

Friday, November 2, 2012 5:46pm



THE TWO-WAY

[Unemployment Rate Ticked Up To 7.9 Percent; 171,000 Jobs Added](#)



[The Colorado Vote 2012](#)



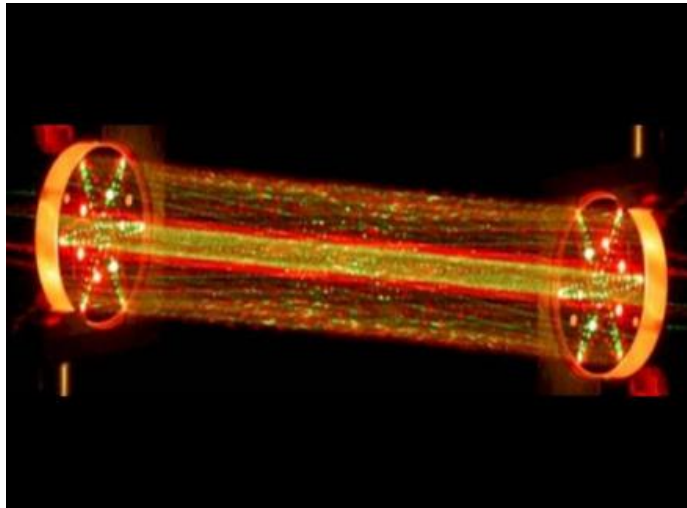
INTUNE STATION BLOG

[Engineer's Note: Sterling Translator At 90.3fm is Off The Air](#)

THE TWO-WAY

Life On Mars? Curiosity Rover Sniffs For Methane, Comes Up Empty

By Eyder Peralta



<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/shared/npr/201211/164213187.jpeg>
[Enlarge Image](#)

Credit NASA/JPL-Caltech (<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/shared/npr/201211/164213187.jpeg>)

This picture shows a lab demonstration of the measurement chamber inside the Tunable Laser Spectrometer, an instrument that is part of the Sample Analysis at Mars investigation on NASA's Curiosity rover.

Today scientists working on the Mars Curiosity Rover mission made an important announcement: The rover used its lasers to "sniff" for methane. [As NASA explains](#) (<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.php?release=2012-348>), methane is a "precursor chemical" for life, because creatures like us produce methane.

The Rover came up empty, or rather the most sensitive measurements ever taken in the planet's atmosphere reveal "little to no methane."

[The New Scientist explains](#)

(<http://www.newscientist.com/blogs/shortsharpscience/2012/11/nasa-rover-adds-new-twist-to-m.html>) that researchers have seen hints of methane using telescopes on

Earth. This was an opportunity to try to verify those findings.

The New Scientist reports:

"After four attempts run on two samples, the tests came back essentially empty, or at least with such tiny traces that nothing is definitive. Still, rover scientists say they will keep looking. 'At this point we don't have a positive detection of methane on Mars. But that could change,' Sushil Atreya, a co-investigator for the SAM instrument, said during a teleconference Friday.

"Atreya said it is possible more robust levels of methane existed on Mars previously but were rapidly destroyed by other gases, such as chlorine, or by the planet's powerful dust storms. So what might have created the past hints? That's anybody's guess, and the rover team is hesitant to name a possible source for a gas they didn't find."

Copyright 2012 National Public Radio. To see more, visit <http://www.npr.org/>.

0 comments

0 Stars



Leave a message...

Discussion



No one has commented yet.

ALSO ON KUNC

[What's this?](#) ✕

test

4 comments • 2 days ago



Mike Hathaway — Perhaps the first thing that Ms. Kent needs to learn, and then teach, is that

Obama Returns To The Post-Sandy Campaign Trail

1 comment • a day ago



Brandt Hardin — If Obama loses this election, you can blame/thank the Right for

Crying Fort Collins Girl Isn't Alone. How the Election is

3 comments • 2 days ago



Linda Crowe — oh give me a break. Abigeal was coached.

From the Desk of President Neil Best: November 2012

1 comment • 2 days ago



Lynn Hirshman — Congratulations and best wishes to Kirk Siegler -- we are