



Press Release
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**U.S. Department of Energy Awards Thermablok-Insulated “Refract House”
First Place in Architecture in the 2009 Solar Decathlon Competition**



Team California (CCA/SCU) took top honors in the 2009 US Department of Energy Solar Decathlon



Aerial photo of the National Mall in Washington DC at the launch of the October 8-18 event

Washington, DC– Tampa, Florida-based Thermablok announces that Team California – consisting of students from the California College of the Arts (CCA) and Santa Clara University (SCU) – took top honors in the Architecture category of the U.S. Department of Energy’s 2009 Solar Decathlon competition in Washington, DC. SCU/CCA students’ Refract House featuring Thermablok’s new “aerogel” insulating material placed third overall among 20 universities from around the world all vying to design, construct and operate the most aesthetic, energy-efficient, and self-sustaining solar-powered house.

Team California took the lead in the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon by winning the architecture contest with a score of 98 out of a possible 100. A jury of professional architects praised the Refract House, calling it “beautiful in every respect,” and applauding Team California’s student architects and designers for its “excellent project documentation, crystal-clear concept, and successful translation of regional architecture.”

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Thermablok® President and Founder Lahnne Johnson donated his new aerogel insulation which uses technology developed in conjunction with NASA, to SCU/CCA's refract House. Aerogel, sometimes referred to as "frozen smoke", has the highest insulating properties of any known material in existence. While aerogel has been used extensively by NASA including the recent Mars missions, until this recent breakthrough aerogel had not been easily adaptable to the building industry.

Unsurpassed in its insulating properties, impervious to moisture and mold and unaffected by age, Thermablok is a natural ingredient for a project like the Solar Decathlon. Energy-conscious architects may soon be incorporating this latest answer to energy conservation and reducing CO2 emissions. Just one, ¼-inch x 1½-inch (6.25mm x 38mm) strip of Thermablok added to only one edge of each stud before hanging drywall breaks the *conductive* "thermal bridging" and can increase the overall wall R-factor by more than 40 percent (US Department of Energy/JM Laboratories.)

Consisting of more than 95-percent air, Thermablok is virtually weightless making it easy and inexpensive to ship and install. Made in the USA, Thermablok is 100-percent recyclable and is now available to the public for both commercial and residential building applications.

A prestigious international competition, the Solar Decathlon began in 2002 and is held every two years. Originally earmarked for Architectural students, the competition has grown to include Engineering, Arts & Sciences, Industrial Labor Relations, and students representing other academic concentrations as well.

This year's Solar Decathlon is represented by teams from Santa Clara University, California College of the Arts; Cornell University; Iowa State; Penn State; Rice University; University of Calgary, SAIT Polytechnic, Alberta College of Art & Design, Mount Royal College; Boston Architectural College, Tufts University; Technische Universität Darmstadt (Germany); Missouri University of Science and Technology, University of Missouri; University of Waterloo, Ryerson University, Simon Fraser University (Ontario, BC); Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (Spain); The Ohio State University; University of Arizona; Universidad de Puerto Rico; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; University of Kentucky; University of Louisiana at Lafayette; University of Minnesota; University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Virginia Tech. The 2009 Solar Decathlon will be open for public viewing October until October 18.

Thermablok and its parent company, [Acoustiblok, Inc.](http://Acoustiblok.com) is proud to sponsor energy conservation-related projects in the worldwide community such as the Solar Decathlon. For more information, contact sales@thermablok.com or visit our website at www.thermablok.com.

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