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Income from her severance package and unemployment have helped the family to cover their mortgage payment and monthly bills.

offered laid-off employees.

And what if she waits for the right position at the right pay and nothing else is available?

At the office, so the layoff has been a blessing in that respect. "It's helped me refocus on what's important for me and my family," Wolfe said. "Change is always difficult, but there's a whole lot of good that can come from it." |

That decision is weighing heavily on her mind, and she gets frustrated with the transition.

"I have an opportunity to think about what I really want to do. I am being as open as I can be about any industry, any opportunity that might seem like a good fit."

ALLYSON WOLFE

Diversity coordinator focuses on continuing her education

BY SARAH JEFFORDS PISTER | STAFF WRITER
spister@bizjournals.com

ANTIA FIELDS

Husband: Ronald L. Fields
Children: Two adult sons
Residence: Jeffersonville
Hometown: Louisville
Education: Pursuing bachelor's degree, business management, Ottawa University; she expects to graduate in June
Former job: Diversity coordinator, Horseshoe Southern Indiana |

Antia Fields refuses to let unemployment derail her quest for a college diploma.

If anything, the former diversity coordinator for Horseshoe Southern Indiana, previously known as Caesars Indiana, is more determined to reach her goal.

Fields was among 14 people who were laid off in July.

It was not an easy transition for Fields, who had been with the company for more than seven years. She loved being a liaison between the riverboat casino and minority and women business owners. Plus, the casino paid a portion of Fields' tuition at Ottawa University.

Degree will be instrumental in job search

Without the company's financial support, she opted to sit out the fall semester.

But she was too close to quit altogether, Fields said, so she enrolled in spring courses and now is on target to earn a bachelor's degree in June. Her intention is to move straight into Ottawa's MBA program.

She hopes the bachelor's degree will be another asset when it comes to landing a job.

Meanwhile, she has been scouting out potential career opportunities.

Although she was offered another position during this layoff period, her heart was not in it. Fields said she knew it was something she would regret later, so she told herself to wait for the right job — possibly another diversity role.

Focused on diversity

Fields said there is a "great need" in the diversity sector. Companies, even those that are

cutting their diversity staffs now, will make diversity initiatives a priority after the downturn, she said.

But, in the midst of the downturn, it has taken her much longer than anticipated to find a position that suits her. "The jobs are there, but because of the economy, companies are waiting," Fields said. "They're looking at their dollars, their budgets. I don't blame them."

Meanwhile, Fields has remained involved in several diversity-related community initiatives. She serves on the planning committee for the Regional Annual Minority & Women Business Owners Conference, the board of directors of the Jeffersonville chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the planning committee for the annual Women Business Owners Summit in Louisville.

And in December, she received the Kentucky Minority Business Council's Chairman's Challenge Award for her efforts to promote diversity.

Finding entertainment at home

Until she lands her next position, Fields has found a way to live on less income.

She received a severance package and un-



Antia Fields is shown at Ottawa University where she is taking classes to complete a bachelor's degree and plans to go for an MBA when that is completed.

employment benefits, and her husband, Ronald Fields, is employed in the logistics sector. She declined to identify his employer.

The couple has been able to pay for their basic household needs.

But there are financial concerns, not only with retirement planning — Fields' 401(k) plan took a hit with the decline in the stock market — but also with everyday expenses.

They now watch movies at home instead of going to the movie theater. The couple also has cut back on the number of times they eat out, and no vacations are in the foreseeable future.

"We have always been thrifty," Fields said. "But you become thrifter."

Layoff a 'temporary setback'

The changing circumstances have not devastated Fields.

She recognizes that she easily could fall prey to depression without her support network of family, friends and fellow church members who attend Frankfort Avenue Church of Christ in Louisville.

Those individuals have been her lifeline, "a buoy in the water."

She clings to her faith and her vision for what the future holds.

"I'm still the same person," Fields said. "I have not changed the goals and aspirations I have for myself. This is a temporary setback." |