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Cool storage

Preserving art in underground vault 17 million photos are kept at site

4/7/02 - BOYERS —If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a collection of 17 million historic photographs stored in Boyers should be able to speak volumes.

And now the collection will be safely stored for thousands of years, since the images are stored in a unique sub-zero preservation facility —Iron Mountain Underground Storage in Boyers.

The new facility is now open to the public, with most of the glimpses into the archives coming over the Internet. As an example of the extensiveness of the collection, caretakers can quickly put their hands on images of Henry Ford on a Flivver, or early version of his automobile creation, the late Queen Mother as a girl and the early monarchy of Afghanistan.



Henry Wilhelm of Wilhelm Imaging Research Inc. shows what happens to a photograph's negative over time. Wilhelm, an expert in preserving photographic materials, is a consultant to Corbis Corp., a digital image provider. Corbis stores 17 million historic photographs in an underground vault at the Iron Mountain facility in Boyers.

The most accessed image overall is a 1932 shot of New York City construction workers at the RCA Building in Rockefeller Center. They are eating lunch while sitting on a steel beam high in the air.

Albert Einstein with his tongue sticking out holds a close second. Meanwhile, the oldest pictures in the collection depict images from the Civil War.



Corbis employees Ann Hartman, manager of the Iron Mountain facility, and Christopher Wendt, director of media, production and management; look through a file containing photographs of the British royal family.

Now that these images have settled into their new home, each will be there for generations to enjoy, thanks to the Corbis Corp., a provider of digital images to the professional, commercial, business and consumer markets. Corbis is the world's leading news photography agency.

For complete story, please see Sunday's Butler Eagle or to subscribe, call (724) 282-8000 ext.231.

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