

SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY EXPERIMENTAL VEHICLE TEAM WINS NATIONAL SOLAR BIKE RACE

MENDOTA HEIGHTS, Minn., May 27, 2009 – Saint Thomas Academy announced today that its Experimental Vehicle Team (EVT) swept the 2009 Solar BikeRayce USA, held Memorial Day Weekend at Crowder College in Neosho, Mo.

The team of 15 students won the 15th running of the Solar BikeRayce, which challenges groups of high school students, college students and adult inventors to build solar vehicles to race 100 kilometers. The event is divided into two main classes: the “ABX Class” of vehicles with human, electric and solar power; and the “S-class,” comprised of vehicles that only use solar and electric power. Most of the solar ABX Class vehicles look like streamlined bicycles with solar array and electric motors. The S-class cars are designed without a human-powered element and look like smaller versions of the cars built for the World Solar Challenge held in Australia.

The EVT began building its solar car from the ground up in the fall of 2008. The car has a carbon fiber body and uses lithium polymer batteries, which weigh less than the regulation 6 kilograms, rather than traditional lead acid batteries. The car’s only metal parts are in the suspension. It uses less than 1.7 square meters of solar arrays.

The two solar bikes also use lithium polymer batteries, which adhere to the 3 kilogram weight limit, and 1.7 square meters of solar array. Human power derived from pedaling offers the solar bikes an advantage over purely solar and electric-powered vehicles, particularly on cloudy days.

The Academy’s three solar vehicles were among 15 entries that raced around the closed streets of Crowder College’s campus under partly cloudy skies and a chance of thunderstorms. Although the sun played hide-and-seek for most of the day, the EVT was able to coach all three vehicles to victory in their individual classes. The team finished first overall, first and second in the bike division, first in the S-class car division, had the fastest lap (JJ.ohn DeMay 2:45 seconds, 30.5 mph, bike), and won the sportsmanship award.

The high school division bike was piloted by Student Director R. Muellerleile and DeMay and was monitored by Student Director B. Lee and T. Grojean. The car was driven by Student Director B. Fonfara and monitored by T. Mealey.

The team is made up of:

R. Muellerleile '09, Student Director
B. Lee '09, Student Director
B. Fonfara '09, Student Director
T. Mealey '09
R. Litwin '09
O. Rickey '09
J. Nye '09
J. DeMay '09

T. Pelletier '10
P. Underwood '10
T. Grojean '11
K. Mealey '11
N. Delaram '11
C. Beckwith '10
J. Ryan '11

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