

Good Bye, Popular Government

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Albert and Gladys Coates spent their own money to publish and mail *Popular Government* even before there was an Institute of Government. It filled a need at the time and over the years it has played a useful role in the life of the School. Our annual legislative summaries originally were published in *PG*—long before there was *North Carolina Legislation*. Early issues contained substantive articles, but it also was a promotional vehicle for publicizing the Institute and spreading Albert's vision. At one time the magazine included cigarette advertisements, including a famous one featuring a Hollywood actor—Ronald Reagan. In recent years the appearance and layout of the magazine have improved dramatically. The problem is that few people seem to be reading the magazine, and it is expensive for us to publish.

For all of the reasons that Chuck Szypszak outlined in his memo (included in [my earlier post about PG](#)) the next issue will be the last print version of the magazine. I won't repeat all the points from that earlier post. Let me just say that my recent conversations with city and county managers have reinforced the decision to eliminate the print magazine. Most of them have said that they never read it, and a couple of them have said that they occasionally read an article. I met with Dudley Watts, the Forsyth County Manager, on Monday in Winston-Salem. He told me that he sometimes reads it while he's on vacation, which raises a whole different set of questions—about Dudley, not the magazine. All of the managers, including Dudley, strongly support the idea of at least moving



to an online version, but they also support the idea of re-examining more broadly whether there are more effective ways to share all of our information. That is exactly what we will do.

This is the right decision, but it would not have happened without the strategic planning process—which included proposals to reconsider the magazine, and that caused me to encourage Chuck to evaluate its role. I appreciate the care with which Chuck, the *PG* Editorial Board, and the Dean's Advisory Council considered the issue, and I appreciate the feedback from a number of you since my original post—everyone agreed that it is time to end the print version. We will be careful in explaining this transition to people who are used to receiving the magazine. I am excited about what might come next, and I'm confident that we will develop something that does a better job of meeting everyone's interests. The magazine changed over the years and this is just the next step.