



carolina forum

Western North Carolina: Destruction or Protection?

As coordinator of the Western North Carolina Mountain League and founder of the Save Joyce Kilmer League, I would like to take this opportunity to present a most interesting and pressing problem in regional planning.

Presently, the North Carolina Department of Transportation is proposing the completion of a four lane Appalachian Regional Development Highway known as Corridor K. Corridor K begins at the North Carolina-Tennessee state line in Cherokee County, North Carolina and travels northeastward to Murphy, North Carolina. Between Murphy and Andrews, construction is already underway to replace old US 19 with another sixteen-mile segment of the new limited access highway. At Andrews, North Carolina the road narrows and enters the Snowbird Mountains, Corridor K's present terminus. Thirty miles east of the Snowbirds, however, the Bryson City Bypass has already been completed and represents the final stretch of Corridor K.

The Appalachian Regional Development Highway System, of which Corridor K is only a part, was originally planned over ten years ago to connect Appalachian population centers. By improving transportation to and within the area, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) hoped to stimulate economic growth of the depressed region. In a June 14, 1977 editorial, the *Winston-Salem Journal* framed the issue succinctly: "The road transects what the ARC calls the Asheville-Chattanooga-Atlanta Corridor, a sort of mini-mountain-megalopolis envisioned by Appalachian Regional Commission planners as an economic stimulant. It is a four-lane highway that would cut across some of western North Carolina's most impressive wilderness . . ."

Eight alternative routes have been proposed by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to complete this final "missing link" of Corridor K. Six of these proposals were considered "unacceptable" by the US Department of Interior in a study completed in December 1977. Although three of the proposals were set aside with qualifications—needing "detailed environmental and engineering studies"—only Alternatives 7 and 8 were recommended for final consideration. Alternative 8, which is the least environmentally damaging, transects the Snowbird Mountains and the proposed Cheoah Wilderness, and crosses the most rugged section of the 2,000-mile Appalachian Trail, has been endorsed by NC DOT. This super highway will pass through Graham County bringing little, if any, of the promised economic progress, but delivering plenty of strip development, neon lights, displacement of eleven mountain communities, and inexcusable degradation of one of western North Carolina's most unspoiled mountain areas.

The Western North Carolina Mountain League has proposed the following solution to the economic, transportation, and environmental problems of the area and has asked that it be considered as Alternative 9.

The Western N.C. Mountain League Stands AGAINST:

1. The destruction of the western North Carolina mountains' beauty and heritage by any more superhighways in the name of "development."
2. The wiping out of many mountain communities and heritage by superhighways in the name of "progress."
3. The setting aside of unnecessarily large and unqualified mountain areas for wilderness.

The Western N.C. Mountain League

stands FOR economic progress, jobs and protection of the area's great natural resources:

4. Sensible Highway improvements where needed.

5. A National Wilderness Visitor Center overlooking the Great Smokies and western North Carolina from the magnificent view at the end of the "Wagontrain Road" spur, providing jobs in the area, increased but dispersed tourist visitation, and including an area heritage exhibit.

6. A Scenic Santeetlah Lakeshore Access Drive providing faster access between Robbinsville and the Wagontrain Road.

7. A fast, scenic and unique passenger railroad service to connect Robbinsville and Asheville with Atlanta and Florida via Bryson City-Nantahala Gorge-Murphy-Blue Ridge.

8. A scenic bus system to connect the area's towns and attractions (Nantahala Gorge, Fontana Dam, Lake and Village, Smoky Mtns. National Park, National Wilderness Visitor Center, etc.) for the benefit of residents, industry, tourists, and hikers.

9. Protect and set aside only the heart of the two uniquely qualified (low timber and highly scenic) remaining wilderness heritage and resource areas, i.e. Nantahala Gorge-Upper Cheoah Bald and Upper Snowbird Creek.

Unlike the other eight routes, Alternative 9 puts the protection of the mountains—one of North Carolina's greatest economic and environmental assets—first. It rejects the outdated notion that bigger roads bring more progress and promotes the judgment that such irreparable damage to the mountain environment cannot be beneficial in any way.

