July 9, 2013

Stanford’s student-built solar-powered race car to be unveiled

The student team has been preparing the car to compete in an international race across the Australian outback.

The Stanford Solar Car Project (SSCP) will unveil Luminos, a new student-built solar-powered car, at the Volkswagen Automotive Innovation Laboratory at Stanford University, on July 12th at 5:30 p.m. Members of the news media are invited to preview the car and interview team members on July 9th from 10am to 1pm.

In October, Luminos will compete in the 2013 World Solar Challenge, a 2000-mile trek across the Australian Outback that is the most challenging and competitive solar car race in the world. The race will feature 47 teams from the United States, Japan, the Netherlands, Chile, Saudi Arabia and more than 21 other countries.

For the 2013 cycle, the Stanford team has switched from a three-wheeled vehicle design to a four-wheeled vehicle for improved vehicle handling and driver safety. The team has also developed custom 97% efficient solar car electric motors — a significant improvement over the industry-standard 93% — and a unique solar panel encapsulation process for increased power. Weighing in at just 375 pounds, Luminos generates less than half the aerodynamic drag of a cyclist, and can cruise continuously at highway speeds on solar power alone.

“This year our team focused on improving the total system efficiency of our vehicle through key student-designed innovations while significantly increasing the reliability of our vehicle in the Outback,” says Team Director Wesley Ford (Stanford ‘13) about the new design.

Stanford’s Luminos is the product of thousands of student volunteer hours of design, construction and testing. Years of technical progress and accumulated expertise at Stanford make possible the lengthy, complicated process of designing a lightweight, ultra-efficient solar car. The Stanford Solar Car Project has received $1.4 million in parts and resources from various donors, including Stanford University, Volkswagen, SunPower, Linear Technology, STMicroelectronics, and 3M.

The SSCP allows students the opportunity to learn about advanced manufacturing techniques, use cutting-edge materials, and attempt the daunting challenge of revolutionizing vehicle design toward a greater environmental conscience. Innovations created through Stanford’s design process often go on to become new companies and products. Solar car racing builds interest in the challenge of developing a more sustainable automotive industry, and cars like Luminos stimulate excitement about the intersection of technology and green transportation.

Don’t miss the official unveiling of Luminos and the opportunity to send off the Stanford team! Read more about the team and follow their progress by visiting solarcar.stanford.edu.

Where: 473 Oak Road, Stanford CA.
When: Press preview: Tuesday, July 9th from 10am to 1pm
         General public unveiling: Friday, July 12th at 5:30 pm

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