



Press Release
For Immediate Release
October 9, 2009

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Iowa State student Timothy Lentz, foreground, and Team Alberta student Leah Battersdy, right, work on the roofs of their houses during the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon 2009 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.,
(Photo Credit: Stefano Paltera/U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon)

Thermablok® Welcomes Sprint to the U.S. Department of Energy's 2009 Solar Decathlon Team

Tampa, FL – Thanks in part to its growing environmentally-responsible initiatives, telecommunications giant Sprint has been chosen to provide broadband connection access for all users at the 2009 Solar Decathlon, including competitors, volunteers and the public visiting the competition at the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

By partnering with the U.S. Department of Energy and its National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) Sprint is supporting the three-week competition that starts Oct. 8, by providing a comprehensive suite of Internet based solutions supporting the needs of the Solar Decathlon.

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Sprint Solar Decathlon/page 2

Sprint joins a distinguished roster of corporate benefactors like Tampa-based Thermablok to sponsor this year's competitors, who represent 20 universities from around the world, all vying to design, construct and operate the most aesthetic, energy-efficient, and self-sustaining solar-powered house.

Thermablok® President and Founder Lahnne Johnson donated his new aerogel insulation technology, developed in conjunction with NASA, to two of the green home designs. 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 in the shuttle and recent Mars missions, until this recent breakthrough aerogel had not been adaptable to the building industry.

Impervious to moisture and mold and unaffected by age, Thermablok is a natural ingredient for a project like the Solar Decathlon. Incorporating this latest answer to energy conservation and reducing CO₂ emissions, one ¼-inch x 1½-inch (6.25mm x 38mm) strip of Thermablok added to just 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.

The prestigious international competition 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.

Thermablok and its parent company, Acoustiblok, Inc. is proud to sponsor environmentally important projects in the worldwide community such as the Solar Decathlon.

This year's Solar Decathlon is represented by teams from Cornell University; Santa Clara University, California College of the Arts; 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 judging and public viewing October 8-18.

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