



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE WILL OFFER SAFE DRIVER PROGRAM**

Wilkesboro, NC- The 23<sup>rd</sup> NC Prosecutorial District, consisting of Ashe, Alleghany, Wilkes, and Yadkin Counties, will begin offering nationally and state certified defensive driving courses as part of the Safety and Health Council of North Carolina's Safe Driver Program in an attempt to reduce repeat traffic violations. The courses, which will begin July 1, will be offered at Wilkes Community College during evenings and weekends. There are currently 24 NC Prosecutorial Districts, 60 counties, participating in this program.

The program offers qualified drivers the opportunity to receive a reduction on a traffic infraction by completing the National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Course. Completion of the course may result in a reduced plea (e.g. improper equipment) which will allow drivers to avoid insurance and driver's license points for the violation. Costs of court and fines will still be assessed. Course completion is documented and maintained through a statewide database. Drivers are only eligible to participate in the program one time in a three-year period.

"Ultimately, our goal is to reduce the number of repeat traffic offenders which directly relates to public safety," says District Attorney Tom Horner. "The benefits to the citizens of our district include safer roadways, a more educated driving public, and the opportunity for individuals to save some of the financial costs associated with traffic violations."

Younger drivers, between the ages of 16 and 24, may take the Defensive Driving Course- Alive at 25, a highly interactive four hour program that teaches young drivers how to take control of situations by taking responsibility for their own driving behavior. Drivers over the age of 24 will be offered the four or eight-hour Defensive Driving Courses.

This new program does not apply to all traffic violations, and the list of applicable violations varies for each prosecutorial district. However, drivers with a citation in a NC district that accepts the Safe Driver Program may complete the course in the district the infraction occurred, or at a location closer to home. With 36 NC community colleges offering the two Defensive Driving Classes, most state residents will have the option to take the course they need without unnecessary travel.

WCC will begin offering both the four- and eight-hour courses at the Wilkes Campus in July at a cost of \$65 for the four-hour course and \$100 for the eight-hour course. WCC officials will monitor needs and will consider offering the course at the Ashe Campus or Alleghany Center if the need becomes necessary.

For more information on the Safe Driver Program, contact Jeff Shore at 336-838-6206.

Wilkes Community College will be a Tobacco Free Campus effective August 1, 2010.

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