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University of Missouri – Rolla Wins American Solar Challenge *Sets record in fastest-ever U.S. solar car race*

CLAREMONT, CALIF. – The University of Missouri – Rolla won a highly competitive 2003 American Solar Challenge today, crossing the finish line at 11:39 a.m. using only the energy of the sun. The team set a record for U.S. solar car racing by completing 2,300 miles in 51 hours, beating the 2001 American Solar Challenge record by more than 4 hours.

Unofficial race results show Rolla's car, Solar Miner IV, made the trip from Chicago to the Los Angeles area in a cumulative time of 51 hours, 47 minutes and 39 seconds, for an average speed of 43.3 mph. Average speed is determined by dividing the distance traveled by the cumulative time, and includes time spent driving through traffic in cities and towns as well as on open highways.

“Congratulations to the University of Missouri - Rolla on their victory in this very demanding race,” Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham said. “The students who competed are our future scientists and engineers. Their willingness to take on this challenge and their outstanding performance should give us all comfort that our future will be in good hands.”

The University of Minnesota placed second in the Challenge with an unofficial total time of 56:36:31. The University of Waterloo placed third with an unofficial time of 58:11:20.

“We're a little surprised by our time during this year's race,” said Rolla team member Kerry Poppa. “We had a good car, a fast car, but we didn't expect this. We're all thrilled.”

The American Solar Challenge is an educational event in which teams compete to build and race solar-powered cars. This year's event started in Chicago July 13 and followed Route 66 through Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona to California. It is the longest solar car race in the world.

(MORE)

The Challenge is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), DOE's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), BP Solar and EDS.

DOE's overarching mission is enhancing national security. Among the department's most important priorities are increasing domestic energy production, revolutionizing our approach to energy conservation and efficiency, and promoting the development of renewable and energy efficiency technologies. NREL is DOE's premier laboratory for renewable energy research and development (R&D) and a lead lab in energy efficiency R&D.

Note to editors: Final race results and photos from the race can be found online at www.americansolarchallenge.org.