A brief history of the decision making process regarding this issue demonstrates what happens to planning once political muscle is applied. The US Department of Interior study, completed in December 1977, excluded and continues to exclude Alternative 9. The NC Department of Natural Resources and Community Development, without performing a study of its own, and in contradiction to an earlier Alternative 9-like position, then recommended to the Governor that Route 8 be supported. The ARC will be providing 70 percent of the necessary twenty-five billion dollars, yet passes its decision making responsibility to the NC Department of Transportation. The NCDOT, in turn, has resisted considering anything but fragments of Alternative 9. Reportedly it will unveil a "Reduced Facility Concept" alternative of its own in the much delayed Draft Environmental Impact

Statement, which we predict will be an inadequate solution designed to better defend the NCDOT chosen superroute.

Turning away from this web of bureaucratic frustrations, it is worth highlighting the most important aspects of WNCML's nine point alternative. First of all, most of the existing roads in the area are in excellent shape, and existing and projected traffic volumes do not support the need for a four-lane superhighway even if such a road were environmentally feasible. Alternative 9 proposes improvements where needed and also incorporates a six mile section of four-lane road which the state improperly approved in 1974.

We consider the proposed National Wilderness Visitor Center a key element of our program. The Center would provide jobs, introduce present and future generations to the history, meaning, and benefits of wilderness, and make North Carolina a national leader in wilderness preservation. The *Charlotte Observer* and the *Winston-Salem Journal* both endorsed this idea in 1971, and Governor Hunt instructed state agencies to study the proposal. Not surprisingly, however, it became a prime target of highway proponents and anti-wilderness forces in western North Carolina and has been quietly shelved.

WNCML also proposes several modes of mass transportation to reduce the vehicle traffic within the region and provide alternative means of access. Our proposals for renewed passenger railroad service from Florida and Atlanta to Robbinsville and Asheville is meeting with great in-



A proposed superhighway in western N.C. concerns conservationists.

Photo courtesy of North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development.

terest. We believe it would be a success if efficiently run. Certainly it is worth a detailed study. While the NCDOT has been holding hearings on introduction of public bus systems in the mountain counties, the proposal has met with silence when presented as an integral part of the regional planning program by WNCML.

Finally, the nine-point program proposes a means of safeguarding the wilderness areas of Nantahala Gorge-Cheoah Bald, Upper Snowbird Creek, and Kilmer-Slickrock, parts of which lie in the path of the proposed Corridor K. The National Wilderness Visitor Center would serve as a point of access for a system of southern Appalachian hiking loops that will allow this resource to be enjoyed but not overused. Should this wilderness be destroyed, much of our remaining program would become of doubtful validity, opening the road to blind economic

progress and environmental destruction.

Our nine-point program provides a basic framework for regional planning in western North Carolina. Although other conservation groups are now joining our firm stand against the supposed inevitability of this destructive superhighway, the political outlook for our proposal does not seem bright. Yet we have not lost faith that enlightened minds in the federal and state governments, and most importantly among the public, will insist that protection of western North Carolina mountain resources remain the priority in regional planning. The Western North Carolina Mountain League invites your support and inquiries.

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Computers and Cultural Resources: A Planning Perspective

Under the auspices of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, applicants for federal funds for planning or development must evaluate the effects of their activities on significant cultural resources*. When cultural resource data are not readily available to project planners, or are not incorporated into the planning process in its early stages, problems and project delays often result.

The Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, is the state agency responsible for advising private project planners and federal, state, or local agencies of their legal responsibilities under NEPA, NHPA, and other legislation concerning the protection of cultural resources. At present, this advisory function is primarily exercised through the A-95 review process and coordinated through the regional

Councils of Government and the State Clearinghouse. In order to improve the quality and utility of data available to participants in the A-95 process, the Archeology and Historic Preservation Section is in the process of implementing the Cultural Resources Evaluation Programs (CREP).

