



Guide to the
Ames Research Center Response to COVID-19 Collection
ARC20.08

NASA Ames Research Center Archives

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Ames Research Center Response to COVID-19 Collection

Collection Number: ARC20.08

Creator: Ames Research Center

Dates: Inclusive: January 9 - December 18, 2020

Extent: Volume: 150 digital items (440 Megabytes) including PDF, PNG, XLSX, and PPTX files

Repository: NASA Ames History Archives, Moffett Field, California 94035

Abstract:

This collection provides insight into NASA Ames Research Center's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Communications documentation captures how Ames management adapted to challenging conditions, and a gives a view into the workforce culture during lockdown (includes circulars; InsideAmes website postings; email correspondence; town hall meeting transcripts; and an employee survey and results). Other documentation shows how research scientists and high-performance computing facilities supported efforts to study the virus and seek solutions and tools to combat it (includes email correspondence; website postings; meeting reminders, agendas, and summaries; symposium agendas and presentations; informational sheets; and exposure assessment tool resources). All of the material in this collection is in digital form.

Administrative Information

Access: Restricted Partly; This collection contains information that has Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI).

Distribution Limits: Partly Public; NASA employees contact archivist regarding restricted materials.

Publication Rights: This collection may contain copyrighted material. The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of copyright. Securing permission to publish or use materials is the sole responsibility of the researcher.

Languages and Scripts: All records are in English.

Acquisition Information: Materials were transferred to the Ames Research Center Archives by Afshin Beheshti (Accession 2020-008), Richard S.Thompson (Accession 2020-009), and Ames Public Affairs Office (Accession 2021-004).

Administrative History

This artificial collection is compiled by the Ames Research Center Response to COVID-19 Data Collection Project. The goal of the project is to broadly capture how the center evolved and changed in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project team consists of Ames archivists April D. Gage and Danielle K. Lopez, and historian James N. Anderson.

In December 2019, a novel coronavirus causing COVID-19 emerged in China. The spread of the virus reached the level of global pandemic within months. By the end of 2020, almost 2 million people worldwide had died due to COVID. Over 300,000 of those deaths occurred in the United States. Responses to the pandemic varied by location, taking into account specific local, state, and federal guidelines that were developed.

NASA Ames Research Center in Santa Clara County, California, became the first NASA center with a confirmed case of COVID. The pandemic affected the day-to-day lives of everyone at the center. Mandatory telework quickly became the new mode for work as almost all social interactions that had previously occurred in person shifted to some form of remote and digitally mediated interaction. While mission critical activities were allowed to return to onsite work after evaluation and approval of return-to-work plans that were specifically tailored for selected laboratories and research groups, most of the workforce remained exclusively engaged in telework beyond 2020.

Timeline

January 29, 2020: The first announcement in an Ames centerwide communication regarding the coronavirus notes that cases have been identified in travelers from China arriving in the United States, but the extent of person-to-person spread outside of China remains unclear. The Public Health Officer of Santa Clara County issues a letter regarding the coronavirus, stating that there is not yet any evidence that the virus is present in the community. The letter advises the use of a mask for anyone experiencing respiratory symptoms for the protection of others.

February 3, 2020: The County of Santa Clara Public Health Department announces confirmation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that two cases of coronavirus are present in the county.

February 4, 2020: NASA announces that employees and contractors returning from travel to China will not be allowed onto NASA centers until after fourteen days of observation and self-care have expired and they are determined not to be infectious.

March 2, 2020: Ames announces a liberal telework policy for employees until further notice as well as the creation of a situation response team working closely with NASA Headquarters.

March 6, 2020: NASA conducts an agency-wide telework day to test its capabilities, resources, and preparedness for large-scale teleworking.

March 8, 2020: The first confirmed case of coronavirus at Ames moves the center to mandatory telework under Stage 3 of NASA's Response Framework.

March 16, 2020: Santa Clara County announces (together with surrounding Bay Area counties and the City of Berkeley) a shelter-at-home order to last for three weeks beginning March 17.

March 17, 2020: The second confirmed case of coronavirus at Ames is announced. Ames moves to Stage 4 of NASA's Response Framework, placing all personnel on mandatory telework with the exception of those required to maintain the safety and security of the center. All previously approved exceptions for work onsite are rescinded and new approvals are required to gain access to the center.

June 8, 2020: Ames transitions from Stage 4 to Stage 3, where it remains for the remainder of 2020.

