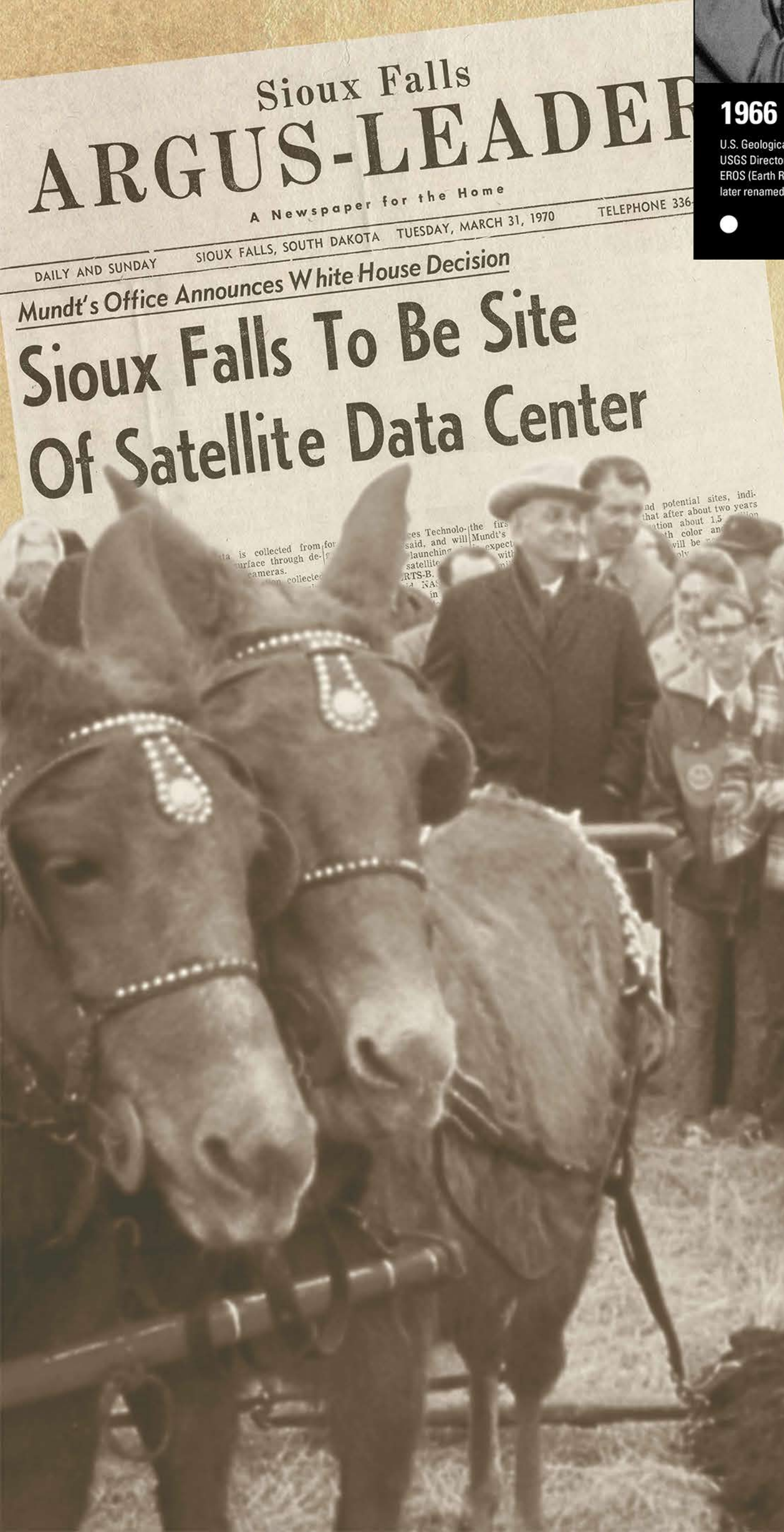
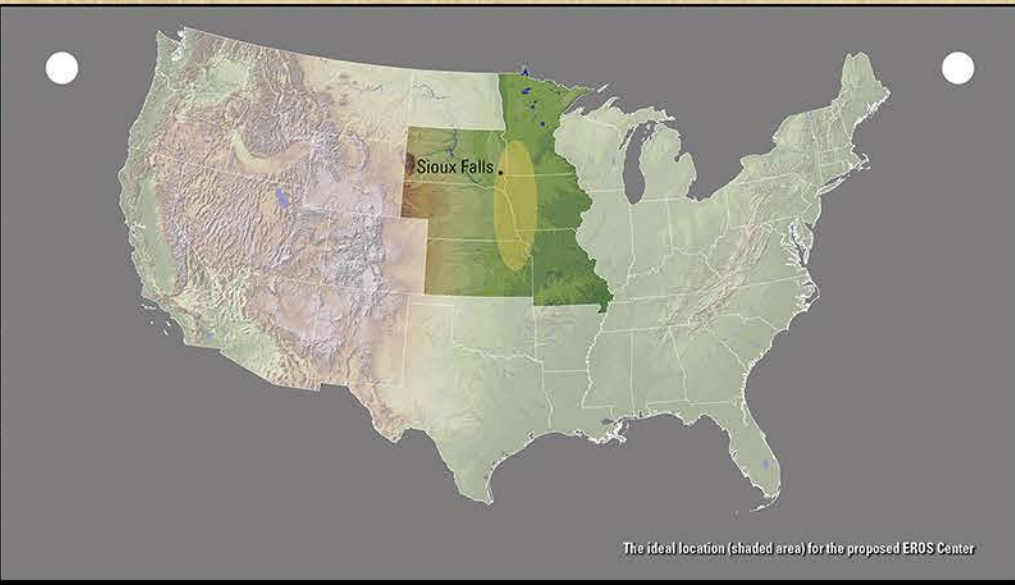


