



National Association of Home Builders

October 3, 2011

Nation's Building News

The Official Online Weekly Newspaper of NAHB

Solar Home Designs Break New Ground in Student Decathlon on National Mall

Students from across the globe were on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 23-Oct. 2 for the [U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon](#), a biennial competition showcasing the latest innovations in solar power, energy-efficiency and green design.

Initiated in 2002, the award-winning program challenges collegiate teams to design, build and operate solar-powered houses that are cost-effective, energy-efficient and attractive.

Nineteen teams competed in this year's challenge.

Students spent nearly two years designing and building their homes for the competition, but had just one week to construct the homes on site.

The teams were able to do this by using building systems — utilizing concrete, log, modular and panelized components and techniques.

(For a related story in this issue of Nation's Building News on the building systems aspect of the homes, [click here.](#))

Though the homes all employed different construction methods, they had one important feature in common — they were produced in a controlled manufacturing environment.

This gave students the flexibility to build the homes in a timely manner on their college campuses and then easily transport and reconstruct them on the Mall.

NAHB was again a sponsor of the 2011 Solar Decathlon.

In January, NAHB provided student teams with the opportunity to attend the 2011 NAHB [International Builders' Show](#) in Orlando, where they unveiled models of their homes and showcased their accomplishments.

NAHB will also provide students at the top three winning colleges with free NAHB Student Chapters memberships through the [Home Builders Institute \(HBI\)](#), NAHB's workforce development arm.

"It was really great to have seen the early stages of the projects on display in model form at the Builders' Show, and now see the teams' hard work come to life here on the National Mall," said Chip Dence, chairman of NAHB's Energy Subcommittee and a home builder from Victoria, Texas.

"The students should be commended for their outstanding work on these homes, and for promoting the importance of energy efficiency," he said.



Winning University of Maryland WaterShed home interior