Scope and Content

This collection provides insight into Ames Research Center's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, with a focus on two main areas. First, communications documentation shows how center leaders handled the response and provides a view into the workforce culture during the first ten-months the center was on lockdown in mandatory telecommute status for nonessential workers (Series 1). Second, other documentation shows how the center's technical facilities and staff supported efforts to study the virus and seek solutions and tools to combat it (Series 2).

Files in Series 1 include both center and contractor management communications to staff and the public that show how Ames adapted to changing and challenging conditions to keep the center functioning, while focusing on ensuring the safety, health, and wellbeing of the workforce. These communications also provide a glimpse into how workplace culture began to change during the long months of mandatory telework, when the bulk of employees shifted from face-to-face activities to digital communications and collaborative platforms. Of note are regular email messages from the KBR Fully Integrated Lifecycle Mission Support Services (FILMSS) Contract I Program Manager Rick S. Thompson to FILMSS staff. Starting on March 8, the first weekday of mandatory telework status, Thompson began disseminating daily emails to staff. These messages, which include a mix of both formal and personal communications, give insight into the culture of a small segment of the Ames workforce and how one senior manager endeavored to provide stability, emotional support, and foster a sense of community during this difficult time.

Materials in Series 2 document how Ames responded as a research center by bringing its expertise and technical facilities to bear on supporting research efforts to study and understand the virus, and ultimately identify solutions to curb or eradicate the spread. This includes both forming an international research team of scientists and lending supercomputing support to help accelerate scientific investigations. The bulk of this series comprises COVID-19 International Research Team (COV-IRT) documentation created and accumulated by Afshin Beheshti, Bioinformatician and Principal Investigator from Ames and Visiting Researcher at Broad Institute, as well as copies of the COV-IRT website pages and copies of tools developed by the team. The COV-IRT effort was initiated by Beheshti and co-

founded by Beheshti, Todd Treangen (Assistant Professor in the department of Computer Science at Rice University), and Krista Ternus (Genomics Specialist in Biological Sciences at Signature Science, LLC). This large, multidisciplinary team of international researchers began working together as an open science collaboration group to study the virus, understand how it impacts the host, and seek pathways to potential therapeutic options. They also developed free, publicly available tools and resources to provide accurate information and help mitigate the spread of the disease. This series also includes an informational bulletin posted online about Ames providing worldwide access to its high-performance computing resources in the Advanced Supercomputing Facility to support efforts such as COV-IRT.

System of Arrangement

This collection is arranged in two series, chronologically, by topic.

Series I: Communications

Subseries I.1: Center Communications

Subseries I.2: Contractor Staff Communications

Series II: Response as a Research Center

Series Descriptions

Series I: Communications, January 29 - December 18, 2020, 42 items.

Subseries 1. Center Communications, January 29, 2020 - December 14, 2020

Center communications, issued in circulars and postings on the Inside Ames internal website "COVID-19 Information and Updates" page, comprise a sampling of announcements, guidelines, facility and services status updates, face mask requirements, cases and contact tracing (anonymized), wellness campaign efforts, transcripts of "Ask the Center Director" virtual town hall meetings with staff; and return to onsite work (RTOW) framework and guidance documents. Also included is a timeline and index of Ames Centerwide announcements and Astrogram newsletter articles organized by date of issue.

Subseries 2: Contractor Staff Communications, March 9, 2020 - December 18, 2020

Center contractor communications mainly comprise regular email messages and informational attachments from KBR FILMSS Contract Program Manager Richard S. Thompson to his staff. In addition to containing critical information, policy guidance, and status updates, Thompson's messages provide personal insights and moral support, and were used to disseminate information and photographs from group activities, such as "FILMSS Foodie Friday" photograph collages of various dishes team members cooked at home each week. The individual messages with attachments are compiled into ten files, one per month from March to December. Also included are staff photographs of inspiring outdoor scenes; a digital card (sent to Thompson on July 1) signed by individual FILMSS employees thanking him for his regular messages and leadership during the mandatory telework period; and a FILMSS RTOW staff survey, survey responses, and summary presentation delivered to staff in a company town hall on May 11.

Series II: Response as a Research Center, March 18 - December 18, 2020, 109 items.

This series contains summary information about the center's response to the pandemic, including the use of high-performance computing resources in NASA's Advanced Supercomputing Division at Ames to support efforts to work toward finding solutions for the pandemic and the COV-IRT effort (a page from the agency website), as well as COV-IRT documentation, including: charter; logo; member list with photographs; brief background information provided by Beheshti; weekly meeting reminders, agendas, and summaries; copies of Beheshti's weekly activity reports summarizing his COVID-19 work and all activity with the COV-IRT team; flyers, agendas, and copies of Beheshti's presentations for the first two COV-IRT symposiums; information from the COV-IRT website about the MaskCheck application developed by the team to help ensure compliance; and website descriptions and copies of versions of the Exposure Assessment Tool developed by the team.

