For Immediate Release Contact: Kimberly DeClark, EcoCAR

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**University of Alabama takes top honors in The EcoCAR Mobility Challenge**

*The Ohio State University and West Virginia University teams finish second and third*

**Chicago, June 9, 2021** – The University of Alabama has been named The EcoCAR Mobility Challenge Year Three champion, taking the lead in the premier four-year collegiate automotive engineering competition. Rounding out the top three are The Ohio State University in second place and West Virginia University in third place.

“This past year has brought unprecedented challenges, but we pivoted quickly and found ways to deliver a high-quality educational experience for EcoCAR students,” said Kristen Wahl, Advanced Vehicle Technology Competitions Director at Argonne National Laboratory. “The EcoCAR Mobility Challenge brings together some of the most innovative minds in academia to solve complex challenges facing the future of mobility. These students have demonstrated their ability to navigate new obstacles and develop unique solutions that will help America’s transportation sector design more efficient vehicles.”

Last night during the Year 3 Awards Ceremony, The EcoCAR Mobility Challenge celebrated the winners in over 40 categories and awarded more than $100,000 in prize money to the associated universities. For jumping to the top of the leaderboard, the Crimson Tide will take home an extra $10,000 to further support the university’s advanced vehicle technology program.

EcoCAR – the latest U.S. Department of Energy Advanced Vehicle Technology Competition sponsored by General Motors and MathWorks – challenges 11 North American universities to apply advanced propulsion systems, electrification, SAE Level 2 automation and vehicle connectivity to improve the energy efficiency of a 2019 Chevrolet Blazer, all while balancing factors such as emissions, safety and consumer acceptability. Teams have four years (2018-2022) to transform their vehicles from design concept into reality, building an energy efficient, connected and semi-automated vehicle.

“We’re always impressed by the level of creativity students bring to this challenge, and this year the students exceeded our expectations,” said Kelly Speakes-Backman, Acting Assistant Secretary of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at the U.S. Department of Energy. “The EcoCAR students have demonstrated their resolve and creativity to transform their virtual designs for the future of mobility into reality – all with the additional constraints brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Year Three marks a critical point in the program where students must make the pivot from propulsion system integration to controls development and testing. Throughout the last two years, the students strived to conceptualize and build the framework for their redesigned Chevrolet Blazers. In Year Three, they put that work to the test and took the vehicles to the roads to assess its drivability, performance and energy efficiency. Each team was scored across six key areas ranging from Propulsion System Integration, Propulsion Controls and Modeling, Connected and Automated Vehicle Systems (CAV), Project Management and Communications.

“We’re all impressed by the remarkable effort of students who worked through pandemic-related challenges in addition to the intense demands of making project vehicles run on propulsion systems they’ve designed. Their experiences in the last 12 months have paralleled what we in industry have faced,” said Ken Morris, GM vice president, Autonomous and Electric Vehicle Programs. “EcoCAR has once again delivered on its promise of being a training ground for students in many engineering disciplines, as well as project management and communications. Mentors from GM that support each team are always energized by the creativity and dedication of the student competitors.”

“We are impressed with the progress and innovation the teams demonstrated in Year Three, particularly in light of the challenging environment,” said Lauren Tabolinsky, academic program manager, MathWorks. “Leveraging their design work from Years One and Two, the students were able to collaborate remotely and test virtually before moving onto physical performance assessments of their vehicles. This was a great example of the kind of real-world challenges these students will face in their careers and they rose to the occasion.”

Additional sponsors joining the U.S. Department of Energy, General Motors and MathWorks, include NXP, National Science Foundation, Intel, American Axle & Manufacturing, Bosch, PACCAR, dSPACE, Siemens, Denso, AVL, Horiba, TRC, Borg Warner, California Air Resources Board, Proterra, tesa tape, Vector, OXTS, Gage, Electric Power Research Institute, J.D. Power and Consumer Reports.

For more information about The EcoCAR Mobility Challenge, please visit www.avtcseries.org.

**About The EcoCAR Mobility Challenge**

EcoCAR Mobility Challenge is a four-year collegiate engineering program that builds on the successful 33-year history of Department of Energy Advanced Vehicle Technology Competitions (AVTC) by giving engineering students the chance to design and build advanced vehicle technologies that explore affordable and highly efficient vehicle solutions. General Motors provides each of the 11 competing teams with a 2019 Chevrolet Blazer, as well as vehicle components, seed money, technical mentoring and operational support. MathWorks provides teams with a full suite of software tools, simulation models, training, technical mentoring and operational support. The U.S. Department of Energy and Argonne National Laboratory, provide competition management, team evaluation and logistical support. Other sponsors provide hardware, software and training. Through this important public/private partnership, EcoCAR provides invaluable hands-on skills to promising, young minds ready to enter the workforce.

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