

Energy Department and Argonne Join GM, Stellantis and MathWorks to Launch EcoCAR Innovation Challenge

Twenty universities and two vehicle platforms will support next-generation innovation and the future auto-industry workforce

DETROIT, April 13, 2026 —The [U.S. Department of Energy \(DOE\)](#) and [Argonne National Laboratory](#) (Argonne) today selected 20 universities to participate in the EcoCAR Innovation Challenge and announced the two vehicle platforms chosen for the program.

Managed by Argonne, the EcoCAR Innovation Challenge is the 15th installment of DOE's [Advanced Vehicle Technology Competitions \(AVTC\)](#) series, which challenges university students to design and build intelligent mobility solutions and innovative products using emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence for engineering tools, machine learning, and exascale computing.

Two industry leaders, General Motors (GM) and Stellantis have joined the Challenge as sponsors, along with technology partner MathWorks, forming a coalition of government and industry partners focused on cultivating the next generation of auto-industry innovators. This is the first collaboration between two major automakers in the same series in more than 25 years.

“The Innovation Challenge is an investment in the next era of the American workforce,” said Assistant Secretary of Energy (EERE) Audrey Robertson. “This unprecedented collaboration between GM and Stellantis underscores the importance of building a skilled US workforce and promoting innovation. We hope to fast-track technological breakthroughs, improve the competitiveness of the American auto industry, and expand the range of options available to American consumers.”

In addition to their use of emerging technologies, participating teams will explore modifications to the vehicle propulsion system to optimize efficiency through the design and integration of electric motor systems and team-built, high-voltage batteries. GM and Stellantis will each sponsor one of the two competition tracks, which provide distinct engineering challenges and vehicle platforms that reflect the choices available to North American customers.

“EcoCAR develops engineers who understand how to integrate software, controls, advanced powertrains, and the customer experience into a single system,” said Ken Morris, Senior Vice President of Product Programs, Product Safety, Integration and Motorsports at General Motors. “We’re proud to support this competition and to help students build the practical expertise that the auto industry needs right now and we are excited to announce GM has selected the 2026 Chevy Blazer EV to provide to teams.”

“Tomorrow’s mobility solutions will be shaped by teams who can take on real-world challenges, innovate across disciplines and provide practical, intelligent results for our customers,” said Micky Bly, Senior Vice President, Global Propulsion Systems Engineering – Stellantis N.V. “EcoCAR gives students that experience, and we’re excited to support their development by providing the 2026 Jeep Cherokee hybrid, which will offer meaningful technical and learning engagement for the teams.”

“Students learn best by building, and EcoCAR lets them build using the same Model-Based Design and simulation workflows widely used in industry,” said Lauren Tabolinsky, Senior Manager, Student and Academic Global Programs at MathWorks. “We’re proud to support a program that helps bridge academic learning with engineering practices that translate directly to the workplace.”

The Universities Selected to Participate in the EcoCAR Innovation Challenge:

1. California State University, Los Angeles – Stellantis Track
2. Colorado School of Mines – Stellantis Track
3. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University – General Motors Track
4. Georgia Institute of Technology – General Motors Track
5. Louisiana State University – Stellantis Track
6. McMaster University – General Motors Track
7. Mississippi State University – General Motors Track
8. The Ohio State University – Stellantis Track
9. Pennsylvania State University – General Motors Track
10. Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology – Stellantis Track
11. Texas A&M University – Stellantis Track
12. The University of Alabama – General Motors Track
13. University at Buffalo – Stellantis Track
14. University of North Carolina at Charlotte – Stellantis Track
15. University of Tennessee, Knoxville – Stellantis Track
16. University of Waterloo – Stellantis Track
17. University of Wisconsin-Madison – General Motors Track
18. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University – General Motors Track
19. Western Michigan University – General Motors Track
20. West Virginia University – General Motors Track

Additional EcoCAR Innovation Challenge sponsors announced today include Caterpillar, Siemens Digital Industries Software, dSPACE, Bosch, Altec, Hesse, and Volta Foundation.

About EcoCAR Innovation Challenge

The EcoCAR Innovation Challenge is a DOE-sponsored Advanced Vehicle Technology Competition managed by Argonne National Laboratory. The program challenges university teams to apply cutting-edge engineering to real vehicles while developing the technical, leadership, and project management skills needed for careers in automotive engineering, transportation, and advanced manufacturing.

For information about the EcoCAR Innovation Challenge, visit <https://avtcsereis.org/>.

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