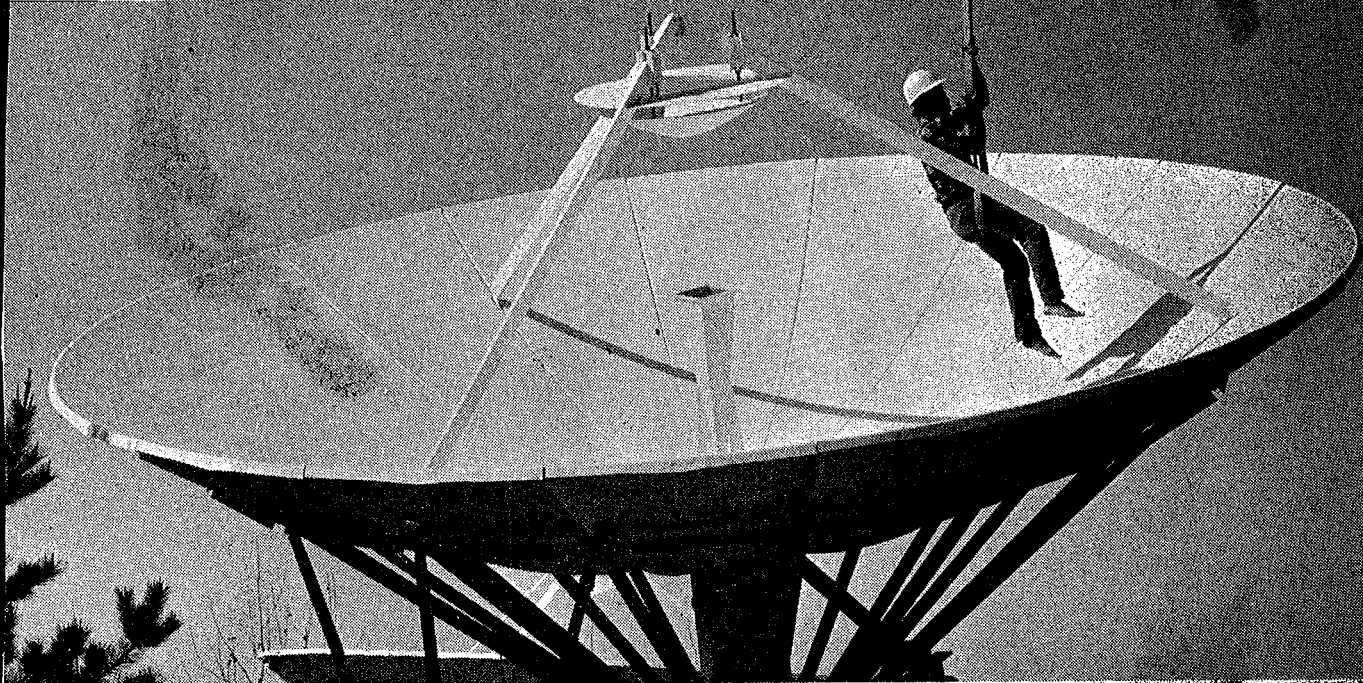


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MFECC goes to the air

Worker installing 21-foot diameter antennas which will link the Livermore-based National Magnetic Fusion Energy Computer Center, via satellite, with fusion labs

around the country. First satellite transmissions will be with Princeton, starting April 1.

MFE data to be transmitted via satellite; Princeton is first link

The National Magnetic Fusion Energy Computer Center's phone bill is expected to drop sharply after April 1 when the Center's data communication with the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory switches from a telephone link to satellite.

Dish antennas for communicating with the satellites were installed Monday. Satellite data transmission between New Jersey and Livermore will start April 1.

The satellites, Westar II and Westar III, are owned by Western

Union. The data transmission service is supplied by American Satellite Company, the firm that installed and owns the ground station here.

The satellite link will replace a 50,000 bit per second phone line that is leased, under the most recently announced phone rates, at \$27,000 per month. The satellite bill will be \$14,000 per month.

Combined, the satellites will provide MFECC with the potential for transmitting 112,000 bits of data per second, more than twice the present

capacity.

John Fitzgerald, MFECC's program manager, said the Center will not have the need for that much capacity for some time but that the \$13,000 per month cost savings starts immediately.

"Installing the two antennas was a way of ensuring that the system would meet our stringent reliability specifications," said Fitzgerald. The agreement with American Satellite, he said, calls for the satellites to be up and working more than 99 percent of