

Industry News

Competitors Selected for DOE Solar Decathlon

Eleven schools will design and build energy-efficient model homes

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Renewable Energy Lab (NERL) kicked off a yearlong competition April 22 as it announced 11 contestants in the 2002 Solar Decathlon, cosponsored by BP Solar and the AIA.

The competition calls for each multidiscipline team to design a solar-powered home; put together a publicity campaign—including a Web site—for it; and build it in Washington, D.C., in the autumn of 2002. Each house will be judged on 10 characteristics:

- Design and livability
- Design presentation and simulation
- Graphics and communication
- The comfort zone
- Refrigeration
- Hot water
- Energy balance
- Lighting
- Home business
- Getting around.



The Team from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The competing schools are Carnegie Mellon University, Crowder College, Texas A&M University, Tuskegee University, University of Virginia, University of Maryland, University of Colorado at Boulder, University of Missouri–Rolla, University of Puerto Rico–Mayagüez, The University of Texas at Austin, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.



Teams live in houses for a week

The university teams, composed of engineering and architecture students as well as students from other disciplines, such as media relations, will be judged over the course of a week, once the houses are built on the Capital Mall. The design of the house, how it is presented, and the publicity campaign to educate the public on the viability of solar design are the more subjective of the criteria. The teams will live in their houses for a week as judges monitor the ventilation and interior temperature, the efficiency of the kitchen refrigerator, the supply of hot water, the balance of electricity produced and used, and the effectiveness of the lighting system. Two final categories for the judging are how well the houses support home-business appliances, such as computers and fax machines, and whether there is a surplus of power to run a commercially available electric vehicle.

NERL (which Midwest Research Institute, Battelle, and Bechtel operate for DOE) is providing technical support for developing the competition and judging, and DOE is providing funding to get the competition rolling. The competition sponsors are seeking private supporters as well to provide additional funding, publicity, and supplies.


For more information, contact the NERL. solardecathlon@nrel.gov. Or visit the Solar Decathlon site. http://rendev.nrel.gov/solar_decathlon/solar_decathlon.html. 

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