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Solar Decathlon 2013 Kicks Off Today, Solar-Powered Houses Open to Public at Orange County Great Park in Irvine, California *Collegiate Teams Showcase Affordable, Energy-Efficient Houses in Global Competition*

Irvine, Calif. – Collegiate teams involving more than 1,000 students from around the world have assembled at the Orange County Great Park in Irvine, Calif., to showcase their highly energy-efficient, solar-powered houses for the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon 2013. Today's opening ceremony kicks off the highly anticipated biennial competition that challenges collegiate teams to design, build, and operate houses powered by the sun that are affordable, energy efficient, attractive, and easy to live in.

"These inspiring collegiate teams show our onsite visitors and online Solar Decathlon audience around the world how efficient building design and clean energy products available today can help families and businesses save money by saving energy," said Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz. "The event provides student competitors with unique real-world training to become the clean energy workforce of the future and helps ensure that our nation remains competitive in the global race for clean energy."

In addition to educating the public about money-saving and energy-saving opportunities available today, this award-winning competition engages students from across the nation and around the world to develop the skills and knowledge to become the next generation of architects, engineers and clean energy entrepreneurs. Over the last decade, the competition has prepared approximately 17,000 students to become future innovators in clean energy technologies and efficient building designs that cut carbon pollution and help slow the effects of climate change to leave a cleaner, more stable environment for future generations. The Solar Decathlon also supports the Obama Administration's goal of transitioning to a clean energy economy while saving families and businesses money.

Student teams in the 2013 competition span two continents, including teams from the United States, Canada, Austria, and the Czech Republic. Over the next 10 days, they will compete in 10 contests that gauge each house's performance, livability, and affordability, rewarding teams that build houses with estimated costs at or below \$250,000. The teams will have to perform a variety of everyday tasks, including cooking, laundry, and washing dishes, to test the livability and energy use of their houses. The winner of

the overall competition is the team that best blends affordability, consumer appeal, and design excellence with optimal energy production and maximum efficiency.

Thousands are expected to visit the houses, which will be open to the public free of charge on eight days over two weekends: from Thursday, October 3, through Sunday, October 6, and again from Thursday, October 10, through Sunday, October 13, from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. PDT. Visitors are able to tour the houses, gather ideas to use in their own homes, and learn how energy-saving features can help them save money today. The overall winner will be announced on Saturday, October 12 at 10:00 a.m. PDT. This Solar Decathlon is the sixth such competition since 2002.

This year's collegiate teams were chosen nearly two years ago through a competitive process. The selected teams and their projects represent a diverse range of design approaches, building technologies, and geographic locations, climates and regions – including urban, suburban and rural settings. They also aim to reach a broad range of target housing markets, including veterans, disaster relief, retirement, and single family. Teams have gathered their combined interdisciplinary talents to design and build the houses, as well as to raise funds, furnish and decorate the houses, and optimize the houses' performance.

Solar Decathlon 2013 teams competing at the Orange County Great Park

- **Arizona State University and The University of New Mexico**
- **Czech Republic** (Czech Technical University)
- **Kentucky/Indiana** (University of Louisville, Ball State University, and University of Kentucky)
- **Middlebury College**
- **Missouri University of Science and Technology**
- **Norwich University**
- **Santa Clara University**
- **Southern California Institute of Architecture and California Institute of Technology**
- **Stanford University**
- **Stevens Institute of Technology**
- **Team Alberta** (University of Calgary)
- **Team Austria** (Vienna University of Technology)
- **Team Capitol DC** (The Catholic University of America, George Washington University, and American University)
- **Team Ontario** (Queen's University, Carleton University, and Algonquin College)
- **Team Texas** (The University of Texas at El Paso and El Paso Community College)
- **University of Nevada Las Vegas**
- **The University of North Carolina at Charlotte**
- **University of Southern California**
- **West Virginia University**

For the first time, the Solar Decathlon will be hosted alongside XPO, a clean, renewable and efficient energy exposition, featuring visionary and innovative companies, products, and educational opportunities, organized by the City of Irvine and Orange County Great Park. Through fun, interactive exhibits and activities, the XPO will provide visitors with information about the broad spectrum of energy efficiency in home design, transportation, consumer products, food production and education. Visitors will experience a 21st century festival of creativity, technology, design, and educational experiences that will inspire children and adults alike. Learn more at www.The-XPO.org.

For full event information, current standings, high-resolution photos, videos, an event schedule and daily results, 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/

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