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TRAVEL ADVISORY

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After 10 Years, Hoover Dam Center Is Open

The new Hoover Dam visitors' center opened last month after 10 years of construction at a cost of \$120 million.

The three-story glass and concrete structure hugs a rocky canyon wall near the northern edge of the dam, on the Nevada side, 35 miles southeast of Las Vegas on the Colorado River.

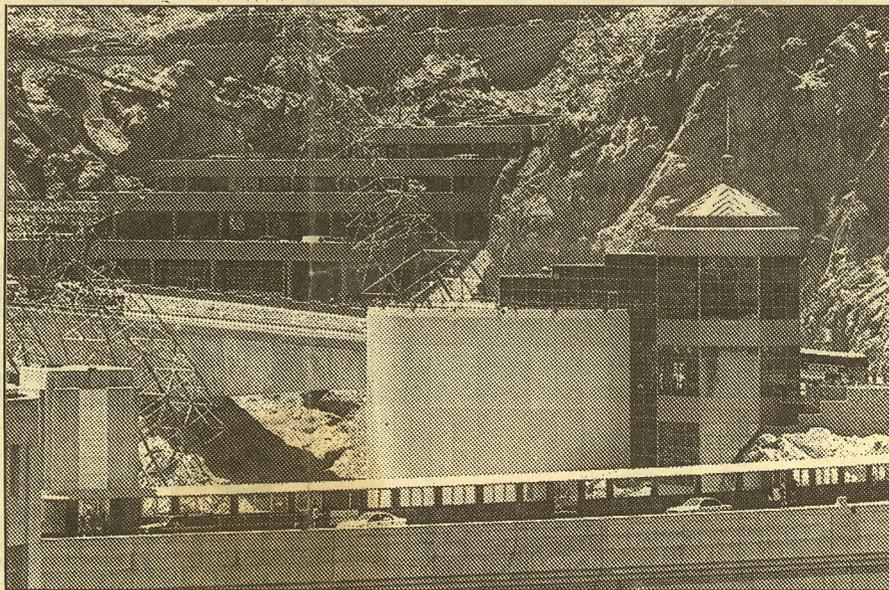
Arizona is just 1,244 feet away across the crest of the dam, which was built in the 1930's.

Visitors to the center ride two 50-passenger, high-speed elevators down deep into the business end of the dam, where 19 whirring turbines generate electricity. The trip takes just over one minute, descending 53 stories (530 feet) through solid rock in 1 minute and 10 seconds. All tours are guided, and last about 25 minutes.

If lines for the elevators are long, visitors can wait in a revolving theater. Only one section of the three-part theater is open, showing films of the dam's construction.

When the two other sections are completed late next year, continuous multimedia programs will tell the story of water in the arid Southwest, and of the planning and building of the dam.

Tours are held continuously every day except Christmas and Thanksgiving, be-



John Curzinski for The New York Times

Visitors' center, right, with a cylindrical-shaped overlook in front.

ginning at 8:30 A.M. The last tour starts at 6:30 P.M. Admission is \$5, \$2.50 for seniors and for children 10 to 16. Children under 10 are admitted free.

The visitor center is operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior. For information, call (702) 293-8305.
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