

NASA to test making rocket fuel ingredient on Mars

August 1 2014, by Seth Borenstein

(AP)—NASA plans to make oxygen—a key ingredient of rocket fuel—on Mars early next decade.

Space agency officials unveiled seven instruments they plan to put on a Martian rover that would launch in 2020, including two devices aimed at bigger future Mars missions.

The \$1.9 billion rover will include an experiment that will turn [carbon dioxide](#) in the Martian atmosphere into oxygen. NASA associate administrator Bill Gerstenmaier said the oxygen could then be used to make [rocket fuel](#) and for future astronauts to breathe. Taking fuel to Mars for return flights is heavy and expensive.

NASA also plans to collect interesting rocks, put them in sealed vials for future flights to pick them up and return them to Earth for detailed study.

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