



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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Las Vegas Claims First in the Innovation Contest and Northwestern Wins the Communications Contest at U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon

Solar Decathlon Open to the Public Today through Sunday, October 15, from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

DENVER, CO – Before a crowd of student competitors near the 61st and Peña Station in Denver, Colorado, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas took first place in the Innovation Contest, and Northwestern University won the Communications Contest of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Decathlon 2017. For the Innovation Contest, the collegiate competitors were judged on how well they demonstrated a thoughtful approach to innovation, rather than being limited solely to off-the-shelf solutions, in the design and construction of houses that integrate renewable energy systems and energy-efficient technologies. The Communications Contest rated each team's effectiveness in communicating the features of their house and their experiences during this project to jurors and the public through a variety of media including websites, audiovisual presentations, displays and tours. For the first time in Solar Decathlon history, teams are taking home prize money. First place in the overall competition (to be announced tomorrow) will win \$300,000; second place wins \$225,000; third place wins \$150,000; fourth place wins \$125,000; and fifth through eleventh place will win \$100,000 each.

“The U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon gives these dedicated students the hands-on experience they need to land jobs in the energy workforce,” said Linda Silverman, Director of the Solar Decathlon for the Energy Department. “The Solar Decathlon and its Innovation and Communications contests prepare hundreds of students with the interdisciplinary skills they need to research, develop and communicate — and help educate others about — innovative building technologies that address global energy challenges such as reliability, resilience, and security.”

The Solar Decathlon involves 10 contests that evaluate architecture, market potential, engineering, communications, innovation, water, health and comfort, appliances, home life, and the level of energy produced versus energy consumed. Each contest is worth 100 points – for a possible total of 1,000 points.

For the [Innovation Contest](#), the jury focused on research, sustainability, appropriateness to the target market, durability and safety of the innovative features of each house.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas earned 98 points to win the Innovation Contest. George Karyayannis, Vice President of CityNOW with Panasonic Enterprise Solutions, presented the first place award in front of an audience that included government officials, Solar Decathlon student team members and visitors to the event. "Jurors were impressed by the development of a heat exchanger which, coupled with research and development for a target market, is solid and impressive," Karyayannis said. "The team's approach to prototyping of a motorized counter, an outdoor design space, and a student-designed-and-built software app with voice control clearly solves a problem for development for a target market."

Maryland claimed second place with 93 points, and Missouri S&T took third place with 90 points. The Innovation Contest results will be available at <https://www.solardecathlon.gov/2017/competition-scores.html>.

Communication skills are critical to helping visitors to the event understand the practical applications of energy-saving technologies and how products available today can help households save money. A jury of communications professionals awarded [Communications Contest](#) points to teams for the quality, creativity, delivery and innovation of their outreach messages, onsite tours, and educational strategies. The jury evaluated communication strategy, electronic communications, public exhibit materials, and public exhibit presentation.

In the Communications Contest, Northwestern earned 96 points to win the contest. Charlie Gay, DOE Director of the Solar Energy Technologies Office in the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, presented the first-place award. "On the tour, jurors said the team provided relevant information, clear language and narratives," Gay said. "The students included strong messaging to their target market, engaged visitors throughout the tour, and presented a narrative that left a crisp, yet highly appealing impression."

UC Davis finished second in the Communications Contest with 85 points, followed by the Swiss Team in third place with 75 points. Full details about the Communications Contest results are available at <https://www.solardecathlon.gov/2017/competition-scores.html>.

The teams currently in the overall lead for Solar Decathlon 2017 are the Swiss Team, Maryland, and the Netherlands, respectively. For current standings scored in real-time, visit: <https://www.solardecathlon.gov/2017/competition-scores.html>.

Results from the Engineering and Market Potential Contest and the overall winner of the Solar Decathlon will be announced tomorrow, October 14, at 9:30 a.m. Mountain Time in the Wells Fargo Education Tent.

Cast a vote for your favorite Solar Decathlon house to win the [People's Choice Award](#). Anyone with a Facebook profile can submit a single vote in the poll through October 14 at midnight. The People's Choice Award winner will be broadcast live on [Solar Decathlon's Facebook page](#) on October 15, 2017, at roughly 10:45 a.m. MDT from the Victory Breakfast.

Solar Decathlon 2017 teams competing in Denver, Colorado

- **Las Vegas:** University of Nevada, Las Vegas (Las Vegas, Nevada)
- **Maryland:** University of Maryland (College Park, Maryland)
- **Missouri S&T:** Missouri University of Science and Technology (Rolla, Missouri)
- **Netherlands:** HU University of Applied Science Utrecht (Utrecht, Netherlands)
- **Northwestern:** Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois)
- **Swiss Team:** École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, School of Engineering and Architecture Fribourg, Geneva University of Art and Design, and the University of Fribourg (Lausanne, Switzerland)
- **Team Alabama:** University of Alabama at Birmingham and Calhoun Community College (Birmingham, Alabama)
- **Team Daytona Beach:** Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and Daytona State College (Daytona Beach, Florida)
- **UC Berkeley/U of Denver:** University of California, Berkeley, and University of Denver (Berkeley, California)
- **UC Davis:** University of California, Davis (Davis, California)
- **Wash U – St. Louis:** Washington University (St. Louis, Missouri)

The Solar Decathlon houses are open to the public for free tours today through Sunday, October 15, from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Ride the University of Colorado A line commuter rail to the event site at the 61st and Peña Station (search Google Maps for Solar Decathlon) near Denver International Airport. Free parking will be available, as well as \$2.00 parking in the solar-covered parking lot operated by RTD (see [directions and a map](#)). For full event information, current standings, high-resolution photos, and videos, visit www.SolarDecathlon.gov. You may also follow the competition in real time on Facebook at [Facebook.com/DOESolarDecathlon](https://www.facebook.com/DOESolarDecathlon) and Twitter at [@Solar_Decathlon](https://twitter.com/Solar_Decathlon). Photos are also available on Flickr at http://www.flickr.com/photos/solar_decathlon/.

More about the Solar Decathlon

The U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon is a collegiate competition made up of 10 contests that challenge student teams to design and build full-size, solar-powered houses. The winner of the competition is the team that best blends design excellence and smart energy production with innovation, market potential, and energy and water efficiency. Competing students gain hands-on experience and unique training that prepares them to enter the energy workforce. Solar Decathlon is more than a student competition. It's an intensive learning experience for consumers and homeowners as they experience the latest technologies and materials in energy-efficient design, innovative energy technologies, smart home solutions, water conservation measures, electric vehicles, and sustainable buildings.

Solar Decathlon 2017 is made possible by a public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and Energetics Incorporated, with the generous support of the Solar Decathlon 2017 Supporting sponsors Wells Fargo, the City and County of Denver, and Denver International Airport (DEN), and Solar Decathlon 2017 Contributing sponsors L.C. Fulenwider, Schneider Electric, Regional Transportation District, Xcel Energy and Panasonic Enterprise Solutions.