

EROS' window to the future

South Dakota's window to the future — the EROS Data Center and its remote sensing technique — was on display this week for 500 scientists, engineers and businessmen attending the sixth annual Pecora Symposium and Exposition.

And appropriately, the thrust of the symposium this year was the application of remote sensing methods in combination with more conventional techniques of surface exploration for petroleum and minerals.

The symposium is a memorial to the late Dr. William T. Pecora, former director of the U.S. Geological Survey. His concept of inventorying earth's resources from cameras in satellites traversing the globe led to the Earth Resources Observations Systems Data Center near Sioux Falls. When he died in 1972, he was under secretary of the Interior.

Exhibit booths and discussion groups at the Convention Center in Sioux Falls this week reflected the scientific age: a mix of computers, aerial survey, mapping and exploratory techniques so vital to man's quest for minerals and conservation of resources. The symposium ends today.

In addition to technical study, the symposium also honored Dr. Verner E. Suomi, professor of meteorology of the University of Wisconsin, as the recipient of the 1980 Pecora award. It was based on Suomi's pioneering work in repetitive observations of the earth for dynamic atmo-

spheric processes, analysis methods for acquired data and the physics of the atmosphere that led to operational applications.

The symposium was sponsored by the Society of Exploration Geophysicists, an international organization based in Tulsa, Okla., which has 13,000 members in 100 countries. Cooperating sponsors were the U.S. Geological Survey, American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the Geosat Committee and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

It's interesting to note the range of symposium themes since the first event was held in Sioux Falls in 1975. They have included mineral exploration, mapping, petroleum geology, wildlife management and satellite hydrology.

No agency except the U.S. government could make NASA's Landsat satellites and the EROS data center available for the general benefit of science, business and other governments. The simulated aerial photographs and maps of the world's surface which are produced by the data center in Minnehaha County have enhanced man's knowledge of his planet.

Their use will continue to play an important role in the years ahead. The Pecora symposiums have contributed to that use and the scientific disciplines involved in their application to a variety of projects around the world.