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Chasing the Checkered Flag

Students Complete 2nd Annual Ethanol Vehicle Challenge

SPRINGFIELD, May 26 –Vehicles powered by ethanol-based fuel from fourteen colleges and universities crossed the finish line Wednesday, marking the end of the 1999 Ethanol Vehicle Challenge, sponsored by the Department of Energy (DOE) and General Motors. The competition challenges student teams to re-engineer Chevrolet Silverado pickup trucks to run on ethanol-based fuel and then drive them in a cross-country motorcade.

“These student teams are helping to develop the vehicles and fuels of the future,” said Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson. “I am pleased that through efforts like the Ethanol Vehicle Challenge, we are able to help accelerate the development and performance improvement of alternative fuel vehicles.”

The Ethanol Vehicle Challenge gives students real-world engineering experience by giving them the opportunity to convert new vehicles built for gasoline into optimized vehicles fueled solely by E85 (85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline *primer*). The goal is an ethanol powered vehicle that achieves greater fuel economy and lower exhaust emissions, but with the driveability, performance and consumer appeal of a conventional gasoline vehicle.

“The students competing in this year’s challenge showed even more creativity, enthusiasm and innovative applications of technical knowledge than expected,” said Rick Scheidt, GM Brand Manager for Chevrolet Silverado. “We are excited about the long-term benefits of the Ethanol Vehicle Challenge and look forward to sponsoring next year’s competition.”

This year’s winning team represented the University of Illinois at Chicago. *All of the vehicles of top five teams met low emission vehicle (LEV) standards and many of the entrants produced ethanol vehicles that surpassed the on-road performance of their gasoline counterparts, signifying the marketability of E-85 fuel.*

Over 200 students from 14 schools competed for more than \$21,000 in prizes, including \$3,500 for first place overall.

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Overall awards went to:

First Place - University of Illinois at Chicago

Second Place - University of Texas at El Paso

Third Place - Kettering University, Flint, Michigan

Fourth Place - University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Fifth Place - Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

Two faculty advisors received \$10,000 each for outstanding contributions to the program by inspiring their students and impacting their respective universities. Professor Charles Allport, Assistant to the Academic Vice President, Cedarville (Ohio) College, founded Cedarville's engineering department and has fielded many vehicle competition teams over the past several years. Dr. Ryan Wicker, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering, University of Texas at El Paso, established a state-of-the-art laboratory and an automotive engineering course that supports the challenge.

Participating schools included:

- Cedarville College, Cedarville, Ohio
- Crowder College, Neosho, Missouri
- Idaho State University, Pocatello
- Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago
- Kettering University, Flint, Mich
- Minnesota State University at Mankato
- University of California, Riverside
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kan.
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- University of Texas at Austin
- University of Texas at El Paso
- University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
- Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich.

In addition to DOE, General Motors and Natural Resources Canada, support for this year's Ethanol Vehicle Challenge was provided by the following organizations: Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, State of Nebraska, the Council of Great Lakes Governors, Renewable Fuels Association, the Governors' Ethanol Coalition, the National Corn Growers Association, the Illinois Corn Marketing Board, the Canadian Renewable Fuels Association, Williams Ethanol, Delphi Automotive and Energy Systems, and Growmark.

This year's motorcade took students on a 600-mile journey from Lansing, Michigan to Springfield, Illinois. Stops were made at *the State Capitol Buildings in Lansing and Indianapolis, the General Motors Assembly Plant in Fort Wayne, Ind., and the Williams Ethanol plant in Peoria, Ill.* Next year's Ethanol Vehicle Challenge will take place in Canada with stops scheduled for Sarnia, Chatham, Toronto, Oshawa and Ottawa. The challenge teams will continue to optimize their E85 conversions of the 1999 four-wheel-drive Chevrolet Silverado pickup trucks.

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