far donated \$220,000 toward the project. He fell in love with the building after riding past it on a bicycle one day after moving to Oxford.

"I hit the curb, bent my rim, popped my tire and broke my seat. It was then I looked up and saw this beautiful building," he said. "I saw the sign saying it was under construction and I wanted to be a part of this project. This building has

a unique place in Oxford's history."

"Our people dreamed of a better life and came together to build this place of worship in 1910," keynote speaker the Rev. Dr. LeRoy Wadlington said during the ceremony. "I stand here today in front of this church, an example that dreams can come true. ... They wanted a place to pray and worship to dream about a better day. This act of togetherness is why we are standing here today."

The ceremony, which included a performance by the Oxford Mass Choir, concluded with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and the ringing of the church bell.

The members of the community were welcomed inside the building to get their first glimpse of the renovations and the new historical narratives created by four doctoral students at the University of Mississippi who researched and wrote on four historical themes.

The inside is bright with new paint. A few of the original church pews have been preserved and now sit in front of a large-screen television that shows interviews about the civil rights era and the church's history.

But for those like Wiley, the changes don't matter and the renovations look "nice," but it's the revival of memories and pride that made Saturday special.

"It's more special to me than I can really express," Wiley said, his voice thick with emotion.

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## City ranks main projects

### Parking garage slips down on priority list

BY ALYSSA SCHNUGG  
Staff Writer

The recent addition of about 100 parking spaces in the lot behind the Oxford-University Club has eased the pressure on city leaders to construct an expensive parking garage.

In a work session Friday, members of the Oxford Board of Aldermen ranked their four top priority capital improvement projects and a new parking garage was No. 3 on the list, behind new and upgraded roads and a new activity center.

Mayor Pat Patterson said the city has been monitoring the parking lot during the week and it has found that other than during the home football game two weeks ago, parking spots in the lot have remained available.

"We have yet to fill them up," Patterson said. "I think we eventually are going to have to build a garage, but I'm not sure it's our No. 1 priority."

Alderman Janice Antonov said she agreed that Oxford will need a parking garage one day, but she said the city should focus more on projects aimed at improving the quality of the lives of local residents.

"A parking garage serves mostly visitors to Oxford," she said. "I think it moves down on the priority list so we can spend the funds on projects that affect Oxford citizens."

Alderman Jay Hughes urged the others on the board to continue to move forward with plans for a parking garage.

"The need for one is coming," he said. "Let's not wait until the storm hits until we get an umbrella."

### Slower pace

The aldermen agreed to move ahead with plans for the garage at a slower pace since it can take several years from start to finish to construct a garage. A public hearing on the location of a future garage is scheduled for 5 p.m. Oct. 1 at the aldermen's next meeting at City Hall.

See CITY on Page 2A

## State's labor force shrinks

### New report finds jobless rate dips

BY JEFF AMY  
Associated Press

**JACKSON** — Mississippi's unemployment rate ticked down to 8.5 percent in August as workers kept leaking out of the labor force.

A separate survey showed state employer payrolls fell slightly.

Both sets of figures — adjusted to cancel out

normal seasonal changes — were released Friday by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.

It's the lowest state jobless rate since February 2009. Mississippi's unemployment rate had initially been estimated at 8.5 percent in July, but that was revised up to 8.6 percent. The state jobless rate was 9.3 percent in August 2012.

The labor force declined by more than 4,000 people, continuing a trend of fewer people looking for jobs. Mississippi's labor force has fallen every month in 2013. Mississippi had 110,000

unemployed people in August, down 700 from July, and also down from 124,000 in August 2012. There was a 3,600-person drop in the number of people who said they had a job, driven by the decrease in the labor force.

Mississippi tied with Tennessee and New Jersey for the eighth-worst jobless rate among the states. Nevada retained the nation's worst jobless rate at 9.5 percent, while North Dakota was again lowest at 3 percent.

See LABOR on Page 3A

## PAINT IT PURPLE



BRUCE NEWMAN

Frances Smith dances with a ribbon before the start of Paint It Purple, an Alzheimer's awareness event held Friday in Oxford. Alzheimer's Action Day was observed Friday on the Lafayette County courthouse lawn.