

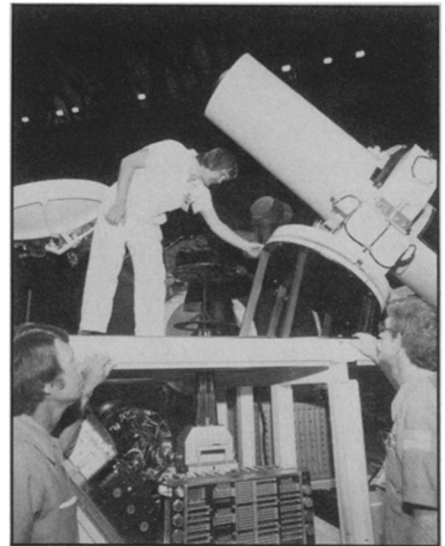
The Next 100 Years

How today's technology will affect America's third century is the theme of a Florida exhibit

BY DIETRICK E. THOMSEN



The largest part of Third Century America's exhibits are in the Kennedy Space Center's Vehicle Assembly Building (left). One of the things visitors can do inside is take over control of a trainer used to prepare astronauts to run a lunar module (below).



A space telescope is among the exhibits.



Future astronauts simulate a countdown.

Anniversaries make people think of the future as well as the past. In 1876, a number of contemporary artifacts were placed in a safe that was sealed and left in the Capitol to be opened in 1976. How charmingly naive of them to assume that the Capitol building would still be standing in 1976.

In this bicentennial summer, we seem a long way from the self-contained, self-assured America of 1876, and it might seem the height of hubris or maybe chutzpah to confidently assume that anything will still be standing in 2076. Still, we wonder what the United States' third century will be like and the government has sponsored an exhibit, the only government-sponsored exhibition of the bicentennial year, to give examples of how current technology may affect life in the country's third century. Called Third Century America, it is a kind of theme park of tomorrow located at the Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral, Fla.

A large part of the exhibits deal with

space research and its effects, but there is a good deal more. Fifteen government agencies besides NASA, and ten private concerns, have put up exhibits in the space center's Vehicle Assembly Building and a group of geodesic domes on the ground near the building. Operation started May 30 and will end September 7.

In NASA's part of the exhibit, kids (and presumably adults too) can enter a lunar module trainer and take over the controls, take part in a simulated countdown, view a simulated marsscape (designed before Viking got there), observe a model of the Apollo and Soyuz capsules docked together and see a model of Spacelab, the orbiting experiment station that NASA will put up for the European Space Agency.

Among other things, the astronomy-minded can see a real space telescope and (courtesy of E Systems, Inc.) a radio telescope that can send a signal through the clouds of Venus and map the planet's surface.

The Department of Agriculture is con-

cerned about whether Americans will eat in the third century. It tells you how many acres of ground it takes to feed one person and that one farmworker can feed 56 people. Along the way USDA will show you a kind of biological Mission Impossible: a bug that eats up the greens that choke southern waterways and then self-destructs when it runs out of food.

The Environmental Protection Agency doesn't want us to choke ourselves off before 2076. Interior is concerned with how we will use our natural resources, NOAA with how we will use the oceans. The Energy Research and Development Administration will show you that solar power can operate appliances. The National Bureau of Standards assures us that America's third century will be measured in metric units. Finally there is a touch of 1876: The Community Services Administration has people from its Community Services Corporation demonstrating and selling handcrafted furniture and quilts. □