



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, September 30, 2011

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Middlebury College Wins the Communications Contest at U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon

WASHINGTON, DC – Middlebury College was awarded top honors this afternoon in the Communications Contest at the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon 2011. Today's announcement concludes another of 10 contests that make up the international competition taking place on the National Mall's West Potomac Park in Washington, D.C. The competition's overall winner will be announced tomorrow, Saturday, October 1, at 2:30 pm in the event's solar village.

"Effective communication skills are critical to helping the public understand the practical applications of energy-saving technologies and how these innovations can help every American household save money," said Richard King, director of the Solar Decathlon for the U.S. Department of Energy.

Middlebury earned a score of 90 out of a possible 100 points. "Middlebury College wowed jurors with its video walkthrough, website, and engaging tour. The truly authentic Middlebury team demonstrated balanced talent across the entire communications competition, making renewable energy technologies accessible to the public. We were inspired," commented Stacy Wilson, one of the contest's jurors and founder and president of Eloquor Consulting Inc., a communications firm specializing in web and social technology.

Appalachian State finished second in the Communications Contest with 89 points, followed by University of Maryland in third place with 88 points. Full details about the Communications Contest results are available at www.solardecathlon.gov.

The award was presented by Ryan Park, solar energy executive with REC Solar. "I've spent two days at the Solar Decathlon in awe of these impressive designs and talented students," said Park. "The competition offers an incredible opportunity to train the next generation of architects and engineers in clean energy technology, and to communicate the benefits of energy-efficient living to consumers."

Currently, Maryland is in the overall lead with 722.460 points. Ohio State is in second place overall with 707.648 points, followed by Purdue (706.964 points), Middlebury (702.361 points) and SCI-Arc/Caltech (697.779 points) in third, fourth and fifth place respectively.

For the Communications Contest, teams earned up to 100 points based on a number of criteria, including:

- Web content quality, appropriateness, and originality
- Video content including walkthrough information, accessible captioning, clarity of the audio narrative, and overall creativity
- The quality of onsite graphics, photos, displays, and signage
- The delivery of messages to target audiences and people of all abilities
- The use of innovative methods to engage audiences, including website visitors and people waiting to tour a house.

The U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon is open to the public through Sunday, October 2. The houses are open for free tours both days this weekend from 10:00 am to 5:30 pm.

For full event information, current standings, high-resolution photos, videos, an event schedule and daily results, visit www.solardecathlon.gov. You can also follow the competition real-time on Facebook at [Facebook.com/DOESolarDecathlon](https://www.facebook.com/DOESolarDecathlon) and Twitter at [@Solar_Decathlon](https://twitter.com/Solar_Decathlon).

More about the Solar Decathlon

The U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon 2011 is an award-winning program that challenges collegiate students from around the world to design, build and operate solar-powered houses that are affordable, highly energy efficient, attractive, and easy to live in. The competition shows consumers how to save money and energy with affordable clean energy products that are available today. The nearly two-year projects culminate in an unprecedented display of affordable green living and design on the National Mall's West Potomac Park from September 23 – October 2, 2011. The Solar Decathlon also provides participating students with hands-on experience and unique training that prepares them to enter our nation's clean energy workforce, supporting the Obama Administration's goal of transitioning to a clean energy economy while saving families and businesses money.

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