
Solar team draws closer to design for national contest

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Posted: 4/17/08

UK's Smart Blues House project is one step closer to selecting its design for the national competition next year.

The project announced various winners and honorable merits for teams of students who submitted entries of a design for the solar-powered home UK will submit for the United States Department of Energy's 2009 Solar Decathlon. The teams were awarded last night at the College of Design's annual awards ceremony at the Kentucky Theatre.

UK is one of 20 colleges invited to compete in the event. Each competing university is attempting to design, build and operate the most attractive, effective and energy-sufficient solar-powered house.

The teams will participate in a weeklong competition and exhibition at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in October 2009.

The UK project has been accepting ideas since Feb. 18 for its entry.

Last week, the project conducted the "People's Choice Awards," at Pence Hall to get students motivated to begin work on the project. Students of all majors voted for the house they found most appropriate and successful to be submitted as a contender.

UK professors and community architects made up a panel of jurors who determined which design would be submitted to represent UK. The Smart Blues House project will enter a design made up of the various ideas awarded last night.

"We took notes and listened to other opinions, ideas, and criticisms of all the different designs and decided that the final solar-powerhouse will not be from any one design," said Hilary Bryon, an architecture professor who was not a member of the panel but was present for the judging. "We will form a melded design from several different team ideas and construct from that a final home that will be presented in Washington D.C."

Five of 25 submitted designs were given awards, including three teams who achieved Honors Awards with a prize of \$500 and two teams given Merit Awards and \$250. The money was donated by the Kentucky Center for Applied Energy Research.

Team one won the People's Choice Award voted by students of all majors last week for their design, "45-degree Solar Home." The team was made up of eight students from the College of Design, three mechanical engineering majors and one electrical engineering major.

The team said the advantages of their solar house design are that the home is foldable and able to be transported in one piece without requiring a permit, and it maximizes solar energy production.

The design for "Passive Meets Active," and "Solar Decathlon - Sustainable Living," also received recognition.

Merit Awards went to the designs, "Living-in-Between," and "House Lab."

More information on UK's entry in the competition is available on the team's Web site (www.uky.edu/solarhouse).

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