

Argus Leader BUSINESS

1D Sunday ♦ Sept. 7, 2003

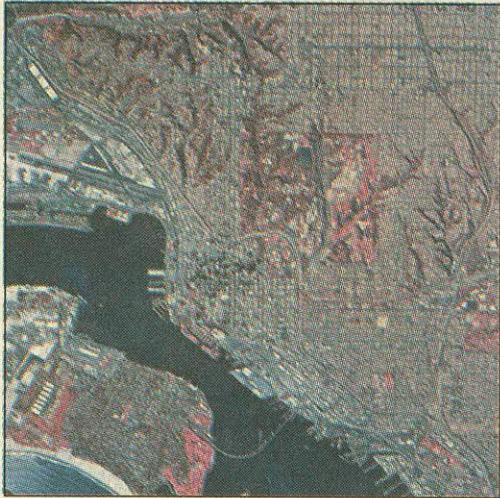
The Mo

The investment wiz
should join an investm

Business Ed

'As we watched, I was absolutely as nervous as a cat on a slippery tin roof. ... If it didn't work, it was quite possible that the project would have failed.'

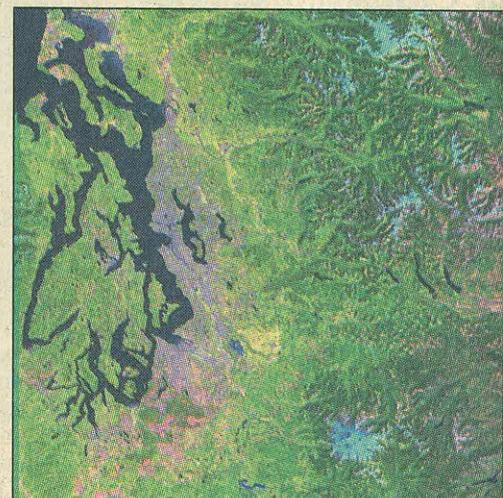
Al Schock, former member, Sioux Falls Development Foundation, on watching the first EROS satellite being launched into orbit



SAN DIEGO



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SEATTLE

PHOTOS COURTESY OF EROS DATA CENTER

High, high tech

South Dakota's EROS led science revolution

BY JAY KIRSCHENMANN

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Long before Hematech and other scientific companies came to town – and well before “technology” became the buzzword for officials trying to bring businesses to Sioux Falls – the EROS Data Center began blazing a high-tech trail through the region.

And as it prepares to celebrate its 30th anniversary later this month, the company remains on the cutting edge of technology and is one of the backbones of the

Q&A

EROS Data Center

Q: What does EROS stand for?

A: The acronym stands for Earth Resources Observation Systems Program.

Q: What does EROS do?

A: The center gathers photographs and

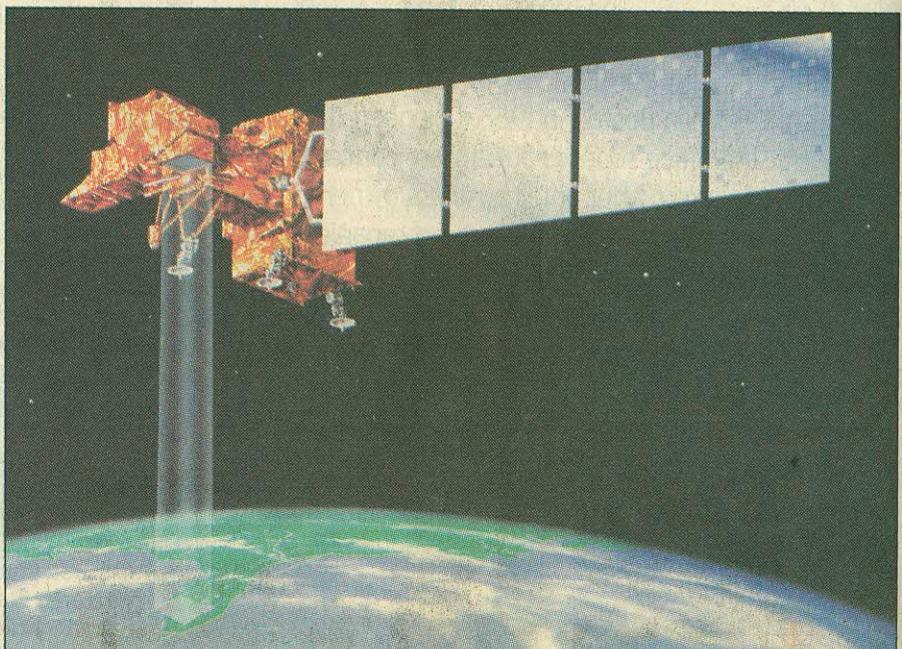


PHOTO COURTESY OF EROS DATA CENTER

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city’s technology sector.

