

Messages from Mars

Transcript:

Bobak Ferdowsi: Hi, I'm Bobak Ferdowsi, Flight Director on the Mars science Laboratory Curiosity mission, and I'm back with another rover report. This past week on Mars we did the SAM atmospheric sample, which is basically like taking a deep breath on Mars and smelling for chemicals.

We also did a drive. The beginning of our road trip basically. Along the drive, you'll see our tracks on Mars and within the tracks you'll see a series of dots and dashes. Those are actually Morse code on the wheels. [Morse code sound effect]. The Morse code spells out 'J-P-L,' but in reality, it's a very important way for us to measure how far we're driving each day. We know how many cycles or how many rotations the wheel makes, but seeing that confirmation on the ground of each rotation helps us to analyze the soil to understand if we're slipping or not. In fact, you can see on the side of my head, I've got the Morse code shaved in.

We also took a Mastcam 100 panorama, that's the 100 millimeter Mastcam camera on the rover, of Mt. Sharp and its buttes, and you can see all the beauty of Mt. Sharp in that.

[Voice of Charles Bolden]: 'Hello, this is Charlie Bolden, NASA Administrator, speaking to you via the broadcast capabilities of the Curiosity rover.'

Bobak Ferdowsi: We also had two firsts on Mars this week. First, we played back an audio file from Administrator Charlie Bolden congratulating the team. That was the first time an audio file has been played back from Mars.

[Leland Melvin]: 'Roll the song. Here we go!' [Music]

Bobak Ferdowsi: And second, on Tuesday, we played back the will.i.am song, 'Reach for the Stars,' meant to inspire kids, and that's the first time a song has ever been beamed back from Mars.

Coming up with the rover, we'll be driving towards Glenelg. That's where we actually see three different types of science materials and the scientists are really excited to get there.

Along the way though, you'll see several interesting things. We'll be doing ChemCam targets of rocks, and all the exciting things that we're really looking forward to.

That's been your Curiosity update. Check back for more reports.