CREP is a series of inter-related computer programs used to manipulate the cultural resource data base by performing the following functions: records management, statistical applications, and graphics applications. One portion of this system that is of particular relevance to planners

is the use of the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development's Land Resources Information Service (LRIS). LRIS is an interactive tutorial graphics information system housed within an independent mini-computer. The system has the capability to store any point, line, or polygon data in North Carolina State Plane coordinates (with a resolution of one foot). Such information may be output in graphic form with State Plane coordinates that relate the map to the surface of the earth. Thus, with LRIS it is possible to store virtually any map data, such as roads, streams, city boundaries, detailed soils, evaluations, and archeological sites or structures. Later, these can be recalled and maps can be drawn. Graphical output includes numerous types of maps (e.g. contour, 3-D surface representations, polygon, drainage, and line) as well as overlays or combinations of these maps.

Two components of this system make it particularly useful for cultural resource evaluation: polygon and label subroutines. The polygon subroutines are a set of computer programs which draw and/or compute the acreage not only of every polygon, but also the intersection of polygons when two polygon maps are overlaid. These subordinates will be used to isolate areas of high site probability. Known sites in similar geographic zones will be analyzed statistically to isolate environmental conditions most often found in conjunction with specific archeological sites. Thus, if it was found that sites

frequently occur on clay/loam subsoils, with a slope of one to three percent, and between 200 and 225 feet in elevation above water, LRIS could produce a map of all areas satisfying these criteria. This would allow projections from areas of known archeological resources into areas that have not yet been subjected to archeological investigation.

Of similar importance are the label subroutines. These tie a series of alpha-numeric labels to each graphic display (point, line, or polygon). Labels for each graphic display may be printed on the map output. These could identify a particular archeological site by its corresponding file number or a soil by its soil abbreviation code. This is particularly relevant for our uses, as labels will be used to store over thirty cultural and management variables which can be used to select which resources will be graphically displayed. Thus, it would be possible to produce a map with all the Victorian structures in Moore County that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

LRIS will be used to perform two major tasks with respect to the review of a project area. These will be the spatial isolation (mapping) of known cultural resources and production of maps depicting areas which are likely to contain archeological sites. Maps of labeled archeological sites and/or structures along with printed reports on each of these resources will form the base planning reference for a given project. In addition, environmental information stored in the interactive graphics

system will be used to create environmental models of site location. These will spatially isolate areas of predicted high, medium, and low site density based on sites in and around the project area. It is anticipated that the implementation of CREP will streamline the A-95 process and should greatly increase our ability to produce information suitable for planning purposes.

The Archeology and Historic Preservation Section is in the process of implementing CREP for A-95 review. CREP will provide planners with the necessary data for the inclusion of cultural resources into early stages of the planning process. Thus, it is hoped through the use of CREP and, more specifically, LRIS, that quick, accurate, and easily interpretable information on North Carolina's cultural resources can be made available to city, county, and regional planners as needed.

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**Cultural resources, in the context of this article, are defined as prehistoric and historic archeological sites and historic buildings.*

A Balanced Approach to Industrial Development

Trying to plan for economic growth in a free economy is like trying to herd a covey of flushed quail. At best, you move it in a general direction. Happily, North Carolina does have strong economic growth these days, and what once was nicknamed "Tobacco Road" is now hailed the bustling "Sunbelt." The state has enjoyed a steady increase in new capital investments for the past three years, and 1978 continues the trend. Governor Jim Hunt has emphasized economic development in his administration, and he has engaged the state in an ambitious effort to develop a "balanced growth" policy.

Directing such expansion is not easy. Growth involves many variables

such as labor markets, tax policy, land use, transportation systems, environmental regulations, and investment capital as well as more intangible items such as community attitudes, quality of living, and worker productivity. All of these figure in a state's effort to attract new industry and to encourage the expansion of existing industries. And not surprisingly, each industry may have its own shopping list of priorities.

