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DOE and NREL Announce Inaugural Collegiate Wind Competition Teams

April 11, 2013

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and its National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) are pleased to announce the teams selected to take part in the inaugural DOE Collegiate Wind Competition.

The following 10 student teams were selected through a competitive process to compete in the inaugural competition:

- Boise State University
- California Maritime Academy
- Colorado School of Mines
- James Madison University (VA)
- Kansas State University
- Northern Arizona University
- Pennsylvania State University
- University of Alaska - Fairbanks
- University of Kansas
- University of Massachusetts - Lowell

The elite educational programs have committed to formulating an interdisciplinary team, integrating the three principal competition contests into students' coursework and senior design projects. The competition contests are designed to reach students from various engineering and business programs to provide them with engaging, real-world project experience as they prepare to enter the workforce. The selected programs garnered organizational support from their institutions as well as private-sector and community support.

The Collegiate Wind Competition is a forum for undergraduate college students of multiple disciplines to investigate innovative wind energy concepts; gain experience designing, building, and testing a wind turbine to perform according to a customized market data-derived business plan; and increase their knowledge of wind industry barriers. NREL is facilitating the inaugural competition, which will take place in spring 2014.

"Wind energy is one of the fastest-growing electrical energy options in the United States, and the industry requires a skilled workforce with talented people from engineering, business, and communications backgrounds. This competition will help attract students from a wide range of disciplines into this exciting industry," DOE Wind Powering America initiative National Director Jonathan Bartlett said.

The theme of the inaugural competition is to design and construct a lightweight, transportable wind turbine that can be used to power small electronic devices. A principal contest involves testing each team's prototype wind turbine in a wind tunnel under specific conditions. Each team's business plan and turbine will also be evaluated against other pre-weighted criteria. The third event of the competition will be a team-to-team debate relating to current wind market drivers and issues. Teams will be judged on the members' understanding of the issues posed to them, their communication of potential solutions, and their ability to promote constructive dialogue.

This competition is an opportunity for collegiate institutions to showcase student ingenuity and the programs that the students represent. In addition to this national recognition, the turbine from the college or university with the best overall score will be placed on temporary display at the DOE headquarters building in Washington, D.C. The competition enables NREL and DOE to support innovative and forward-thinking educational institutions that incorporate renewable energy technologies, helping to foster the growth of the future wind energy industry and workforce.

"This is a great opportunity for students, universities and the wind industry," says Ian Baring-Gould, the national technical director of the Wind Powering America initiative. "The Department of Energy's


Solar Decathlon has clearly engaged students and the public in the renewable energy field. Our hope is that this new wind focused competition will have a similar outcome. NREL is very excited to be involved.”

NREL is the U.S. Department of Energy's primary national laboratory for renewable energy and energy efficiency research and development. NREL is operated for DOE by the Alliance for Sustainable Energy, LLC.

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