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SPORTS • PAGE A8

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MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2011

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Japan takes hit after hit

By Jay Alabaster and Todd Pitman
Associated Press

ANOTHER EXPLOSION AT STRICKEN NUKE PLANT, PAGE A2

SENDAI, Japan — The estimated death toll from Japan's disasters climbed past 10,000 Sunday as authorities raced to handle a second nuclear plant explosion today, and hundreds of thousands of people struggled to find food and water. The prime minister said it was the

nation's worst crisis since World War II. Nuclear plant operators have been working frantically to try to keep temperatures down in several reactors crippled by the earthquake and tsunami, wrecking at least two by dumping sea water into them in last-ditch efforts to avoid meltdowns.

Today's hydrogen explosion occurred at Unit 3 of Japan's stricken Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant. The blast was similar to an earlier one at a different unit of the facility.

See JAPAN on A2



Mark Baker/AP

Residents queue to collect fresh water in Koriyama, Japan, on Sunday, two days after a giant earthquake and tsunami.

AS ATHENS CHURCH EXPANDS, ITS UNIVERSAL MESSAGE REMAINS THE SAME



Richard Hamm/Staff

Josh Bayne talks about the planned sanctuary for Athens Church during a recent tour inside the old Walmart off Atlanta Highway. When it's finished, the 48,000-square-foot nondenominational church will include classrooms, offices, a "hip" cafe and a 1,200-seat sanctuary, Bayne said. Below, worship leader Trey McKnight.

By Blake Aued
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Athens Church is trying hard to live up to its name.

Young congregation? Check. R.E.M. and Modern Skirts on the stereo? Check. A bench made out of recycled bicycles? Also check.

Even the church's slogan — "Athens, I love you" — is straight-up Classic City.

"We really believe that if God were to say something to Athens, it wouldn't be 'I'm angry with you, you stay out too late,'" said Josh Bayne, who serves as project manager for church construction. "We believe God would say 'Athens, I love you.'"

All the talk of Athens is meant to appeal to the thousands of local college students, 20-some-



Photo courtesy of Athens Church/Special

things and young families who are spiritual but don't regularly attend church, Bayne said.

"We want to create the kind of church we're excited to invite our friends to," the 25-year-old said. It seems to be working.

Founded by pastor Sean Seay, formerly of North Point Community Church in Atlanta, the nondenominational Athens Church has grown to about 2,000 members in just six years. It outgrew its first makeshift sanctuary, the

auditorium at Cedar Shoals High School, started holding services at the Classic Center and is about to move again.

The church's new digs are an example of the fashionable-in-Athens concept of adaptive reuse, taking an empty building meant for one purpose and using it for something else. Think of all the restaurants and coffee shops that have opened up lately in vacant gas stations.

Athens Church started renovating the old Walmart off Atlanta Highway in October and is scheduled to wrap up in June. The church got a sweet deal on the 110,000-square-foot property, paying \$1.5 million after the former occupant, discount clothing retailer Steve & Barry's, went under.

See ATHENS CHURCH on A3

BARROW APPEALING

Road fix argument continues

By Merritt Melancon
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Darrell Greeson never set out to upset anybody when he started drafting a design for a badly needed turn lane at the entrance of Barrow County's new courthouse, but he did.

The Georgia Department of Transportation told him to do one thing. Now, the state Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors is telling him he should have done another.

He's caught between two state agencies arguing over the way Georgia's roads are built and whether all road work requires a professional engineer.

"Going into this thing, there's no way I thought I was doing anything wrong," said Greeson, director of Barrow County's engineering department.

See BARROW on A3

AT ORCHARD BRANDS SITE

Fill-in sought for call center

By Erin France
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Athens-Clarke leaders hope to find a similar business to replace national retailer Orchard Brands, which will close its call center in April and eliminate hundreds of jobs.

Other call center businesses could find Orchard Brands' site on South Milledge Avenue and its cadre of trained workers tempting, said Matt Forshee, CEO of the Athens-Clarke Economic Development Foundation.

Forshee is leading the search for a company to move into Orchard Brands' call center in the Shoppes at South Athens shopping center near the Athens Perimeter.

See SPEEDY on A3

VOTING TUESDAY

Light turnout expected in handful of elections

By Erin France
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Madison, Jackson and Barrow county residents have one more day to ponder whether they want to renew a 1 percent special-purpose, local-option sales tax.

Regular polling locations will open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday.

Madison and Jackson county residents will see a 1 percent sales tax for school construction in their ballots,



while people in Barrow County are set to consider a sales tax to make countywide infrastructure improvements and pay down debt on past construction.

A few hundred people in each county participated in early voting, which ended on Friday, voting officials said.

Officials don't expect a high voter turnout in any county, they said.

"In our last (sales tax) election, we had about a 16 percent turnout," said Katie Ferm, Barrow County elections superintendent.

About 200 people had voted as of Thursday afternoon, Ferm said, and she didn't think this year's sales tax question would garner much more interest.

"I am expecting less than 20 percent," she said.

See SPECIAL ELECTIONS on A2

INSIDE

- Blotter.....A6
- Blueprint.....B1
- Calendar.....B4
- Classified.....B5
- Autos.....B10
- Homes.....B5
- Jobs.....B7
- Comics.....B2,3
- Local/State.....A6
- Lotteries.....A9
- Movies.....A2
- Obituaries.....B6
- Opinions.....A4
- Sports.....A8

FORECAST

73°

50°

FULL DETAILS, PAGE 2



#13 Women's Tennis vs. Butler • Tue., 3/15 @ Noon vs. Yale • Wed., 3/16 @ Noon

Dan Magill Tennis Complex • Free Admission

#13 Men's Tennis vs. LSU • Sat., 3/19 @ 1:00 pm

Free tennis clinic by local tennis pro from 12:30-1:00pm and a 30 minute session following doubles. All fans are invited to participate in the clinic and post match pizza social.

Dan Magill Tennis Complex • Free Admission