The Hunt Administration wants to diversify the industrial base and, in the process, attract higher-wage industries. There are sound and historic reasons for this. North Carolina's manufacturing economy for decades has revolved around the tex-

tile, apparel, and furniture industries. Even today, over 54 percent of the state's manufacturing jobs are in these sectors. They are traditionally very competitive, low-wage industries, although their wages are almost equal to the national average in their respective industry. Such a concentration, however, has made the state vulnerable to the ups and downs of the economic cycle, and the recession of 1974-75 left many textile towns with record unemployment.

State leaders beginning with Governor Luther Hodges have tried to diversify the state's industrial base. Diversification spreads out the risk of unemployment so that a recession in one industrial sector does not necessarily cripple the entire state economy. Because a majority of the

Getting to be one of America's fastest-growing industrial states wasn't all fun and games.



For years, executives have been coming to North Carolina a beautiful beaches, mountains, and golf courses to escape their offices. Now they're also coming to open offices. And plants. And corporate headquarters.

For the state, simple reason that wages, remain: North Carolina is offering these executives excellent, competitive, and laborable economic advantages.

Like financial subsidy North Carolina is one of but a handful of states which can boast both a balanced budget and a coveted AAA bond rating. North Carolina also features a very active unemployment insurance trust funds which has kept unemployment rates low even during recent recessionary years.

North Carolina is also a major

transportation center. It is home to more long distance motor carriers and more miles of state-maintained roads than any other state in the country. It has 2,200 miles of track and modern solvent railroads. It has two deep-water, ocean-access ports and 12 commercial airports. It is also conveniently within 200 miles of over half the nation's population.

When it comes to an abundant, skilled labor supply, North Carolina comes up a winner again. Its



people were born and bred on the good old-fashioned work ethic. And still above it. They exhibit an almost innate mutual deservity complemented by the state's comprehensive training programs. As a result, North Carolina offers

employers a rare combination of exceptional sites, modern facilities, and a highly skilled labor force. North Carolina is a right-to-work state. It offers special tax incentives for recycling, resource recovery and pollution abatement. It has an adequate supply of water and electric power.

North Carolina also has a number of other available plant facilities ready for you to move in right now. As well as the lowest construction costs in the country, if you prefer to build your own. So send some one bring your check here for a round of golf, you might also bring your briefcase for a round of talks.

NORTH CAROLINA
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with accessible distribution centers for goods and products.

Growth in our smaller communities means more jobs for citizens and less cause for the dislocation of family and home that has characterized economic growth in the past. Sons and daughters will not feel the need to migrate to the cities in search of good jobs. Moreover, these small cities and towns often are those most in need of economic development when one considers unemployment and per capita wealth. Also, they are sometimes ill equipped to sell themselves to industrial prospects. Professional staff with an understanding of industry's transportation needs, water and sewer demands, and market analysis are beyond their budgets. Indeed, they are like the child who needs love the most but is the hardest to love.

The state, however, starts from a position of strength. North Carolina is one of the most attractive states in the nation to business, according to any number of respected surveys on the subject. *Business Week* ranked us number two in the country in 1976; the Fantus Company, a consulting firm specializing in industrial locations, put North Carolina in the top five in business climate.

We have the basic ingredients that attract industry: a good highway network; solvent railroads; a labor force willing to work and augmented by a tested industrial training program; and a water supply that will improve our position as growth states in the West find this essential increasingly harder to provide. We also have the lowest rate of work stoppages in the country, and we have the highest credit rating among states—a fact that we effectively advertise to businessmen. North Carolina's taxes are competitive in the region and are expected to improve with Governor Hunt's proposed credit for inventory intensive industries. In short, industrialists see a growing market here and a state that looks after its own budget as closely as business looks after its books.

The proof in this pudding can be measured in the Department of Commerce's figures on investment capital in new and expanding industries. In 1976, the state had a record year with one billion dollars reported in industrial growth. Last year showed a 44 percent increase, totaling \$1.45 billion. The first six months of 1978 showed projected investment capital at \$1.2 billion or almost double the growth announced for the first six

months of 1977.

