

Post Register



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SATURDAY

August 4, 2012

Schizophrenia
One family's struggle with mental illness
Coming Sunday



Shortcut closed

Developer shuts off Bellin Road shortcut on west side of town **B5**



Supreme reign
Phelps looks to close out his career with an 18th gold medal **B2**

MISSION TO MARS



INL nuclear power system heart of Mars rover



Monte LaOrange / mlaorange@postregister.com

Stephen Johnson, director of Space Nuclear Systems and Technology at Idaho National Laboratory, describes some of the testing procedures involved with the radioisotope power generator that was built and tested at INL.

■ The success of NASA's Mars rover Curiosity, which lands Sunday, will trace back to a team at INL that developed its nuclear power system.

By ZACH KYLE
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Nobody knows what secrets NASA's Mars rover Curiosity will uncover after it lands on the Red Planet — if all goes as planned — at 11:31 p.m. Sunday.

About the size of a car, Curiosity will roam a crater, taking and analyzing samples that could uncover traces of life, water and other mysteries.

The electricity powering Curiosity's two-year mission traces back to eastern Idaho and a team at Idaho National Laboratory.

In simple terms, Curiosity runs, in part, on a \$100 million nuclear battery developed at the lab, said Stephen Johnson, division director of Space Nuclear Systems and Technology.

The 2-foot-tall, 2-foot in diameter cylinder aboard Curiosity is packed with radioactive isotopes generating heat. That thermal energy is converted into the electricity fueling Curiosity's wheels, arms and other gadgets, as well as recharging its bank of lithium-ion batteries.

In technical terms, it's called a Multi-

Degree of difficulty

The capsule holding the NASA Mars rover Curiosity will enter the Red Planet's atmosphere at 2,000 mph. The capsule will undergo a complex process involving a parachute and rockets before hovering above the surface and setting the rover down on a tether. Check out NASA's video about the landing at tinyurl.com/curiositylanding.

Mission Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generator.

"People call it a battery, but it's actually a power system because it doesn't need

■ 6 years spent on project

MARS, Continued on Page A5

Learn the lingo: Mars terminology

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — Fascinated by NASA's latest Mars mission and planning to tune in?

Well, good luck understanding the space agency's everyday lingo, which resembles a sort of Martian alphabet soup.

In the highly specialized world of spacecraft engineering, there are many moving parts and pieces — not to mention processes. Names and descriptions are often reduced to acronyms and abbreviations, which are faster to string together in a sentence but can end up sounding downright alien.

So if you want to know whether MSL will nail the EDL and what it can do on different sols, you have to learn the language.

■ Lingo is even jarring to other scientists

LINGO, Continued on Page A5

INSIDE

■ A detailed look at Curiosity and 5 things you might not know about Mars: A5

■ NASA picks 3 companies to provide space transport: A3



Artist's rendering of Mars rover Curiosity

Associated Press

Beck cleared of fraud

■ A jury found Bonneville GOP leader Doyle Beck innocent of improperly profiting from the Daren Palmer Ponzi scheme.

By MIKE MOONEY
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Idaho Falls businessman and Bonneville County Republican Party leader Doyle Beck was cleared of fraud Friday in connection with a lawsuit claiming he had improperly profited from Daren Palmer's illegal Ponzi scheme.

"It was a great result for Mr. Beck," defense attorney Bryan Smith said. "The jury found that he didn't engage in fraud and (that) he had acted in good faith."

In February 2010, court receiver Wayne Klein sued Doyle Beck in federal court, alleging Beck received \$555,000 in improper and fraudulent payments from Palmer's company, Trigon Group, through Palmer's brother-in-law, Duane Yost. Beck denied the accusations, claiming he never personally dealt with Palmer or Trigon.

The civil lawsuit played out this week in U.S. District Court in Pocatello.

Reached after the verdict Friday, Klein said the lawsuit never claimed Beck had engaged in fraudulent activities. Instead, Klein said the fraudulent activity occurred when Trigon transferred money to Yost.

"We proved that the \$555,000 came

■ Ultimately, the jury did decide that Beck should repay only \$55,000

BECK, Continued on Page A5

Larry Craig defends his campaign money use

■ The FEC is suing the former senator for using elections funds for 'personal use' during the defense of his 2007 sex-sting bust.

JOHN MILLER
Associated Press

BOISE — Former Republican U.S. Sen. Larry Craig aims to fend off a federal election lawsuit against him by arguing his infamous July 11, 2007, Minneapolis airport bathroom visit that ended in his sex-sting arrest was part of his official Senate business.



Craig

Craig is hoping to avoid repaying \$217,000 in campaign funds the Federal Election Commission says he misused to defend himself.

The FEC sued Craig in June in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., alleging he converted the campaign money to personal use by spending it on his legal defense after he was accused of soliciting sex in a Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport bathroom. The

■ Craig cites a U.S. Senate rule on reimbursable per diem expenses in his defense

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83 High / 50 Low

Today: Sunny, light wind. Forecast: A2