A Brief History of the Center



1966
U.S. Geological Survey scientists proposed using satellites to study Earth's natural resources from space. USGS Director William T. Pecora persuaded Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall to support Project EROS (Earth Resources Observation Satellite). NASA built the first Earth Resources Technology Satellite, later renamed Landsat 1. USGS became responsible for satellite data management.



1968
A centralized facility for acquiring, distributing, and storing millions of satellite images became a top priority. A study determined that the ideal location for receiving satellite data lay within a small area in the northern Great Plains. Cities within this zone, including Sioux Falls, began to compete for the EROS Center.



1969-Spring 1970
Senator Karl E. Mundt and Congressman Ben Riefel, together with members of the Sioux Falls Development Foundation, worked to convince government decision makers that Sioux Falls was the best choice for the EROS Center. The city's offer of free land on which to build the facility clinched the deal.



August 1970
The site deemed ideal for the Center's location was 12 miles north and 4 miles east of Sioux Falls, on farmland purchased from Rudolph and Olga Froese and Alfred and Annette Hagg. South Dakota Governor Frank Farrar presented the deed for the land to President Richard M. Nixon.



1971
While architects drew up plans for the new building, a temporary EROS office opened in downtown Sioux Falls. It housed computer systems, a photo laboratory, and a fledgling staff trained in photo interpretation, data processing, and image distribution and archiving.



1972
Ground-breaking ceremonies for the new EROS Data Center featured a mule-drawn plow making the first cut into the soil. Construction was well underway by July 1972, when the first Landsat satellite was launched and began capturing digital images of the Earth.



1973
As the building neared completion, the downtown staff transferred to its new quarters. The EROS Data Center, housed in the Karl E. Mundt Federal Building, was officially dedicated on August 7, 1973. It was hailed as the "first major dividend from America's space effort that can be shared by all mankind."



1975-1979
During this period, the workforce and capabilities of the EROS Center grew rapidly. Staff acquired hundreds of Landsat images daily, printed and distributed them to users worldwide, and archived them within an ever-expanding database.



1980-2000
The EROS Center continued to develop as new satellites and satellite antennas vastly increased the amount of data being received and made available to users. By 1990, EROS had become the world's largest civilian repository of terrestrial satellite data.



2001-present
Capitalizing on decades of innovative technology and scientific research, the EROS Center stands as a premiere facility engaged in receiving, processing, archiving, distributing, and using satellite data, and in helping to document the extent and impact of changes taking place on our dynamic planet.