Last year's industrial investments will mean 26,700 jobs when the factories come on line. Some, of course, will not be operating at capacity until several years from now, but these factory jobs will provide the nucleus for the 200,000 new jobs that Governor Hunt has set as a goal for his administration by 1981. Obviously many of these jobs will be in labor-intensive factories such as textile expansions, but increasingly more will be in high-wage industries such as cigarette manufacturing and electronic work. Commerce Department figures indicate that beginning in 1977, investment capital in non-traditional, new industrial growth surpassed capital expansion in domestic industries. For example, investment in new industries totaled \$730 million while investment in expanding (domestic) industries totaled \$720 million. That trend has increased in the first six months of 1978, with \$800 million in new industry compared to \$248 million in expansion projects.

We also have noted a trend that we believe will work in our favor in diversifying industrial growth. Industries themselves are showing more interest in smaller communities. And we believe that the best place to locate an industry may well be in the smallest community able to meet the industry's demands. Some of the more notable plant locations in recent months illustrate this point: Miller Brewing Co. has built a \$200 million facility in Eden, population 16,570 by 1976 estimates; Timken Co. is building a \$135 million project in Lincolnton, population 5,880; Campbell Soup Co., \$250 million, in Maxton, population 2,100; Dana Corporation in Morganton, population 15,670; Novo Biochemical, Inc., in Franklinton, population 1,520; Stanadyne Corp. in Jacksonville, population 19,280; Data General Corp. in Clayton, population 4,020; Eaton Corp. in Kings Mountain, population 8,850; and the much publicized Philip Morris plant in Concord, population 18,700.

While it is true that many of the towns are near larger, metropolitan areas, the companies did select a small community in which to grow. This is reflected, too, in the relative growth rates among the state's three regions. Since 1970, the fastest growing job market has been in eastern North Carolina, according to Department of Administration figures. The East is composed mainly of small towns and cities. Similarly, during

Advertising is part of the industrial recruitment strategy in N.C.

Courtesy of North Carolina Department of Commerce, Economic Development Division

factory jobs have been in low-wage industries, new industries generally have brought with them higher wages. While they pay wages comparable with the local rate they increase competition for labor, and after developing experienced work forces, pay better than the average prevailing wage. For instance, the state through its industrial revenue bond program requires applicants to pay better than the local prevailing wage in order to receive the tax break afforded by the bonds.

To these goals, the Commerce Department wants to add the challenge of balancing growth geographically. There are sound reasons for pursuing this objective. Diversifying and spreading growth across the state will preserve the traditional balance among North Carolina's urban areas. No one city will dominate the state as is the case in other states. Rather, the population will continue to be spread from the mountains to the coast, giving the state economic stability and diversity at the same time.

Secondly, the distribution of industrial growth is a way to prevent the urban sprawl that has attended rapid economic expansion elsewhere in the country. North Carolina's larger cities, which are attractive, prosperous, and safe by national standards, remain manageable in size and in touch with their citizenry. They also provide commerce and industry

1977, the amount of investment dollars in industrial growth in the East was 31 percent of the total \$1.45 billion, a large portion considering past performances. The growth rate in jobs in the West was not as pronounced during the first half of the decade, but population did grow at a higher rate than in the Piedmont.

Much of this new industry and industrial expansion is in non-traditional areas; that is, in growth outside of textile and furniture manufacturing. Paper products and food processing showed the largest amount of investment growth in 1977. An analysis of inquiries from industries seeking information for new sites also shows that interest is coming from non-traditional, high technology industries such as chemicals, fabricated metals, electronics, rubber, and plastics.

Thus, we know that North Carolina sits squarely in a growth region. We know that we have what industry wants because industrial growth has set records for the past two years and continues to improve. We know that new industry tends to be of a higher-technology than our current industrial base and that it is more diversified in content. What then, can we do to direct this growth to achieve a geographic and economic balance in its development?

