



FIRST BELL

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Leading the News

NASA Tests "Flying Saucer" Technology.

[ABC World News](#) (6/29, story 9, 1:25, Jarvis) reported that "exploring Mars is a top priority for America's space agency," and "this weekend they tested a new technology to land space craft on its surface." ABC (Benitez) added, "A UFO sighting in Hawaii. This is NASA's latest experiment. A balloon is pulling a flying saucer up to the edge of space to see if it will some day be ready for Mars. How ground breaking is this experiment?" Dan Coatta, NASA/JPL engineer, said: "These are the steps we have to take here on earth before we can send space craft and eventually humans to space."

On its website, [NBC News](#) (6/28) reported that "the trial, which began at the U.S. Navy's Pacific Missile Range Facility in Kauai, Hawaii, took about three hours and was meant to test the new parachutes' capabilities." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (6/28, Queally) reports that "the test was the result of a four-year project aimed at landing a vehicle on Mars heavier than the roughly 2,000-pound Curiosity rover, which arrived on the Red Planet in 2012."

The [AP](#) (6/28) reports that "as the craft prepared to fall back to earth, a doughnut-shaped tube around it expanded like a Hawaiian puffer fish, creating atmospheric drag to dramatically slow it down from Mach 4, or four times the speed of sound," although "then the parachute unfurled — but only partially," and "the vehicle made a hard landing in the Pacific Ocean." The piece notes that "engineers won't look at the parachute problem as a failure but as a way to learn more and apply that knowledge during future tests, said...Coatta." He commented, "In a way, that's a more valuable experience for us than if everything had gone exactly according to plan."

In a separate story, the [AP](#) (6/28) reports that more flights are planned for next year before a decision is made on "whether to fly the vehicle and parachute on a future Mars mission." JPL project manager Mark Adler remarked, "We want to test them here where it's cheaper before we send it to Mars to make sure that it's going to work there."

[SPACE](#) (6/30) reports that in a statement, Adler said, "We are thrilled about yesterday's test. The test vehicle worked beautifully, and we met all of our flight objectives. We have recovered all the vehicle hardware and data recorders and will be able to apply all of the lessons learned from this information to our future flights."

Also reporting this story are the [Los Angeles Times](#) (6/27, Rosen), [USA Today](#) (6/28, Watson), [Reuters](#) (6/30, Klotz), [CNN](#) (6/30, Erdman, Botelho), [Forbes](#) (6/29), the [Tampa Bay \(FL\) Times](#) (6/30), [BBC News](#) (6/30, Amos), the [Times \(UK\)](#) (6/30), another [Times \(UK\)](#) (6/30), [FOX News Latino](#) (6/29), [Press TV \(IRN\)](#) (6/29), [RT \(RUS\)](#) (6/30), [AFP](#) (6/30), [Emirates 24/7 \(ARE\)](#) (6/28), [World News Australia](#) (6/29), the [International Business Times](#) (6/30), [Venture Beat](#) (6/28), and [io9](#) (6/30).

Research and Development

Montana State University Professor's Computer Technology To Be Tested Aboard ISS.

The [Sidney \(MT\) Herald](#) (6/29) reported NASA announced last week Montana State University is one of five winning institutions to receive \$100,000 and the chance to test computer technology designed by professor Brock La Meres on the ISS. This system is "designed to operate in the presence of high energy radiation particles that pass through space craft and radiation shields. These particles might not permanently damage electrical circuits, but they can cause computers to crash." LaMeres and his team will work with NASA engineers in the next year "to make sure the computer system meets safety standards and can communicate with the space station. He will then turn it over to NASA, which will schedule the computer system for flight."

Researchers Examine How Biofilms Behave In Medical Devices.

The [NPR](#) (6/27, Manke) "Shots" blog reported on the danger posed by biofilms in "medical devices like IV tubes and catheters," particularly those caused by *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria. Figuring out "how biofilms behave in these devices is important in preventing hospital-acquired infections, a large fraction of which are associated with urinary or intravenous catheters." Researchers are just beginning to understand how biofilms form and behave, but "the results may one day help engineers design medical devices that are more resistant to biofilms of infectious bacteria."

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