

# OCC instills skills according to trends

BY RALPH R. ECHTINAW  
STAFF WRITER

Oakland Community College has apparently hit the mother lode in retraining laid-off workers. Karen Pagenette, the director of OCC's Center for Dislocated Workers, reports that a 16-week machinist training program can educate people fast enough to fill all the available area machinist jobs.

"There's usually a company willing to get somebody," she said. "It's an industry that a lot of young people are not going into." The center has offered the machinist program 12 times to date, training 200 people in the operation of metal lathes and such. Every one of the trainees found work in jobs paying an average of \$9.50 per hour, Pagenette said. Almost all of the 150-200 students who pass through the center every year get their training for free. Government grants pay OCC about \$400,000 a year.

The "scholarships," as Pagenette calls them, are given to people who have been laid off with little chance of recall. The idea is to give people a quick education in a field with ample job opportunities. Center personnel scan the help-

wanted ads for trends and identify skills that will most benefit their students.

Paying customers are welcome to take the courses, too, but few have so far, Pagenette said. The machinist course meets all day Monday through Friday for 16 weeks at OCC's Auburn Hills campus.

Pagenette may be reached at 340-6787.

## Homestead from page 5A

match? A. No, says Treasury. But if your city or township asks, Treasury will run a computer check of the social security number to make sure you're not improperly claiming exemptions for two houses.

Q. Our new house is under construction and won't be finished until July 1, the date tax bills are due. Who should file for the tax break? Can the builder do it or just the potential buyer?

A. The builder can't. Only the occupant may. File your affidavit with the assessor when you move in July 1.

Treasury tells us not to be concerned about the date. The July 1 bill will be calculated on the assessment as of last Dec. 31, when the house was largely unfinished.

Q. I own a property but don't occupy it. I rent elsewhere. Am I eligible for a homestead exemption?

A. No. But you're entitled to a

separate tax break as a renter. The Treasury form says: "Renters should not file this form, but are entitled to a higher renters' credit on the 1994 Homestead Property Tax Credit Claim that you will file in 1995. The credit has been increased from 17 to 20 percent."

Q. Our principal housing consists of two locations. Can we claim exemptions for both?

A. It's "unlikely," but there are rare cases where a married couple could be granted two exemptions. Our Treasury contact cites a pair

where the husband works and lives in Detroit five days a week while the wife occupies the home in Lansing. Each may be able to claim one exemption.

The short answer is: "Your homestead is where you reside the majority of the time."

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