



Remember those “Star Trek” scenes where Captain Kirk could talk to a projected three-dimensional image of a nasty Klingon in the Enterprise control room, even though the guy wasn’t actually there in the flesh? Soon, with some expert imaging, from Mount Rushmore, it’ll be, “Beam me up, Scottie, to George, Tom, Teddy and Abe.”

Within the next few months, camera crews will be scanning laser video from all angles of the Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota. Then they’ll put it all together and produce a totally three-dimensional digital visual image of the American landmark.

This will create an information program that will offer visitors and educators a stand-alone, three-dimensional visual image similar to the one Captain Kirk saw on the bridge of the Enterprise. More important, for historians and archaeologists, if any drastic damage ever happens to the full-size monument, they will have access to a full image to use for reconstruction efforts.

Similar projects are now underway for the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. More are planned to preserve such treasured sites by laser imaging, so that Americans of the near and far future will be able to see them exactly as they were in the year 2009.

Some Mount Rushmore history: Sculptor Gutzon Borglum began drilling into the 5,725-foot mountain in 1927. It took him and his crew 14 years to complete the project. The total cost was \$1 million dollars, an amount even one of today’s bankrupt auto manufacturers would think too low to pay its CEO.

If the Presidents’ faces of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt were on full standing figures, they would each be more than 450 feet tall.

Even the real Abe Lincoln wasn't quite that tall.

To visit the monument by air, you'd book to fly to Rapid City Regional Airport, and take van or bus 35 miles to the memorial. By car, go on I-90, exit at Rapid City and follow Highway 16 southwest to Keystone, then Highway 244 to Mount Rushmore. For more information, go to www.nps.gov/moru