Industry, of course, will have the biggest voice in such decisions. In our free market economy, that is how it should be. Government cannot begin to decide for the multitude of private enterprises what is the best site for their particular operations. Industrial recruiters, however, can improve their sales techniques and localities can be better groomed for industrial prospects. We intend to do these things.

Our recruiters now say that many new industries ask for a location within a hour's distance of an interstate highway and within 30 minutes of an airport served by three commercial carriers. Prospects also want workers who will be available and willing to work and buildings ready to use. The state already is recognized as a hub for the trucking industry. There are more headquarters for long distance carriers here than in any other state.

Obviously, not all of our communities meet these requirements. We believe, however, that our road building program will help open more cities to controlled access highways. The commerce department also feels confident that our air carrier service will grow along with our markets. And

the Hunt Administration and the commerce department in particular have taken the initiative in developing our labor market with innovative use of Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA) funds to provide on-the-job training. In one of the most efficient programs in the nation, the department's labor force section has worked with private enterprise to find jobs for hard-to-employ workers, some 85 percent of whom remain on the jobs at the end of the program. These are people who are removed from public sector dependence and become productive taxpayers in the private sector.

More specifically, our industrial development program can help small communities by taking the following initiatives:

One, the state can identify those towns and areas in need of new industrial growth. This is no easy task. Some small communities, may in fact, have low unemployment and may satisfy the social needs of their citizens. Likewise, some of our larger cities may have an unacceptable unemployment rate and need new economic life to make use of their existing facilities. We are preparing such an identification system now in the Governor's Balanced Growth Plan, and it will help us select targets for our industrial recruiters.

Two, the state can give more emphasis to training smaller communities in salesmanship and industrial growth planning. The Business Assistance Division currently conducts programs of this sort to interested towns or local industrial development boards. The Governor and I have asked for an extra \$200,000 to expand and improve this effort. The department also is seeking new ways to expand the use of unoccupied buildings in industrial recruitment. As noted earlier, these plant "shells" increasingly have become an important attraction to industrial prospects.

Three, the state can improve its recruiting team so that smaller communities are given a chance to compete for the clients. Of course, these towns are not left out of the competition now, but we can give them special attention. For example, industrial recruiters can make a point of showing at least one community on the priority list to each qualifying industrial prospect. Special recruiting teams can focus on finding and soliciting prospects for these communities.

Overall, the attention that Governor

Hunt and I give to this objective will have an impact of its own. This enthusiasm will have a direct effect on the state's industrial recruiters, and it can only uplift the spirits of those in these smaller communities. They will know we are listening to them. They will know we are extending a hand.

The consequences will not be what some might call an anti-big city direction. The facts and history of industrial recruiting show that our metropolitan areas will continue to get a large share of the industrial growth. Many of our larger cities such as Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and Raleigh have excellent industrial recruiting programs of their own. Similarly, these cities also house many industrial promoters connected with the state's financial houses and growth related businesses such as railroads, utilities, and construction firms. So these large municipal citizens will not be left out or neglected.

There are some industries, too, that will not qualify as prospects for smaller communities. It would do the state little good to take executives interested in a high-technology labor market into areas devoid of such expertise. Indeed, it is likely that the need for jobs in these target communities may outweigh the state's commitment to high-wage industries. We may have to settle for lower-wage, lower skill industries in order to match the industry with the community. This is not a retreat from our goals; it is making a hard choice for low-wage jobs rather than none.

This is, I believe, a practical way to approach a tough problem. We do not expect overnight results. We will need help from our small communities because we know that the state cannot sell an industry to a town that doesn't want it. For example, local leaders will have to help identify suitable locations for prospective industrial clients. They must be prepared to work with state recruiters to find adequate and environmentally acceptable water supplies and waste disposal systems. Their support is key to measurements of available labor and skilled training. In sum, local community attitude must complement the state's established reputation as one that welcomes more and better jobs. Together, I believe we will achieve results.

*D. M. Faircloth
North Carolina
Secretary of Commerce*