

NASA, UNL team up for satellite research

By **JOSH NICHOLS**
Staff writer

NASA is joining forces with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to pay for research directed at using satellite technologies to analyze land from high in the sky.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration will work with UNL's Center of Advanced Land Management Information Technologies stationed in Nebraska Hall. CALMIT is part of UNL's Conservation and Survey Division, and the School of Natural Resource Sciences.

The research will cost \$860,000, of which NASA will pay \$600,000.

Al Peters, the university's CALMIT research associate heading the project, said the satellite imaging technologies allow the center to analyze crop conditions at any given time. For example, researchers could find whether a field is experiencing a drought.

Research also will focus on using computers to analyze geographic information and satellite-assisted methods for determining exact location.

In other words, any task that involves space or distance on land can be mapped with assistance from satellites, Peters said.

Maps made using these methods show the condition of the land and crops.

"This is intended to lead to economic development in this region through improved farming methods and techniques," Peters said.

J.S. Smoot, computer system analyst at NASA, said the Affiliated Research Center Program was developed to make the U.S. more technologically competitive. There are about 10 other universities involved in the project.

ARC is introducing these technologies to small companies throughout the nation by bringing the research to the local universities, he said.

"Companies can go to the universities to get research instead of having to go to NASA," Smoot said.

Peters said the price of these technologies for commercial use is dropping rapidly. At one time many companies in Nebraska were not able to develop them because of high costs.

CALMIT is seeking corporations interested in being partners in its development of these technologies, Peters said.

CALMIT is focusing on private sectors interested in mapping and analysis of vegetation and other land cover, water quality and wetlands assessment and site-specific management in farming and ranching, often called precision agriculture.

Precision agriculture allows farmers to find specific information about their fields and crops such as whether they are insect-infested or if they are experiencing a drought.

To promote private sector interest, NASA flew over Lincoln and the University of Nebraska field laboratory in Mead last month and measured the conditions of the land from the sky.

NASA analyzed the land using poster-sized maps of each region, Peters said.

CALMIT must provide monthly reports to NASA on the details and status of projects. It also must give an annual report including detailed

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AL PETERS
CALMIT research associate

accounts of each of the four completed projects, results, expenditures and metrics.

Two months prior to the end of the contract year, CALMIT will supply an

annual Option-Year Renewal Proposal if there are budget changes.

Smoot said the program, which has been under way for about three months at UNL, is going well.

Capitol restoration to be captured on Web

By **NICOLE HALL**
Staff writer

When restoration begins on the Capitol within the next few weeks, Lincoln residents won't even have to leave their chairs to see the progress — they can watch it unfold on the World Wide Web.

Information Analytics has installed a Webcam at the top of its microwave tower to capture pictures of the restoration.

The Webcam, at 1440 M St., will take a picture of the Capitol every hour for the next three years. These pictures then will be put together to create a time-lapse video of the three-year

restoration project.

"We wanted to show a picture of the Capitol to the world," said James Howell of the Navix Help Desk. Navix and its parent company, Aliant Communications, are helping to finance the project.

In addition to the Capitol Webcam, three other Webcams have been placed throughout Lincoln. They show pictures of downtown, 31st and O streets, and a different angle of the Capitol.

"The O street Webcam is mostly to show the traffic on O and the weather, for people without windows in their office," said Mark Dahmke, vice president of Information Analytics.

The Webcams can be viewed at <http://www.starcitymall.com/webcam/>.

ASUN Watch

And the score is ...

The following is a list of goals ASUN has set and the progress it has made.

1. Continue commitment to diversity through sponsored events and increased communication with the campus community.

— ASUN President Sara Russell and Andy Schuerman, Human Rights Committee chairman, are working with a universitywide committee to coordinate activities for Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Jan. 19, 1999.

2. Maintain regular campuswide community service projects.

— Senate members completed their second community service project Tuesday by working on the UNL Habitat for Humanity chapter's "NU House." Ryan Anderson, chairman of the Campus Life Committee, said committee members are brainstorming ideas for a service project during the winter holiday season.

3. Enhance technological services to students.

— Paul Schreier, Technology Fee Advisory Board chairman, said student Web services are being updated to include online registration, schedules and grade checks. The Communications Committee is working with Maggie Doyle, public relations liaison, to update student government information on the World Wide Web.

4. Research the options to make student evaluations more effective.

— ASUN Academic Committee members are meeting with college departments and faculty members to discuss midsemester feedback forms. Kara Slaughter, committee chairwoman, said so far the meetings have been positive.

5. Address campus parking concerns.

— The Environmental Issues Subcommittee is addressing parking issues on campus by actively promoting alternative forms of transportation, including walking, biking and public mass transit. Members hope to decrease the number of single-occupant private vehicles used by students, faculty members and staff.

6. Continue efforts to unite City and East campuses.

— Tony White, Environmental Issues Subcommittee chairman, said the committee is promoting mass transit services on StarTran bus No. 24 and night shuttle service between City and East campuses. White said he wants more UNL students, faculty members and staff to use the buses to ride between campuses.

7. Create a larger representation of students through outreach initiatives.

— Student senators are continuing to visit with student organizations monthly. Russell said the meetings between ASUN members and organizations help communicate student government activities, as well as answer any questions or concerns the student population may have.

8. Lobby for student input and concern regarding the ASUN government party system.

— The ASUN Electoral Commission voted to accept Russell's proposed measure to keep a partisan government system, but remove the listing of party names on the election ballot. The commission will present the new proposal, along with new election rules and procedures, today for the senate to vote on.

9. Work to promote alcohol awareness and education campuswide.

— ASUN members are researching processes and methods on how to award the Laura Cockson Memorial Scholarship. Russell said a scholarship will be awarded this year to a UNL student who actively promotes and brings awareness to the adverse effects of alcohol.

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