



By William G. Hancock

FROM THE CENTER OUT

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With this first issue of *N. C. Insight* the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research begins what we hope will become a continuing dialogue with our members, people who, as the ad says, "like calling North Carolina home."

When the Center opened in March of 1977, it was the culmination of 18 months of planning and work by a number of North Carolinians who believed there was a need here for an organization designed to help all of us constructively evaluate the performance of our state government. Since the opening, the Center has had a productive first 10 months. The board of directors increased to its present complement of 34 members, representing all areas of the state. A talented professional staff came to work, moved into the Center's headquarters in Raleigh, and produced the Center's widely-praised first major report, *This Land Is Your Land*, which criticized several aspects of state land management policy and recommended a number of reforms, most of which already have been adopted formally by state officials.

The creation of the Center was made possible by grants from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation of Winston-Salem, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Ford Foundation. These foundations had the vision to realize the necessity for independent, non-profit, citizen-based evaluation of state government operations and policies, and saw in the Center an opportunity to help create a model research organization of this kind which could be duplicated by citizens in other states.

A key feature of the Center's development plan from the beginning was the publication of this journal—*N. C. Insight*—as a means of regular communication with members. In November of last year the Center began to ask North Carolinians to become members and to support this effort through tax-deductible contributions. The response has been excellent. This support directly from the people of North Carolina is essential to the future of the Center, and we hope that all of you who have joined will urge your friends to do likewise.

During 1978, the Center will publish a number of major reports on important state problems similar to *This Land Is Your Land*, and will send its members four quarterly issues of *N. C. Insight*. Each issue of *N. C. Insight* will contain summaries of major Center reports as well as reactions to them from the press and public officials, articles on other state government matters of interest, profiles of state officials and agencies, follow-up on previous reports and stories and many other items. This column will not always be hoarded by this writer, but will be written by the director or other staff members or board members of the Center, or by some other North Carolinian selected by the Center's staff. Essentially, it will be a column of personal opinion on subjects related to state government problems and policies and, as such, will not constitute an official editorial judgment of the Center.

We have heard from dozens of North Carolinians who share our enthusiasm for the work of the Center, and we are encouraged and gratified by that. We also have received some criticism of the Center's first report, and we have learned from it and are equally grateful for that.

We encourage the comments of members and others with respect to any aspect of the Center's activities, and we earnestly solicit suggestions for topics which the Center might study. The Center is, and will remain, an independent organization run by and for the benefit of all the people of our state. With your help, it will make an important contribution to the quality of life in North Carolina as it works to find ways that government might serve all of us more humanely and effectively.

(From now on, we'll be publishing letters and comments from you—the citizens of North Carolina. We would like to have your ideas and insights about what the Center is doing—or should be doing. Limit your comments to 250 words and include your name and address.)