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Letter from Managing Director Nils Andreassen

Founded by Governor Walter J. Hickel in 1994, the Institute of the North remains strongly committed to his legacy.

Gov. Hickel has always been known to stand up for Alaskans and Alaska, demonstrating the conviction of his principles by using his voice. Many know him for his passionate appeal to relate the obligations of ownership to Alaskans and the world. His firm belief that Alaskans must use the resources they own in common for the benefit of all is a constant reminder that Alaska's future is secured when we all pull together.

With this in mind, the Institute of the North announces its latest initiative, **Voices of Choices**, a campaign for increased civic discourse. In the face of the many challenges facing the state, Alaskans must use their voices to work **together** to build an Alaska that provides jobs for its citizens, infrastructure and economic development solutions for its communities and opportunity for its youth.

A core component of this campaign is civil discourse. Civility doesn't mean just please and thank you, nor does it mean giving up what you believe in. The Institute believes that an impassioned dialogue giving voice to Alaskans' values is an important, powerful and constructive way to address the issues facing us. At the same time, good dialogue means that each of us respects the other's perspective and values the other's time and energy. Each of us can make a difference by engaging in conversations backed by solid research and good information, and that present both sides of the argument and include all stakeholders at the table.

The Institute has a long tradition of striving to achieve this balanced approach, hosting our annual Alaska Dialogue for over a decade, and more recently engaging young leaders in an annual Emerging Leaders Dialogue held each spring. We approach these events from the perspective that each of us is an owner in the future of the state, that we have obligations to one another and the state and that in all things, we put the state first.

Voices of Choices is one more step toward involving Alaskans in our future. Those who add their voices are recognized for being committed to and standing up for the state and community. The Institute believes that as citizens, we demonstrate our citizenship by choosing to speak up. The obligation of ownership is to be involved in the decisions that affect us, and silence does not reflect our responsibility.

Join us. Add your voice.