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ENERGY FROM FUSION -- Physicist have come a step closer to harnessing fusion as a viable energy source with testing of the Particle Beam Fusion Accelerator II at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Fusion, the nuclear reaction that powers the sun, takes place when densely packed hydrogen nuclei collide with such force that their natural tendency to repel each other is overcome. Instead, the nuclei fuse, releasing huge amounts of energy. The accelerator is designed to reproduce this process by bombarding a pellet of deuterium and tritium (forms of hydrogen) with lasers or beams of charged particles and to deliver up to one million million watts of power. A partial-power firing of the accelerator was the second in a series of tests that gradually will bring the machine to full power and focus the energy source, before scientists try to ignite a pellet in 1988. The spectacular pattern of lights is caused by stray electromagnetic energy which engineers would like to channel toward the reaction. (86-1752-C)

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ATOMIC SURFACE