Indexing Terms

The following terms may be used to index this collection.

Corporate Name

Ames Research Center
COVID-19 International Research Team (COV-IRT)
KBR Incorporated

Personal Name

Beheshti, Afshin
Thompson, Richard S.
Tu, Eugene L.

Subjects

Coronavirus Pandemic
COVID-19 (Disease)
COVID-19 (Disease)--Treatment
Emerging Infectious Diseases--Treatment--Congresses
High Performance Computing
NASA Fully Integrated Lifecycle Mission Support Services Contract

Processing Information

Filenames were changed for consistency to include descriptive information and dates, and to remove nonconforming characters and spaces. Dates appended to filenames are expressed as yyyyymmdd.

Document and still image formats: Portable Document Format (PDF), Portable Network Graphics (PNG), Microsoft Excel Open XML Format Spreadsheet (XLSX), and PowerPoint Open XML Format presentation file (PPTX). (XLSX and PPTX files are also provided in PDF format).

Related Collections

Public Affairs Office Collection, AFS1380

Astrogram Collection, AFS1380

Acronyms

ARC	Ames Research Center
COV-IRT	COVID-19 International Research Team
FILMSS	Fully Integrated Lifecycle Mission Support Services
HPC	High-Performance Computing
NAS	NASA Advanced Supercomputing Division
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
RTOW	Return to Work

Container List

I_Communications

II_ResponseAsResearchCenter

inv.txt

./I_Communications:

I1_CenterCommunications

I2_ContractorStaffCommunications

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FromInsideAmesInternalWebsite_Restricted

Index_COVID19CenterCommunications.pdf

Index_COVID19CenterCommunications.xlsx

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AskCenterDirectorTownHallMeetings

CasesAtAmesTable

Covid19_InformationandUpdates_accessed20210125.pdf

EmployeeWellnessCampaign_accessed20200125.pdf

FacemaskUseRequirements_Ames_accessed20210125.pdf

Facilities-ServicesStatusesDuringCovid_accessed20210125.pdf

ReturnToOnsiteWork

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AskCenterDirectorTownHallMeetings:

AskCenterDirector_20200327_1transcript_20200511.pdf

AskCenterDirector_20200327_2AdditionalAnswers_20200511.pdf

AskCenterDirector_20200428_1transcript_20200511.pdf

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covid-case-table_webpg_accessed20210125.pdf

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ReturnToOnsiteWork:
1_Ames_RTOW_webpage_accessed20210125.pdf
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Ames_RTOW_HealthAndSafetyGuidance_accessed20210111.pdf
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202007_EndOfDayMessages.pdf
202008_EndOfDayMessages.pdf
202009_EndOfDayMessages.pdf
202010_EndOfDayMessages.pdf
202011_EndOfDayMessages.pdf
202012_EndOfDayMessages.pdf
Return_to_Work_SurveyQuestions_20200421.pdf
Return_to_Work_SurveyResults_202005.pdf
Return_to_Work_TownHallPresentation_20200511.pdf
ThankYouCardForRickEmail_20200623.pdf
ThankYouCardFromStaffToRick_20200701.pdf

./II_ResponseAsResearchCenter:
AmesContributionstotheCOVID-19Response_accessed20210216.pdf
COVIRT

./II_ResponseAsResearchCenter/COVIRT:
Administrative
Notices
Symposiums
WebsiteContent

WeeklyMeetings

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COVIRT_SummaryEmail_20200417.pdf
COVIRT_WeeklyUpdates_20200318-20200522.pdf
COVIRT_charter_v1_20200608.pdf
COVIRT_logo-2.png
COVIRT_logo.png
COVIRT_members_20200422.pdf
COVIRT_resources_20200424_NotClearedForPublicRelease.xlsx

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COVIRT_Notice_20201123_ExposureAssessmentTool_1.pdf
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COVIRT_Notice_20201123_ExposureAssessmentTool_1_att2.jpg
COVIRT_Notice_20201123_ExposureAssessmentTool_2.pdf
COVIRT_Notice_20201215_MaskCheck.pdf

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COVIRTSymposium_2

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COVIRT_Symposium1_Flyer.jpg

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COVIRT_Symposium2_SpaceBioDivHighlights_20200723.pdf
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MaskCheckPage_Downloaded_20201218

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ExposureAssessmentTool_20201218_Interactive_VB14_US.pdf

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