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The U.S. Geological Survey's EROS Data Center and the Sioux Falls Development Foundation today announced the signing of a contract with Spitznagel Architects to provide the architectural and engineering design for a major addition to the Data Center's main building.

The 60,000 square foot, $10 million addition represents a partnership between the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in support of NASA's Mission to Planet Earth. Mission to Planet Earth is a 20 year, $15 billion space based program to examine the planet and the regional and global effects of climate and environmental change. Land related Earth observation data, acquired by a series of polar orbiting spacecraft, will be received and processed in the new facility.

The building addition will house several super computers, high volume data storage, retrieval and analysis equipment and research offices. An expanded research library and complete visitor and auditorium facilities are planned.

The Spitznagel design study will be completed later this year. Ground breaking is scheduled for the spring of 1993, with construction to be completed early in 1994. Construction will coincide with operational development of the Earth Observing Systems (EOS) phase of the Mission to Planet Earth program.

The new facility will be staffed by approximately 150 additional employees,

bringing total staffing at the Center to nearly 500 employees. The new positions will be primarily in computer operations and research related to Earth sciences.

"This agreement marks another step in the development of a world class data management and research facility in South Dakota," said Dr. Donald T. Lauer, Acting Chief of EROS. "The Center already holds the world's largest collection of spacecraft and aircraft acquired data of our planet. That archive forms the information base for research to be conducted under Mission to Planet Earth. The new addition will provide to scientists around the world new types of data that will assist them in understanding the environmental factors affecting global change."

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Ronald Beck at 594-6551.