Greetings,

On Aug 5, 2012 @ 10:31 PM (PDT) the Rover Curiosity should touch down safely on the surface of Mars.

We hope.

The planned landing involves the most complex series of maneuvers ever attempted in space. Lots of opportunities for untried-technologies to go wrong, and absolutely everything must go right or else the rover won't survive. We call this particular entry the 'Seven Minutes of Terror' since there's a real chance that this may turn into an interplanetary snafu. See:

http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/videogallery/index.html?collection_id=1466=&media_id=146903741

http://www.nasa.gov/mars

We'd like to share the suspense, so NASA-Ames is having a event at our 'Exploration Center' (located outside the main gate, so it's open to everyone and no IDs are required) and inside the 'outer gate' at Shenendoah Plaza (any gov-issued photo-ID will be OK for admission; foreign citizens are OK).

We'll have a series of lectures from Curiosity mission scientists starting at 5:00 PM, will tune into a live video feed from JPL's Mission Control during the landing, and (hopefully) will celebrate until midnight. Of course, if the landing is not successful, y'all may have the opportunity to see what NASA folk look like when we've been crushed by circumstances :-)

The invitation (below) is primarily for Ames employees & family, though there shouldn't be a problem with outsiders. If you want to insure admission, register at:

http://www.eventbrite.com

The full invitation (sent to Ames staff) is quoted below.

All the best.

--Ron
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SUBJECT: Mars Rover Curiosity Landing Event, Aug. 5, 2012 – Mark YourCale=dars!

Join us for an exciting opportunity to celebrate the Mars Rover Curiosity, scheduled to land the evening of Aug. 5, 2012. NASA's AmesResearch Center will be hosting one of the largest public events of the year in Shenandoah Plaza, and you're invited!

We've followed the water on Mars and found it. Now we're following our curiosity in other ways, including searching for the answer to a big
question: Are there places that supported - or still support — life on Mars? It's a big question requiring a bold rover.

Curiosity isn't your ordinary rover. It's bigger than a small car. It comes equipped 'standard' with six wheel rocker-bogie suspension, multiple camera systems and an expansive suite of science instruments.

The rover's power supply doesn't rely on solar panels, so Curiosity will be able to roam longer and farther than previous Red Planet rovers. Scientists expect this means Curiosity will travel to more interesting places.

Almost everything about this mission is new and bold: a new guidance system for reaching a far smaller target area; a new landing system employing a skycrane to lower Curiosity to the surface (since it is too heavy for air bags); a new power system, and a state-of-the-art onboard science lab.

Save the Date and we hope you will be part of this historic event celebrating the Mars Rover Curiosity, Mars Science Lab (MSL) and highlighting Ames contributions. Registrations for attendance will be available through EventBrite beginning Monday, July 23, go to http://www.eventbrite.com

The event schedule will include:
5 – 8 p.m.: Ames Expo - The Ames Community will exhibit their contributions to the Mars Rover Curiosity Mission. Did you know that we helped develop the largest supersonic parachute, or what the CheMin instrument is looking for? Come find out from your colleagues what their contributions to the mission are.

8 p.m. – 10 p.m.: 'Ask A Scientist,' - several scientists, including Chris McKay, will share their stories about Mars and why we are so curious about it!

10 p.m. – midnight: Live Broadcast - we will tune in to the control room at JPL to find out what's happening as the mission occurs.

To learn more about Mars Rover Curiosity, visit http://www.nasa.gov/msl <?xml version=.0" encoding=TF-8"?>

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