



Plymouth, Wis., high school seniors develop innovative vehicle; compete in electric car contest at Road America

Orion Energy Systems sponsors car and provides solar technology that it hopes will one day charge electric vehicles with the sun's renewable energy

MANITOWOC, Wis. — May 12, 2010 — Plymouth, Wis., high school seniors Bob Chase and Brenden Schulz have developed a battery powered car that could serve as a prototype for future innovations — like a vehicle that harnesses the sun's energy to power itself.

The students, both 18, built the vehicle for Electrathon, a contest in which teams compete to see which battery-powered car can complete the most laps in an hour. The goal of Electrathon is to bring attention to the environmental problems of conventional cars and demonstrate the viability of electric vehicles, according to the Wisconsin Electrathon program.



The Plymouth High School car, one of approximately 15 in its class, was sponsored by Orion Energy Systems (NYSE Amex: OESX). This is the first year Plymouth High School built an electric car and competed in Electrathon.

The car competed in two events recently, the first on April 30 and May 1 at Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton and Wisconsin International Raceway in Kaukauna respectively; and one event on May 9 and 10, at Road America in Elkhart Lake.

“These students represent the future of sustainable technologies and we’re proud to support their efforts,” said Orion CEO Neal Verfuert. “The technologies these students are developing are technologies that will make a significant, positive impact on the environment, something we support at Orion and something that will affect us all.”

As a leader in energy management, Orion is helping these students develop skills and change the energy paradigm so that it will someday help revolutionize transportation by developing new technologies that use photovoltaic systems to power electric vehicles.

Orion in recent years has developed technologies that utilize the sun as a power source, like its direct renewable Apollo[®] solar light pipes that replace electric lights for up to 10 hours a day, and more recently with its innovative photovoltaic systems that generate electricity.

“Orion is supportive of innovations that will lead to new ways of using the sun’s renewable energy to power buildings and vehicles,” Verfuert said. “The technologies the students are experimenting with today are economically viable and will bridge the gap between the struggling economy today and a strengthened economy in the future.”

Chase and Schulz, who both plan to attend Michigan Tech in the fall and majoring in engineering, said they learned a great deal from the semester-long project, including design, teamwork, time management, physics, electricity and problem solving.



“We’ve learned quite a bit from this experience,” Chase said. “There were lots of little things that we learned, that, when starting the project, we never considered. But we tackled them as they came up and, overall, this was an extremely valuable experience.”

Schulz said the lessons learned could someday lead to clean energy vehicles.

“The technologies we’re using in this car hopefully will be a stepping stone to other clean air innovations that will help improve the environment and reduce pollutants created by millions of conventional vehicles on the road,” Schulz said.

Matt Poppe, club advisor and engineering and technology instructor at Plymouth High School, said the students acquired numerous skills as they constructed the car from scratch and competed in the statewide events.

“Participation offers tremendous problem-solving and teamwork ability,” Poppe said. “The amount of learning that takes place in figuring out the gearing is only one small problem of the whole car.”

Cutlines:

On Course — The No. 23 Orion electric car competes Monday in Electrathon Wisconsin at Road America in Elkhart Lake. The student-built, battery-powered cars competed to see which team could complete the most laps in one hour.

Preparing for the Challenge — Brenden Schulz, left, talks with driver Bob Chase of the No. 23 Orion car in preparation for the Electrathon Wisconsin challenge at Road America in Elkhart Lake on Monday. While the students learned valuable lessons while building the vehicles, spectators were able to see the future of transportation.

Orion has deployed its energy management systems in 5,374 facilities across North America, including 123 of the Fortune 500 companies. Since 2001, Orion technology has displaced more than 504 megawatts, saving customers more than \$782 million and reducing indirect carbon dioxide emissions by 6.7 million tons.

Orion Energy Systems Inc. (NYSE Amex: OESX) is a leading power technology enterprise that designs, manufactures and implements energy management systems, consisting primarily of high-performance, energy-efficient lighting platforms, intelligent wireless control systems and direct renewable solar technology for commercial and industrial customers without compromising their operations. For more information, visit www.oesx.com.

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