Nestled into 318 acres of
farmland about 15 miles
northeast of town, the Earth
Resources Observation Sys-
tems facility is home to the
world’s largest civilian
archive of land data, mostly
in the form of aerial and
satellite images of Earth.

Customers range from
Mapquest and research sci-
entists, to geographers and
farmers who want to see
their land from a broad per-
spective. For sale are
images of rivers, moun-
tains, deserts and lakes,
which take on a revealing
perspective from more than
400 miles high.

To keep track of 4.5 mil-
lion images acquired by
satellites and 8.5 million
photos taken by cameras
aboard aircraft, EROS hous-
es one of the largest com-
puter complexes in the
Department of the Interior.

“And all the data we have
is in the public domain,”
said Tom Holm, EROS’
senior advisor of policy and
legislative affairs.

“Anyone can order it and

Q&A

EROS Data Center

Q: What does EROS stand for?

A: The acronym
stands for Earth Re-
sources Observation
Systems Program.

Q: What does EROS do?

A: The center gath-
ers photographs and
facts about the natu-
ral resources of the
Earth’s surface using
orbiting satellites
equipped with what
could be considered
large digital cameras.
It also archives and
makes available sur-
face data from other
government agencies.

MORE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, PAGE 3D

use it any way they want.
There is no restriction on
the data.”

During a Sept. 20 open
house celebrating its 30th
anniversary, visitors will be
able to tour the facility and
see areas usually off limits
to the public, including mas-
sive film archives within
the 65,000-square-foot facil-
ity.

Persistent officials suc-
ceeded in attracting the
EROS Data Center in 1973.
Sioux Falls’ location in the

See **EROS**, page 3D

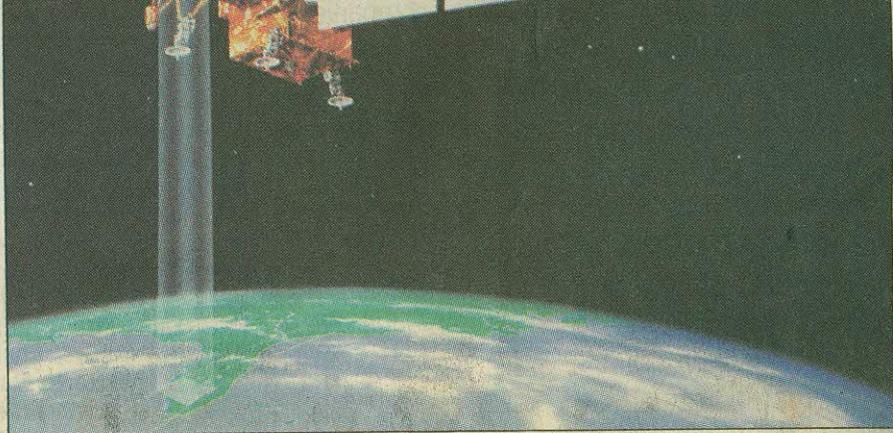


PHOTO COURTESY OF EROS DATA CENTER

The Landsat 7 satellite was launched in 1999 and is monitored by EROS Data Center. It recently developed a glitch that degrades images it collects.

Glitch still degrading photos taken by Landsat 7 satellite

BY JAY KIRSCHENMANN

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There’s still a glitch in a satellite
monitored by EROS Data Cen-
ter that is degrading images
used by a wide variety of cus-
tomers, including scien-
tists.

“We continue to do engi-
neering studies and have
not yet solved the problem,
but even with the edges of
images degraded, the data
still is useful,” said EROS
spokesman Dennis Hood.

“Engineering remedies are being
sought,” he said.

Degraded images collected by the
Landsat 7 satellite and relayed to Earth
first appeared in images May 31. But a
second EROS satellite, Landsat 5, follows
the same orbit and is relaying clear
images.

The down side, he said, is that the old-
er Landsat 5’s data recorder failed years

ago, so only data collected in sight of an
antenna can be collected. That’s not a
problem for images of the United States,
since the EROS Data Center is in the cen-
ter of North America. Full U.S. coverage
is possible, as are most areas overseas.

But portions of Africa and
South America are not in
Landsat 5’s antenna sight.

The problem with Land-
sat 7 will either be resolved
or will have to be accepted
by the scientific commu-
nity, Hood said. Meanwhile,

an anomaly resolution team was called in
with the challenge of finding and fixing a
problem 438 miles above Earth’s surface.

The team members come from U.S.
Geological Service (USGS), National
Aeronautics and Space Administration
(NASA), Lockheed Martin and other
companies with an interest in the prob-
lem.

More online
EROS Data Center
(EDC):
edc.usgs.gov

See **LANDSAT**, page 3D



LLOYD B. CUNNINGHAM / ARGUS LEADER

The EROS facility northeast of Sioux Falls. This images was assembled from four separate pictures.