

Jackie Kite prepares a bowl of chili for Mike Leedom on Saturday during the Second Annual Chili Cook-off at the Lake DeSoto Farmers Market. Kite took first place honors in the contest.

CHILI: Second annual cook-off a hit

Continued From Page 1A

and a contest for booth display.

Kite took first place in the cooking contest, while Deborah Jennings was second and Eb Steward was third.

"I am totally surprised," Kite said, noting she began preparing her award-winning chili the night before the contest.

Maxine's All In Organic Chili, the name of Kite's chili, was sold out by the end of the day as consumers with cups and bowls continuously visited her booth for the award-winning chili. "I am pleased I took first place and I'm

kind of shocked, too," she said. "I do an all white meat chili with turkey, sausage and chicken breast. My family loves it, but I never thought it would win.' In the booth decoration contest, Richard

Wright took first place, Jennings was second and Kite was third.

Nick Roberts, Lake DeSoto Farmers Market manager, said the competition went really well.

"The chili contestants really brought it this year," he said. "Last year there were only six or seven contestants, but this year people brought their friends and it ran smoothly. Everyone is pleased with the way it worked out."

Roberts said the idea behind the chili cookoff was to get more people to visit the farmer's market.

"Even if people don't stop in and purchase items from the vendors that are usually here, Church On The Way (representatives) were the ones selling the chili bowls and they raised money that's going to help some of their people go to

Dale Tompkins, Church On The Way lead pastor, said all the proceeds from the bowls and cups are going to help people from the church who are working at an orphanage in Africa.

GUNS: Obama will try to outflank NRA

Continued From Page 1A

stand up for sensible gun laws, and if they do that, we will stand up for them, and if they don't we will stand up for whoever runs against them," New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg told the U.S. Conference of Mayors Friday. "Because that's exactly what the NRA is trying to

Just hours after Obama rolled out his gun proposals on Wednesday, the group gathered at the headquarters of the National Education Association to game out their plans.

As of Friday, voters' calls to Reid's office were running two-to-one against Obama's proposals, a Reid aide said.

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JOBS: Unemployment rate falls

Continued From Page 1A

2008, when it was 7.8 percent, though 749,000 workers remain jobless out of a workforce of approximately 9.3 million Floridians.

The December unemployment rate was down 0.1 percentage points from the November rate of 8.1 percent and was 1.9 percentage points lower than the year-ago rate of 9.9 percent.

In November the county's labor force consisted of 31,229 people with 28,863 having jobs, while there were 2,366 unemployed residents.

In December 2011 the county's unemployment rate was 9.2 percent, when 28,718 people in the county's workforce of 31,628 people had jobs. Then, 2,910 residents were jobless.

BREAK-INS: Many reports received

Continued From Page 1A

vehicle owners reported break-ins Friday night, but officers were called to several other homes where people reported their cars had been broken into and ransacked, but nothing taken.

Jay Swisher, a homeowner in the Cypress Landing Subdivision off Grandview Avenue, said three of his family's vehicles where targeted Friday night or early Saturday morning.

"We actually had two cars and a truck that got hit," he said. "They ransacked two of them and the third they ransacked and they got cash from the glove box."

Swisher said he believes he was the only person on his street whose vehicles were targeted by thieves, but when speaking to authorities about his case, he heard of other vehicle burglaries around the city and county.

"Several subdivisions throughout the county, including Cannon Creek and the Lake City Country Club had some burglaries this past week," he said. "All were kind of similar MO (method of operation) with the ransacking. It appears they are looking for something specific. We had several electronics that were in the vehicle, checks and gift cards that were available and they didn't take it. They probably don't want anything they have to sell and take a chance of it coming back to them."

Melinda Moses said thieves also ransacked her vehicle sometime after dark Friday or before daylight hours Saturday.

"I didn't notice my car was broken into initially," she said. "My neighbor, Joel Foreman, came over and told me his car had been broken into and the police where at his home. So then we looked at my car and the suspects had left open the glovebox and gone through my make-up bag. I didn't really have anything of value

Moses said she didn't believe anything was missing from her car, but the thieves ransacked her vehicle once they gained entry to the car.

Several of the cars that were targeted by the thieves were left unlocked, and some even had the keys in the vehicle, victims said.

An about-face on early voting

By BRENDAN FARRINGTON

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE — Florida Gov. Rick Scott — who slashed early-voting from 14 to 8 days then defended the decision in court — now says he thinks returning to 14 early-voting days is a good idea.

The first-term Republican said in a statement "we need shorter ballots. We need more early-voting days, which should include an option of the Sunday before Election Day. And, we need more early voting locations."

In 2011, Scott signed an elections bill that cut early voting from 14 to 8 days and eliminated the Sunday before Election Day — one used by many black churches for get-out-the-vote drives — as an early-voting day. The state was criticized last fall for six-hour-long voting lines, though Scott then defended the

He said Thursday the changes will ease long lines and delays in counting

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