



## NEW SCHEDULE: MORE ACC GAMES, FEWER UNC-NCSU MATCHUPS SPORTS



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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2012

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### MORE NEWS

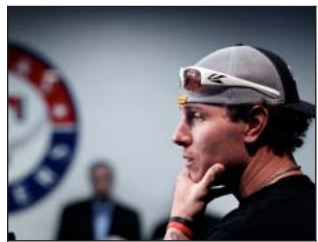
**UPDATES ALL DAY AT NEWSOBSERVER.COM**

#### ETHERIDGE SKIRTS HOT N.C. ISSUES

The former congressman running for governor declines to take a stand on the proposed constitutional same-sex marriage ban or a proposed sales-tax increase for schools. **1B**

#### PROPERTY OWNER FILES BANKRUPTCY

A unit of Raleigh-based Lichten Corp. that owns office buildings near the RBC Center in Raleigh has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. **4B**



Hamilton speaks during a news conference Friday at the Rangers Ballpark in Arlington, Texas.

LM OTERO - AP

#### HAMILTON SAYS HE HAD A RELAPSE

Josh Hamilton, the Texas Ranger and former Raleigh preps baseball star, acknowledges drinking alcohol but says he is drug free. **1C**

#### FOOD TRUCKS WARY OF CHAPEL HILL

Trucks will soon be allowed on town streets, but many vendors say the required fees will be too costly. **1B**

#### IRAN HARDENS STAND ON NUKES

An anti-Israel speech by Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei elevates tensions with the U.S. and Israel regarding Iran's nuclear program. **3A**

#### WEATHER

**Today:** Rain likely throughout the day. High 58; low 47.

**Sunday:** Rain lets up, but it gets cooler. High 56; low 38. **8B**

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AB ● ● ●



Debra B. Johnson, 55, an administrative assistant for DHHS before being laid off about four months ago, is taking classes at Wake Tech in hopes of improving her chances at a new permanent job.

TAKA AKI IWABU - tiwabu@newsobserver.com

## N.C. job reductions hit women, minorities hardest

### Budget cuts led to displacements

By CRAIG JARVIS  
cjarvis@newsobserver.com

Women and minorities were disproportionately hit by the budget cuts to state government last year. Data provided by the state show that 58 percent of those who lost their jobs in this budget year were women, contrasted with the fact that 47 percent of the workforce in state agencies was female before the cuts. Forty percent of the laid-off workers were minorities, although they only comprised 34 percent of the state agency workforce.

The numbers mirror national economic trends that have seen male-dominated jobs like manufacturing begin to rebound while public-sector jobs that have traditionally been held by women continue to disappear. Reducing government jobs is just what

the General Assembly had in mind as it looked for ways to close a budget deficit. But the outcome doesn't make anyone happy.

Andrea Harris, president of the Durham-based N.C. Institute of Minority Economic Development, says government jobs traditionally have given women and minorities a career opening that didn't exist in private industry. Taking away that opportunity means trouble for communities across the state, she said.

"When you have so many people who are displaced, and so many women head of households, there are implications for children and families," Harris said. "This loss of jobs in the public sector for the population who are already at the very bottom, I think it will cost the state more in negative social consequences in the short and long run. This is a very frightening time."

Rep. Nelson Dollar, one of the key budget writers and a Republican representing Cary, says it wasn't the leg-

islature's intention for administrative and lower-level workers to bear the brunt of the burden.

"I think that's always been a frustration for a number of us that more of the higher-level positions don't get looked at for consolidation," Dollar said. "It seems like the frontline folks are looked at first as opposed to looking at reductions in force of various management layers in the agencies. That does create a concern."

But Dollar pointed out that the overall number of layoffs was relatively small, despite dire warnings to the contrary. "Our intent was to have the least amount of effect that we could have on people delivering services to citizens," he said. "There were no mass layoffs."

The State Employees Association of N.C. agrees, saying workers fared better than expected with fewer than 1,000 non-education losses. In fact, the cuts were not big enough to substan-

SEE LAYOFFS, PAGE 12A

## Komen group reinstates funding

By DAVID CRARY  
Associated Press

**NEW YORK** — For leaders of the nation's pre-eminent breast-cancer charity, it was a firestorm they didn't see coming — and couldn't withstand.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure on Friday abandoned plans to eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood.

The dramatic retreat followed a three-day furor that resounded across the Internet, in Congress and — perhaps most tellingly — among Komen affiliates who openly rebelled, suggesting the leadership had bowed to anti-abortion pressure.

"We want to apologize to the American public for recent decisions that cast doubt upon our commitment to our mission of saving women's lives," said Nancy Brinker, Komen's chief executive, in a statement.

Komen had adopted criteria excluding Planned Parenthood from future grants for breast-cancer screenings because it was under govern-



U.S. Sen. Patty Murray speaks at the Seattle Planned Parenthood on Friday, after the Komen Foundation reinstated grants to the group.

JOHN LOK - AP

ment investigation, citing a probe launched by a Florida congressman at the urging of anti-abortion groups.

"We will amend the criteria to make clear that disqualifying investigations must be criminal and conclusive in nature and not political," Ko-

men said Friday. "That is what is right and fair."

Komen officials were unavailable for further comment on how they came to change their plans. There

SEE KOMEN, PAGE 9A

## Jobless rate at 3-year low

The national rate fell to 8.3 percent in January, its fifth consecutive monthly decline.

By DON LEE  
Tribune Newspapers

**WASHINGTON** — An unexpected burst of job growth last month helped drive down the unemployment rate to its lowest point in three years, raising hopes that the long-sluggish labor market is gaining momentum despite significant challenges to the economy.

The government reported that the nation's unemployment rate fell to 8.3 percent in January, the fifth consecutive monthly decline, and that employers added 243,000 net new jobs last month — about 100,000 more than what analysts had forecast and the most in nine months.

Some economists cheered Friday's report, calling it a strong signal of better times ahead for American workers.

Other analysts were more cautious, noting that job growth was inflated by the unseasonably warm weather — construction reported sizable gains, for instance — and that the outlook remains constrained by government cuts, financially strapped consumers and a slowing global economy.

SEE ECONOMY, PAGE 12A

## Council member fights DWI

By ANNE BLYTHE  
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**RALEIGH** — An Apex Town Council member convicted in January of driving while impaired is appealing the verdict with an unusual defense: An acid reflux problem, he claims, skewed the breath test he took when arrested.

Scott Lassiter, a Johnston County school teacher who was sworn in as a new Town Council member in December, is scheduled to go to Wake County Superior Court in mid-March to fight the conviction.

Lassiter and his attorney James Crouch have asked for a jury trial to argue that gastroesophageal reflux

SEE DWI, PAGE 9A

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