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News Release

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

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GENERAL PRESS RELEASE

The U.S. Geological Survey EROS Data Center, near Garretson, South Dakota, will recognize its 25th anniversary by hosting an Open House on Saturday, September 19, 1998. The theme of the celebration is "EXPLORING A CHANGING PLANET." Events that day will run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The public will have full access to the Center, including an opportunity to see the massive data archives, which hold the world's largest collection of civilian satellite images and aerial photographs. Educational exercises for exploring the Earth, designed for Middle School age children, will be available. Displays of satellite images from around the world will show how information available from the Center is used for environmental studies and for monitoring the effects of natural and man made actions to the land mass of the planet. Visitors will also be able to tour the advanced computer facilities being prepared for the next generation of Earth observing satellites to be launched in 1999.

A special guest for the day will be a former NASA astronaut, Dr. Mary Cleave. Dr. Cleave will participate in the Open House and offer comments in a public forum on her experiences as a Mission Specialist on the Space Shuttle. Entertaining events are planned in addition to the scientific

and technical activities. These events and displays include a fun run, Native American dancers, skydivers, tethered hot air balloon rides, music, ham radio operators, military equipment, fingerprinting identification service, and even a few clowns. Everything is free of charge except for food and soft drinks, which will be available at the food court. The day is planned for family education (about the planet Earth) and for fun.

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Geological Survey EROS Data Center was established in 1973 primarily to receive, process, archive, distribute, and analyze land remote sensing data acquired by our Nation's civilian Earth observing satellites. Today, 25 years later, the EROS Data Center manages the world's largest collection of civilian satellite land data and distributes these data to land managers, resource specialists and climate change researchers worldwide.

The EROS Data Center is located 16 miles north and east of Sioux Falls. To get there, take Interstate 90 to exit 402, go north 10 miles on County highway 121, and one mile east; or, from Interstate 29, exit 96, east six miles on County road 114, then south on County highway 121 three miles to 252nd street, and one mile east. Signs will direct the public to parking and to the events.