

# Western Piedmont's News Notes

## High technology vital part of many WPCC programs

From the moment you push the snooze button on your digital alarm clock early in the morning until you turn off your quartz-tuned television at the end of the day IT affects you. IT evokes a wide range of responses, from mild disdain to an almost maniacal fanaticism. What is IT?

### High technology

No matter what your feelings here is no denying the fact that we are in the midst of the most widespread technological revolution in the history of man since the invention of the Gutenberg printing press.

And perhaps nowhere in Burke County is this revolution more evident than in the Department of Engineering and Natural Sciences at Western Piedmont Community College.

Currently offering 25 different degree and certificate programs, the department is dedicated to providing the area with a highly trained, competent work force to cope with the advances and innovations in business and industry.

The field of drafting and design is a prime example of both the increase in technology and WPCC's dedication to keeping abreast of these advances.

Blueprints and design have been

an integral part of most manufacturing development and design for decades. Until recently these graphic arts were also the most tedious and time consuming aspects of industry.

Revisions to drawings required as much time as the originals. With the implementation of computer aided drafting systems, revisions and changes become simpler and much less time consuming.

According to Raymond Miller, coordinator of drafting at the college, once the basic drawing fundamentals are attained, the next logical step is to apply these abilities to new drafting technologies.

"Being able to type or having knowledge of computers is not a prerequisite to operating a CAD system, you only need to be able to draw. Probably the most important aspect of the system is that revisions can be made in terms of minutes instead of hours," he said.

### Auto service

Another example of the impact of technology on industry is in automotive service. Not too many years ago most auto repairs were a matter of a little common sense and a crescent wrench.

This is no longer the case says Shirley Smith, coordinator of automotive technologies. "Automotive technicians today require intensive

training in not only mechanic skills but also in electronics and computer technologies."

One amazing and exciting aspect of the automotive program is the training that students receive with the 'Smartscope' diagnostic computer. This device is capable of troubleshooting anything from individual cylinder compression to the operation of turn signals with the press of a button.

Equipment and training such as this are essential to a student who wishes to compete in the automotive industry.

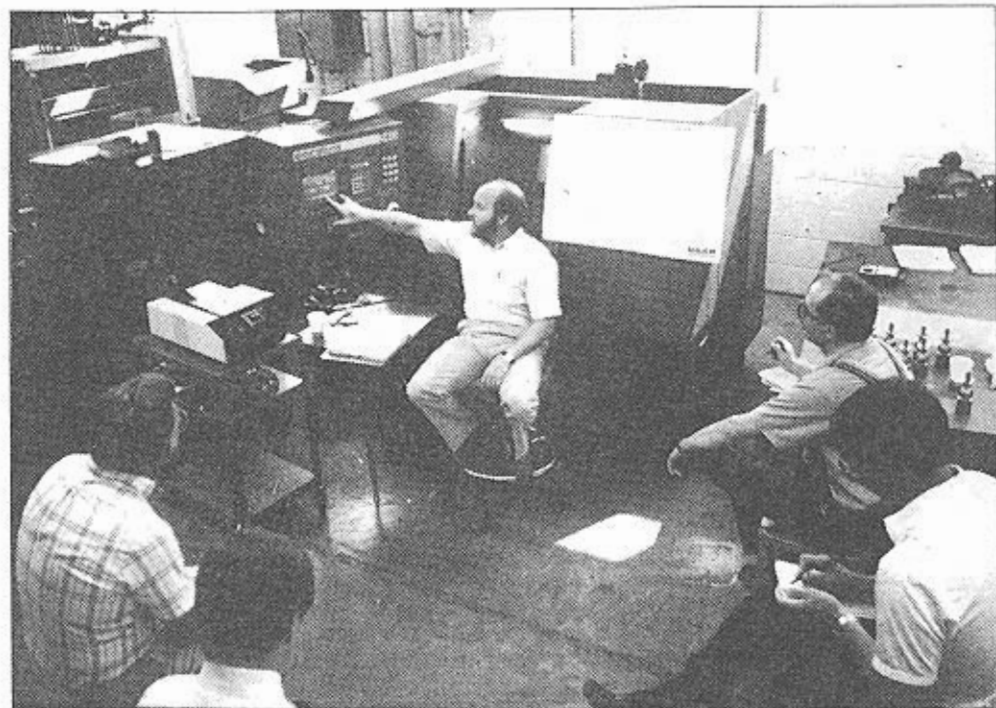
One major concern to members of the manufacturing community is that jobs will be jeopardized by technology. "I'm going to be replaced by a computer," is an often voiced comment.

WPCC is challenging this attitude with new equipment and innovative training in the machinist and machine operations programs. Machine craftsmen can now receive training on some of the most advanced equipment available today.

Devices such as the Emcotrun 340 numerical control lathe enable the college to answer industry's call for well educated and technically literate employees.

### Agribusiness

Even a career as seemingly basic



Computers are evident throughout the school.

and down to earth as agribusiness doesn't remain unscathed by high technology. Students enrolled in WPCC's horticulture program receive education and practical study covering many aspects of the business including hands on experience in the efficient, computer-controlled climate of the campus greenhouse.

With this and the application of other innovative ideas, students will gain the knowledge and creativity necessary to cope with the demands

of an ever-shrinking world.

Finally, with the implementation of computers and other new technology over such a diverse collection of industries, there is a booming demand for high-trained personnel to design and maintain these systems.

The Computer Engineering Technology program is designed to satisfy this demand. Classroom instruction and hands-on experience ranging from electrical fundamentals to computer architecture pro-

vide the student with the ability to intelligently deal with the demands of computerized industry.

Recent trends indicate that the South is gaining new status as the technology center of the country. Educational institutions must stay ahead of industry to provide the personnel and training to maintain and especially to promote this status, and the Department of Engineering and Natural Sciences at WPCC is committed to this ideal.