

Experts: State economy to bottom out within year

By Susan Haigh
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HARTFORD, Conn. — University of Connecticut economists predicted Monday the state's recession would likely bottom out sometime in the fourth quarter of this year or first quarter of 2010.

Depending on how bad the economy gets, they predicted, the state could ultimately lose between 78,000 to 110,000 jobs during the downturn.

It could take years to recoup those job losses, warned Steven P. Lanza, executive editor of The Connecticut Economy, a quarterly UConn journal. University economists unveiled the journal's summer issue Monday at a briefing on its findings.

"After you bottom out, then the big job is to work your way back to where you were when things started getting tough out there," Lanza said.

During the recession of the 1990s, the state lost about 156,000 jobs and it took 11 years to recover them. In the 2000 recession, Connecticut lost 58,000 jobs, taking seven years to rebound.

Two top state lawmakers, who attended the briefing, said they still have a lot of work to do before an agreement can be reached on a new state budget.

The General Assembly ended its regular session last Wednesday without passing a tax-and-spending plan for the next two fiscal years.

Lawmakers are currently in special session, but rank-

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EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF THE
CONNECTICUT ECONOMY

and-file members won't return to the capitol until budget negotiators work out a plan for legislators to vote on.

Legislative budget committee leaders and members of the General Assembly and governor's budget staffs are supposed to negotiate a deal.

House Majority Leader Denise Merrill, D-Mansfield, and House Minority Leader Lawrence Cafero, R-Norwalk, said Democrats and Republicans continue to disagree on the levels of spending cuts and borrowing, as well as whether tax increases are needed.

Cafero said the GOP remains opposed to raising taxes, but he predicted higher taxes would ultimately be needed in 2012 and 2013 when the state doesn't have federal stimulus funds to fill in the gaps.

Merrill said she believed some tax increases will be needed to get through the financial crisis, but said Deni want to avoid cuts that hurt the state's strategic investments, such as education.

Police say Greenwich mom left infant in car

By Debra Friedman
STAFF WRITER

A Riverside woman was arrested Monday and charged with leaving her 4-week-old baby in a hot car while running an errand at a bank on Greenwich Avenue, police said.

Gina Barrit, of Old Kings Highway, was charged with leaving a child unattended in a vehicle after police, firefighters and Greenwich Emergency Medical Services personnel arrived at about 3 p.m. to find the baby crying inside the locked car. The baby was unharmed.

Lt. Mark Kordick said the front windows of the Lexus were closed and the back windows were only cracked an inch.

"You could tell it was warm inside," said Kordick. "I would say it was at least 90 degrees."

Kordick said a person walking by notified a police officer on foot patrol about the infant. The Fire Department was called to unlock the car. Police said 15 minutes passed from when they were notified of the incident to Barrit's return to the car. It was not clear how long the infant had been sitting in the car prior to police being notified.

Kordick said officials were close to breaking the windows to rescue the child. "You consider breaking a window out of the vehicle if there is obvious distress," said Kordick. "The problem is we can't control where the glass goes."

However, Barrit returned



Gina Barrit carries her child while being accompanied by a police officer Monday on Greenwich Avenue.

NEIL VIGDOR/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

before police had to break the glass, at which point she told them she was running an errand that took longer than she thought it would.

"She indicated she left the child in the vehicle intending to visit the bank and it took longer than she anticipated," said Kordick, noting that the woman had described herself as a "new mom."

The incident prompted a crowd of onlookers to gather as an ambulance arrived to check the baby's vital signs. As police investigated, Kordick could be heard telling the officers "we're going to lock her up."

Police opted to allow the woman to walk her baby down the block to the station where she was later booked



Police examine the car where they found an infant locked inside alone Monday.

on the misdemeanor charge.

Barrit had not been released as of 6 p.m. Monday because police had not finished

processing her, they said.

— Staff Writer Neil Vigdor contributed to this report.



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