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**WEDNESDAY
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SERVING SOUTH ALABAMA SINCE 1897

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

OUR BUSINESS!



Photo by John O'Dell/Call News

Robin Byrd, owner of Meggie B's Gifts and More in Semmes, said of local businesses: "We are the people who support your schools, sponsor your children's activities. We hire local employees."

Bargains lure local shoppers

BY EMMETT BURNETT
erburnett1976@gmail.com

With the holiday shopping season of 2020 quickly approaching, many area merchants have found themselves in the same boat as others in the state and nation, trying to navigate the uncharted waters of the nation's economy during COVID-19.

While national chains are focused on Black Friday, local merchants are focusing on Small Business Saturday and beyond.

Small Business Saturday, created by and as a registered trademark of American Express, encourages holiday shoppers to patronize locally owned businesses. This year's event

falls on Nov. 28 and many local storeowners anticipate what could be an economic boost in a rocky 2020.

SBS is always the day after Black Friday which features big box retail giants and the day before Cyber Monday, when online mammoths compete for e-commerce sales.

For years, small businesses have been challenged, as local store owners, in reminding holiday shoppers that "we are here." For years, local merchants have regularly competed with brick and mortar mega-malls and ever-expansive online giants, but this year the holiday season is different. With 2020 came the

See **BUSINESS**, 2A



Photo by Willie Gray/Call News

Josh Nichols points out power tools on sale at Andrews Hardware in Citronelle.

FEDERAL AID AWAITED

FEMA checks out Zeta damage

BY WILLIE GRAY
williegray@thecallnews.com

Hurricane Zeta swept through Mobile and Washington counties on Oct. 28, leaving a trail of destruction that can still be seen.

Citronelle was one of the hardest hit areas of Mobile County, and evidence of the damage caused by the storm is plainly visible as trees, limbs and debris litter the sides of the city streets. Citronelle city leaders say they don't know when the cleanup of the debris might begin as the official announcement of the area being certified as a disaster area has not been made.

Citronelle Mayor Jason Stringer said the city may have gotten a little closer toward gaining the proper classification to receive federal and state financial assistance in the cleanup. Stringer said officials with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were in Citronelle most of the day on Thursday of last week.

"They were here to see firsthand what we are faced with in our city," Stringer said. "I really appreciate them coming to the city; I know we would all like for

See **FEMA**, 4A

Satsuma will try to clean up on its own

BY EMMETT BURNETT
erburnett1976@gmail.com

With piles of debris waiting for a federal government response that may never come, Satsuma took a proactive stance in removing Hurricane Zeta trash in a Nov. 17 City Council meeting decision. The council declared a city emergency, citing safety hazards and potential fire issues with accumulated residential debris lining virtually every street

in Satsuma. The measure allows the mayor to enter into a contract with a company or companies to assist the city in debris cleanup.

Also, Councilman Randy Little recommended and the council agreed for city cleanup crews to take hurricane debris or trash to the city's trash ramp rather than the public landfill. According to Little, the move would

See **SATSUMA**, 6A

Schools boss visits to commend Mobile

BY ARTHUR L. MACK
alouisismack@aol.com

MOBILE — Alabama State Superintendent Eric Mackey paid a visit to the Mobile County Board of School Commissioners during their Nov. 18 work session. Mackey quickly stated the purpose of his visit, saying he was on hand to celebrate several milestones that have been accomplished by the Mobile County Public School System during the last two months.

"When the state superintendent shows up, people regularly ask, 'What's up?'" Mackey said. "Well, there's nothing up, nothing is up

See **SCHOOLS**, 4A



Photo by Arthur Mack, Call News

Eric Mackey speaks in Mobile during his visit.

Holiday blessing: 500 families fed

BY WILLIE GRAY
williegray@thecallnews.com

Feeding the Gulf Coast, the organization formerly known as Bay Area Food Bank, has been coming to the aid of families in and around Mobile for several years and last week the organization provided 500 families with the basic necessities for the traditional Thanksgiving dinner.

In partnership with Southeastern Grocers, parent company of Winn-Dixie stores, Feeding the Gulf Coast hosted a drive-through food distribution Nov. 19 as part of the ongoing effort to fight food insecurity in the Mobile area.

Michael Ledger, president and CEO of Feeding the Gulf Coast, said because of the coronavirus pandemic and the effects of the recent storms, holiday supplies were needed

See **BLESSING**, 7A



Photo by Brad McPherson/Call News

Kaitlyn Derusha, a Winn Dixie employee from store No. 591, was among the many volunteers who devoted their time to handing out free turkeys and other Thanksgiving food to 500 families at City Church of Mobile on Nov. 19.



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