

WIA offers students encouragement

By TAMMY BENNER

Wayne Community College student Shirley Howard worked at Barry's of Goldsboro, a manufacturer of bedroom slippers, for 28 years.

When Barry's went out of business in June 2001, Howard didn't know where to turn.

She went to the unemployment office where she found out about the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

On August 7, 1998, President Clinton signed the Workforce Investment Act, a form of legislation that replaces the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

According to Howard the program is designed to help dislocated workers reenter the workforce.

"The program turns a negative situation into opportunity," said Richard Darden, WIA and Dislocated Worker program director at Wayne Community College.

Mike Cordell is the case manager, and Linda Sutton is the administrative assistant.

The program is an alternative for people who have a need for job training and assistance to help them return to the workforce with job skills and a better education.

"It's a great program. I am very grateful I'm in it. It has allowed me to go to college, something that I have always wanted to do," said Howard, who is earning her associate degree in Human Service Technology.

She is currently enrolled in her second semester at WCC, under the WIA.

WIA is divided into two parts, the WIA Adult Program, and the WIA Youth Program, of which Lea Thornton is the director.

[See picture this page]

The program, which is federally funded by vouchers, pays for tuition, books, and other materials that participants may need.

The program also provides employment and training activities for adults and dislocated workers.

The Employment Security Commission (ESC) has agreements with local service areas to provide these services.

After enrolling in the WIA, participants are required to turn in time sheets. Once a week they must go for counseling. They must also keep up their grades.



Shirley Howard, center, reviews cigarette ads with classmates Kevin Palaganas and Bonnie Holsinger for a project in ENG 111. PHOTO: VOICE STAFF

Those enrolled in the program must maintain the GPA required for their program.

The WIA offers financial assistance based on an income chart.

Darden said, "The program is outstanding. It allows people to get an education and develop skills that will help them get back into the workforce to be self sufficient."

The program helps workers that have not had a college education get an associate degree.



Lea Thornton

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