

## About the Solar Decathlon

The U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon® is a collegiate competition that prepares the next generation of building professionals to design and build high-performance, low-carbon buildings powered by renewables. The [Design Challenge](#) is a one-to-two-semester, design-only competition, while the [Build Challenge](#) is a two-year design-build competition. Since 2002, Solar Decathlon has promoted student innovation, STEM education, and workforce development opportunities in the buildings industry. The Solar Decathlon has challenged more than 20,000 students to create innovative, affordable, and highly energy efficient buildings. The **Solar Decathlon Media Preview on Monday, April 12**, and the **Solar Decathlon Competition Event, Thursday-Sunday, April 15–18**, are opportunities to learn about the extraordinary accomplishments of the student teams. See below for media participation details.

## 2020 Build Challenge

Teams that compete in the biennial Solar Decathlon Build Challenge must design and construct high-performance houses. The 2020 Build Challenge was originally scheduled to take place on the National Mall in Washington, DC, during the summer of 2020, hosted by the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, with the houses available for public tours during the event. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Build Challenge was postponed and transitioned to a local build event, with teams constructing their homes in their local communities. The Build Challenge will culminate at the virtual Solar Decathlon Competition Event, April 15–18, 2021. [Nine finalist teams](#) will present their solutions to panels of industry expert juries, and winners of the 10 individual contests will be announced. The overall winner will be announced by Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm at the Awards Ceremony on Sunday, April 18, starting at approximately 2 p.m. EDT. The Awards Ceremony officially starts at 1 p.m. EDT.

## 2021 Design Challenge

Teams competing in the annual Solar Decathlon Design Challenge complete their projects during one or two academic semesters. Participants prepare creative solutions for real-world challenges in the building industry. Finalist present their designs to a panel of industry expert jurors during the Solar Decathlon Competition Event, where they also learn from thought leaders and engage with a variety of organizations about energy careers. Winning teams will also be recognized by Secretary Granholm at the Awards Ceremony on April 18. Winning project presentations will be published on the website.

## **Solar Decathlon Virtual Village**

While the teams and their zero energy homes are scattered around the world, visitors can experience the Build Challenge homes in the first-ever Solar Decathlon Virtual Village, which opens April 12, 2021. A Media Preview of the Virtual Village will take place on April 12, 2021, at 12 p.m. EDT.

Industry partners, schools, future collegiate teams, and the interested public are invited to participate in no-cost, virtual tours, hosted live by student teams or self-led, to learn about the student teams' high-performance, low-carbon homes; explore innovative building technologies; and to discover the impact of these homes on their communities. A toolkit will be available to help teachers bring students to the virtual village for unique educational activities.

Additional details are available on the [Solar Decathlon](#) website.

## **General Media Access**

The Competition Event is not open to the public, but the Opening Ceremony and Awards Ceremony are open to the media. **Media registration for the following events will be added as it becomes available.**

- April 12, 2021, 12-2 p.m. EDT [Media Preview of Solar Decathlon Homes](#) (via Zoom)
- April 15, 2021, 3-4 p.m. EDT [Opening Celebration](#) (via Zoom)
- April 18, 2021, 1-3 p.m. EDT [Awards Ceremony](#) (via Zoom)

## **Additional Resources**

- Teams page with links to individual team pages and Construction Status Graphic: <https://www.solardecathlon.gov/2020/build/challenge-teams.html>
- Flickr: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/solar\\_decathlon/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/solar_decathlon/albums)
- YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9zisKhXiA5BcL-n9TDW\\_WA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9zisKhXiA5BcL-n9TDW_WA)
- B-Roll: <Coming soon>
- Blog post with updates on home construction: <https://www.solardecathlon.gov/blog/archives/5769#more-5769>
- Weber State Matterport tour (link ½ way down the page): <https://www.solardecathlon.gov/2020/build/competition-team-weber-state.html>

## Media Contacts

John Horst

U.S. Department of Energy

Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE)

EERE Communications | Solar Decathlon Media Relations Lead

[John.horst@ee.doe.gov](mailto:John.horst@ee.doe.gov); 303-434-2823

Linh Truong

Solar Decathlon Communications Lead

National Renewable Energy Laboratory

[Linh.Truong@nrel.gov](mailto:Linh.Truong@nrel.gov)

303-384-6624

## Solar Decathlon Social

### Media



[Instagram](#)



[Facebook](#)



[Twitter](#)



[YouTube](#)

### EERE Social Media



[EERE on Facebook](#)



[EERE on Twitter](#)



[EERE on LinkedIn](#)

### DOE Social Media



[DOE Instagram](#)



[DOE on Facebook](#)



[DOE on Twitter](#)



[DOE on LinkedIn](#)