



Photos by E.L. Hubbard for The Enquirer

**Rob Leach** inspects his work while labeling TimberTech samples at the factory in Wilmington. Orion Rehabilitation Center workers make product samples for about 100 TimberTech customers.

## Orion Rehab, TimberTech meet each other's needs

By Jeff McKinney

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**WILMINGTON** – Cecil Mullins says he's consistently impressed with the quality of work done for his company by the disabled workers he hires from the Orion Rehabilitation Center here.

Mullins, supply-chain manager at TimberTech – a decking, railing and fencing products maker – says he has been using Orion's outsourcing services since 2005 and first brought disabled workers on-site in April, helping to improve the company's operating efficiency by eliminating the need to hire outside vendors for many jobs.

The Orion workers make product samples for about 100 TimberTech customers.

"They do an outstanding job based on their attention to detail and high-quality craftsmanship," he said.

Kyle Lewis, superintendent at the Clinton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD), says the partnership between TimberTech and Orion is good for both sides. Orion is part of the MRDD's adult-services program.

Lewis says the partnerships help his agency fulfill its mission of providing support for mentally and physically disabled residents to work and earn money in a com-



**Stephanie Osborn** (standing), an Orion Rehabilitation Center work supervisor, helps Beth Hopkins as Hopkins wipes and labels TimberTech samples at the factory.

munity setting.

"It gives these workers a sense of pride and belonging where they live," Lewis said. "It allows them to have the same things that we all want."

Congress has designated this month National Disability Employment Awareness Month, but TimberTech officials say their commitment to disabled workers is year-round.

"We couldn't be as successful as we are today without them,"

Carey Walley, said TimberTech's marketing director. "And we're helping our community. It's a win-win situation."

Lewis said Orion has similar relationships with other well-known companies here, including Kroger and Pizza Hut.

"The relationships with all three of these companies demonstrate their understanding of the benefits that can be gained from employing individuals from all segments of the population," Lewis says.