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The Gadsden Times

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GENERAL FUND

Special session looms

BY KIM CHANDLER
Associated Press

MONTGOMERY — Alabama legislators are heading to special session sometime this summer after arriving at an impasse over the state's general fund budget.

The session ended with a vetoed spending plan and plenty of finger-pointing over who was to blame.

Getting a budget this summer will depend on something in short supply this spring: agreement.

"The Legislature was not ready to solve this in February. They were not ready. They have become more ready," Gov. Robert Bentley said.

The session ended with a vetoed spending plan and plenty of finger-pointing over who was to blame.

Republicans control both the governor's office and a lopsided majority in both chambers of the Alabama Legislature. Being of the same party, however, did not shield state office holders from sharp disagreements on how to handle a \$200 million shortfall in the fiscal year that begins in October, and unfunded needs in prisons and Medicaid.

PLEASE SEE SESSION | A7

Local legislators worry about what lies ahead

BY ANDY POWELL
Times Staff Writer

Area legislators say they expect to be back in Montgomery in mid-August for a special session after Gov. Robert Bentley vetoed a General Fund budget that would have cut the budgets of non-education agencies by \$200 million.

The delegation's three House members said more

revenue is needed to fill the budget gap, but Sen. Phil Williams, R-Rainbow City, said he will oppose any tax increases.

Democratic House Minority Leader Craig Ford, D-Gadsden, criticized the Republican-dominated Legislature for what he called a lack of leadership.

"It's just a classic case of revenue is needed to fill the budget gap, but Sen. Phil Williams, R-Rainbow City, said he will oppose any tax increases. Democratic House Minority Leader Craig Ford, D-Gadsden, criticized the Republican-dominated Legislature for what he called a lack of leadership. 'It's just a classic case of

PLEASE SEE WORRY | A7

ECONOMY

Jobs don't equal financial security

BY JOSH BOAK AND CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. economy is churning out a lot of jobs these days but not a lot of financial security for many of the people who hold them.

Pay growth, though improving, remains tepid. Many workers have few opportunities to advance.

Others have taken temporary, part-time or freelance jobs, with little chance of landing full-time

permanent work with benefits.

As a result, many jobs don't deliver as much economic punch as they used to. Part of the reason is that U.S. workers have grown less efficient in recent months.

When they produce less per hour of work, their earnings power shrinks. So the economy doesn't fully benefit from the fuel that healthy job growth normally provides.

PLEASE SEE JOBS | A5

SERVICE WEEK



ERIC T. WRIGHT | GADSDEN TIMES

Jagger Nance dances with Vickie Vaughn Wednesday during a performance by a youth group with an Elvis impersonator at the Holy Comforter House in Gadsden. The group performed as part of Gadsden United Methodist Church's youth Service Week.

Bridging the Gap

UMC youth, Holy Comforter residents mix things up

BY LISA SAVAGE
Times Staff Writer

It was an eye-opening experience for Victoria Smith and about 140 other teens from across Etowah County as they participated in Service Week.

Young people from about six church groups went into the community to provide services, play music, offer entertainment and interact with people of all ages. Service Week helps the teens discover the needs in their own community while learning about the need for clean drinking water around the world.

They experienced lunch with strangers by going into restaurants and buying a meal for someone they didn't know; providing help to feed the homeless at shelters; and doing art projects with kids at the Sixth Street pool and the Boys & Girls Club. They picked up trash and did some recycling.

They carried water buckets in downtown Gadsden for several blocks, several times, to get a glimpse of the experiences of children in Africa, who are missing school because they have to walk miles each day to get clean water.

The week also is about raising money and awareness for well-building projects in the Zambezia Province of Mozambique. Students learned that the average life expectancy in Mozambique is 49 years old and that about 70 percent of the residents live on less than \$2 a day.

Service Week included several visits to nursing homes and assisted living facilities. It was there that Smith, an

PLEASE SEE GAP | A5



ERIC T. WRIGHT | GADSDEN TIMES

A Beatles cover band performs for Holy Comforter residents.



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Volunteer Jami Beck dances with Joe Keracher, a well-known local musician in his own right, during a performance at the Holy Comforter House. View more photos online at www.gadsdentimes.com.

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END OF WORLD

Films of cataclysmic proportions remind us that we all need a shared catharsis.
C1

TODAY'S WEATHER



Expect another warm, humid day with partly sunny skies.
High 93 Low 67
For details, see A8

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