



# THE AEROSPACE GAZETTE

Eskite	Welch	Neiss
Josephson	Rainey	
<u>Johnson</u>	Cotter	
Bordareff	Enser	

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## LANDSAT IN AN OPERATIONAL ERA

Highlights from the First NOAA/NESS Meeting  
by Donna B. Hankins

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, March 14--Arriving in Seattle by AMTRAK and travelling out to the Seattle Center, I wondered if the weather--rain, snow and wind, alternating with flashes of startling blue sky and spring sunshine--was an indicator of trends in the meeting to come. In many ways it was since the overall effect was both invigorating and warming!

If the activities of the first NOAA/NESS Regional meeting are the model for the operational Landsat era, it ought to be a very good period indeed.

The main energy behind the forward motion in the program is Dave Johnson, Director of the National Environmental Satellite Service (NESS). Busy with the initial effort to put together an interim plan for President Carter by June 1, 1980, Johnson expressed a personal concern that the people who are using Landsat satellite data should be in touch, to express their needs and desires. "We should be fully operational by 1988," said Johnson, "but the system we put together will be designed with the data users input and needs as the guidelines."

Johnson went on to note the key challenges of the new era. Weather and ocean data users are a relatively well organized and developed group who can get together and communicate their needs to NOAA. On the other hand, the Landsat user group is larger, more diverse and still developing. "We need to define some communication links and get them working as soon as possible," stated Johnson.

According to Johnson, NOAA will not be involved in a major way in the "value-added" business. This is good news for private industry involved in preparing Landsat data for their customers and for corporate users.

One of the most important parts of the day-long program turned out to be a questionnaire included in the registration package. Wilber (Bill) Eskite, Director of NOAA's Policy and Planning Office, explained. The questionnaire was primarily for non-Federal users of Landsat: state and local governments and agencies, research and academic groups, corporate users, "value-added service" companies and individual users. (Federal groups are being dealt with separately.) Eskite said that the information gained from the 5 regional meetings would be merged with Federal input, given to NOAA concept groups and finally rechecked against user need lists for a final working interim plan.

"All of your information," said Eskite, "can help develop an operational system--one that serves an intended purpose and has continuity, reliability and stability, from a user standpoint."

What will NASA's new role look like? Jim Welch, Deputy Director of NASA's Resource Observation Division, stated that NASA would continue in its traditional research activities and technology development as well as retain the Regional Applications Program for Landsat technology transfer. Welch described the new operational era as an extension and expansion of the existing NASA/NOAA pattern of

### Highlights of NOAA/NESS Meeting (continued from p.1)

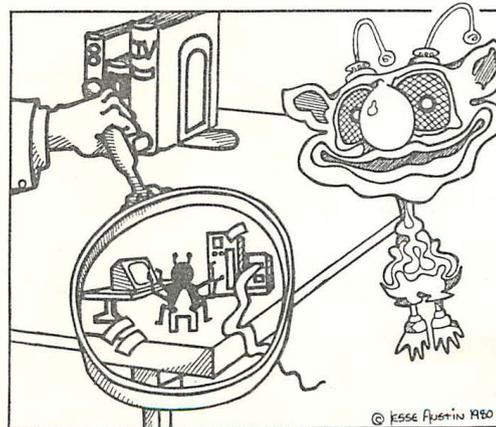
The Seattle meeting's afternoon session was devoted to user requirements, and here some general consensus emerged. Namely, there should be a Private Industry Advisory Board to the new program Board; technology transfer efforts should be continued as a NASA responsibility; and there should be an effort to unify local-level users so that they too can define their needs for NOAA.

Dr. Barry Schrupf of the ERSAL facility at Oregon State University seemed to sum up all of our feelings when he said, "This first meeting with NOAA officials is very encouraging. They're on the right track with getting people together to solicit their input via workshops and questionnaires. They seem to truly appreciate the two most important factors needed by those of us dependent on the Landsat base for our bread and butter: continuity and reliability of data and timely delivery of data to the users."

Dave Johnson made this very clear at the start of the meeting when he said, "We're beginning a long slow process now, that will continue far beyond the lives of most of us in this room."

NOTE: The July/August issue of the Aerospace Gazette will carry a full review of all 5 regional meetings and will continue to update readers as NOAA and NASA move into the operational Landsat era. If you are a Landsat user, or think your organization will become a user in the future, send for a questionnaire so that your voice can also be heard. HRM, Inc., 1101 30th St. NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC 20007. 800-424-3738; 202-338-9071.

### PIXEL LA GRID



I knew they were getting smaller...but this is ridiculous!