

Local MSU grad's knitting business born from passion for fiber arts

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JASON CHIOU/THE STATE NEWS

A boat and shuttle lay on an unfinished blanket on a loom at Woven Art, 325B Grove St.

The State News

SUZY'S SIGNATURE N

Sweet victory

JOEY NOWAK

MSU women outthrust Blue Devils in win



They said it would take everything they had. On Monday, Aisha Jefferson said no team shows

up in March Madness with more hustle than an opponent — it would come down to mental focus. The junior forward was right, and she was wrong.

The Spartans came out with the wind at their backs, the fight song in their hearts and a fire in their bellies. Duke came out as flat as stale Pepsi. And the Spartans did outthrust the Blue Devils all the way to a stylish, Suzy Merchant era-defining upset win of the No. 1 seed and heavily favored Blue Devils.

"It was all about us today," Jefferson said. "A lot of teams that play Duke just look at the name Duke and that's the end of the game there. But we knew if we came out and played with heart and played harder than them, we would be the better team."

Not surprising, the Spartans came out fired up on their home floor. What was surprising was how they kept it up.

Duke can easily run to deep, while the Spartans run eight-deep at best. But timeout after timeout, the scoreboard read the same: MSU on top.

And that's how it ended. MSU 63, Duke 49. Guard Mia Johnson's leadership at the point and shooting from beyond the arc (season-high 17 points, incredible one turnover) was indicative of



KATIE RAUSCH/THE STATE NEWS

Head coach Suzy Merchant and junior center Allyssa DeHaan react to a No. 9-seed Spartans victory over No. 1-seed Duke Tuesday night at Breslin Center. With their 63-49 win, the Spartans are headed to the Sweet 16.

a senior with nothing to lose and everything to gain from a career performance in a career game that could give

Aitch's tenacity and competitive edge turned heads with a career performance in a career game that could give

Merchant the stamp to put on this program she's been

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Win over No. 1 seeded Duke sends Spartans to first Sweet 16 since '06

By Joseph Terry

THE STATE NEWS

It had to be perfect.

To beat No. 1-seed Duke, the No. 9-seed MSU women's basketball team had to limit turnovers, storm the glass and play staunch defense.

The Spartans did just that, **MSU 63** **DUKE 49** and advancing to the Sweet 16 to play No. 4 seed Iowa State in Berkeley, Calif.

The game was back and forth until the last few minutes when senior center Lauren Aitch and junior guard Mia Johnson took over the game.

The momentum swung in the Spartans favor when red-shirt freshman Lykendra Johnson made a pretty pass to Aitch underneath the basket for a layup that put the Spartans up 49-47. Aitch followed that with an and-one putback layup, putting the Spartans up by four.

After Aitch hit the free throw, Mia Johnson spun through the lane, netting a layup and putting the score out of reach, as MSU went up 53-47. The Spartans closed the game on a 16-2 run over the final five minutes to win the game 63-49.

MSU became the first No. 9-seeded team in the tournament to knock off a No. 1-seed since Notre Dame beat Texas Tech 74-59 in 1998.

"We were going four minutes at a time," Johnson said. "We were going by who would win the four-minute battles. We just came out and went by that."

MSU headed into the locker room up 25-20. The Blue Devils closed the lead immediately after halftime, as Duke forward Chante Black fought inside and scooped a layup. An Abby Warner 3-pointer the next possession brought the score to an even 25-25.

Black, the Blue Devils' leading scorer averaging 14.5 points per game,

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COUNCIL

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES CITY CENTER II EXTENSION

By Jeff Kanan

THE STATE NEWS

The developer of East Lansing's multimillion dollar City Center II project was granted an additional 90 days to finish securing funds for the project during a city work session Tuesday.

The East Lansing City Council approved a third extension to its agreement with Strathmore Development Company to build City Center II, a \$16.4 million project slated for the Grand River Avenue and Abbot Road area.

Strathmore sought the extension so it could continue the process of applying for a loan from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in Michigan, or HUD, Strathmore President Scott Chappelle wrote in an e-mail to The State News.

"A significant portion of the financing is contemplated to be provided by HUD, which has a rigid timeline for approval and funding," Chappelle wrote. "Strathmore continues to work through this process, which currently represents the critical path to commencement of construction."

The original deadline for the project's development agreement was Oct. 1 but has been delayed three times since. Under the most recent extension, the new deadline is June 30.

The city's development agreement must be in place before construction on the project begins. The city finished the acquisition of all property located within the City Center II area within the past month.

Jim van Ravenswaay, director of planning and community development for East Lansing, said based on discussions between Strathmore and city staff, he expects the agreement to be completed within the new time frame. He declined to speculate on the city's next action if that didn't happen.

Council members said the poor state of the financial markets is a significant cause for the development company's request for a third extension, and they wouldn't be opposed to issuing another extension in the future if necessary.

"I'm disappointed that things have fallen into place ... but I don't see anything out of the ordinary or any concerns," Mayor Vic Loomis said. "All you have to do is pick up a newspaper to know the financial market is in disarray."

Strathmore already has invest-

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For more stories, photos and video from the Spartans' win, visit stateneews.com/multimedia

CONSTRUCTION

US-127 to see repairs through Aug.

By Pat Evans

THE STATE NEWS

As lane closures begin Tuesday on northbound US-127/1-496 between I-96 and Trowbridge Road, 58,000 commuters were forced to adjust their daily commutes.

The \$7.4 million project, part of a five-year road and bridge program, will extend the life of bridges along the corridor and make smoother, safer roads for motorists, said Kari Arend, a spokeswoman for the Michigan Department of Transportation, or MDOT.

The northbound lane was closed Tuesday, and a southbound lane is expected to be closed on Thursday. The single lane closures will be in effect until early July, Arend said. Both sides of the road will be reduced to one lane.

Construction on US-127



"The first couple of days are the worst," Arend said. "But once the drivers establish their new routes,

things should get better."

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ADDRESS

Obama: 'Signs of progress' in turning around economy

By Allison Bush

THE STATE NEWS

During the second prime-time television address of his presidency on Tuesday, President Barack Obama reiterated his message that the economy will recover, adding "we're beginning to see signs of progress."

The conference came after the announcement Monday of a plan to remove up to \$1 trillion worth of bad assets from banks, the latest of several actions Obama said are aimed at loosening credit and "to support the markets for more affordable auto loans, student loans and small-business loans."

The government could partner with private investors to

purchase these assets, which would free up the banks to lend out more money.

"We will continue to do whatever is necessary in the weeks ahead to ensure the banks Americans depend on have the money they need to lend, even if the economy gets worse," Obama said.

Some have expressed concern that the banks were at fault for lending out too much money and have no right to be bailed out, finance professor Navaneetha Khanna said.

On the other hand, if the banks fail, the country will have even bigger problems, he said.

"I would have let a few of these banks fail, and I think

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DARK TIMES

E.L. and four other Mich. cities look to raise awareness with Earth Hour this weekend, page 3A



Weather

Showers

High 54° | Low 35°

Three-day forecast, Page 2A