



Ledford's
Brian Connolly
signs with
UNC-Asheville.

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THOMASVILLE TIMES

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Baptist Children's Homes
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Saturday, April 17, 2010

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United Furniture bringing 150 jobs to county

BY ERIN WILTGEN
Staff Writer

LEXINGTON — Even Lexington Mayor John Walser didn't know the extent of the good news until Friday morning.

When writing out his speech for the press conference announcing the commitment of a manufacturing company to a plant in Lexington, Walser left a blank line for the company's name. And when he found out it was United Furniture Industries NC, LLC, he just couldn't believe it.

"I can't get this smile off my face," he said. "This is the best thing that's happened to us in a long time."

United Furniture Industries NC, LLC — a national manufacturer of upholstered affordable living room furniture such as sofas, chairs, recliners and sleepers — has pledged to create 150 jobs and invest more than \$3.3 million in Lexington over the next three years. The company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of United Furniture Industries, Inc., headquartered in Okolona, Miss.

Other than the new plant in Davidson County, the company has five other locations, three in Mississippi and two in North Carolina. The North Carolina sites are in Archdale and Glenola, in Randolph County, and together employ about 400 people.

"We are glad to be in Davidson County," said company President Larry George. "It has been a long road, a process. We are looking forward to being here to create some jobs. I hope that we can add to the community."

United Furniture will

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TIMES PHOTO/ELIOT DUKE

Thomasville City Schools Superintendent Keith Tobin serves some fruit to children at Thomasville Primary School Friday. Below, TPS children work in the school garden area.

Food for Thought

Thomasville Primary awarded for child nutrition

BY ELIOT DUKE
Staff Writer

Staff and students at Thomasville Primary School enjoyed a moment in the spotlight Friday afternoon as local, state and federal dignitaries visited the campus to recognize a special achievement that culminates years of hard work and dedication to nutrition.

During a special ceremony in the cafeteria, TPS was formally recognized as a 2010 USDA Healthier School Gold Award

winner for its outstanding nutrition environment and dedication to fighting childhood obesity. TPS is one of 654 schools across the United States and one of five in the state to receive such recognition.

"I'm pleased to recognize TPS for achieving Gold-level status," Jane Mandell, branch chief of the child nutrition division with the USDA, said. "The Healthier U.S. School Gold Award is one of the highest honors a school nutrition program can achieve and reflects a strong commitment to

provide students with additional healthy food options throughout the school campus, and to emphasize nutrition education and physical activity in the school curriculum."

In order to receive gold status, TPS, led by Brenda Watford, Thomasville City Schools child nutrition director, had to undergo two and half years of following strict USDA guidelines. Participating schools had to submit their entire menus for a

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Itty Bitty Kiddie Festival offers information, entertainment

BY ELIOT DUKE
Staff Writer

Smart Start of Davidson County, a local non-profit organization committed to providing opportunities for young children, is offering parents a chance to see what programs are available to them this weekend while their kids are off playing.

With support from Davidson County Local Interagency Council and Thomasville Medical Center, Smart Start is sponsoring the 11th annual Itty Bitty Kiddie Festival at the Davidson County Fairgrounds today from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. to raise awareness about the many services the agency offers families with young children. Admission is free with a canned or boxed food donation that will benefit Fairgrove Family Resource Center of Davidson County.

"We try and do something a little different every year," Linda Leon-

WANT TO GO?

WHAT: Itty Bitty Kiddie Festival

WHEN: Today, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WHERE: Davidson County Fairgrounds

ard, executive director of Smart Start, said. "This is a great family day for people. It's a great opportunity to let families know about the services we offer the community. Our organization not only delivers services but also funds services out in our community. So many of the services are free."

Smart Start of Davidson County offers readiness programs for children up to five years old in an effort to help them reach their potential by improving child care, parenting resources and access to health care.

More than 30 agencies will be attending the fair, which has grown exponentially over the past decade. In its first year, the festival attracted less than 1,000 people, compared to 2009 when more than 3,000 attended. While parents are learning about programs dealing with school readiness, occupational therapy, human and preschool services, child care and scholarships, kids will have access to a variety of

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DCS calls on county to increase 2010-11 budget

BY ERIN WILTGEN
Staff Writer

Davidson County Schools faces the classic 2010 catch-22 — how to improve a system with ever-dwindling funds.

But even in the face of a potential funding cut from the state, the Davidson County Board of Education has set new goals. And to reach them, the board turns to the county, asking the Davidson County Board of Commissioners for a 3.5 percent increase in the local budget for the 2010-2011 school year.

"Our goal, the superinten-

'We need teachers. We have students, we have to have teachers. So we have to have money to pay them.'

— Pam Sink
DCS Chief Finance Officer

dent's goal, for 2010-11 is to reduce the class size back to the 2008-09 year to enhance the quality of literacy instruction," said Pam Sink, chief finance officer. "And to save jobs."

The local budget — the amount not covered by state or government funds — would total \$25

million if the commissioners approved the request, up from the \$24 million of the current school year.

Besides decreasing class sizes to improve the teacher-to-student ration — 2008-09 figures were 21.7 students per teacher at the elementary level, 25.5 per

teacher at the middle school level and 23.9 per teacher at the high school level — the increased budget will also go towards other basic needs.

Sink said the cost of utilities will go up, and the school system hopes to update computers and software. Other cost increases are more complicated and link to the \$11 million decrease in state budgetary funds last year.

With that cut, the state also did away with five staff development programs, and local governments now must pick up

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Today's Weather



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