

Dell-Winston School Solar Car Challenge

In 1993, the Winston Solar Car Team launched an education program designed to teach high school students how to build roadworthy solar cars. The Winston Solar Education Program works to meet this objective by providing curriculum materials, on-site visits, and workshop opportunities for high schools across the country. This effort was designed to motivate students in the sciences, and to stress the value of science, engineering, and alternative energy.

The end product of each two-year education cycle is the Winston Solar Challenge, a closed-track or cross-country race designed to give students an opportunity to display their work. The first such Challenge in 1995 attracted ninety schools leading to nine teams actually building cars for the 1995 race. Three cars qualified to run. Eight cars qualified for the 1997 race, a 600-mile cross-country event from Dallas to San Antonio.

The Winston Solar Challenge now hosts annual events based on the support of the world famous Texas Motor Speedway. Even-numbered year events will be closed track races at the Speedway; odd-numbered year events will continue to be cross-country races. The 1999 race was a 1600-mile event from Dallas to Los Angeles. Students from over 750 schools shared this monumental event; nine teams qualified. The 2001 racers traveled from Austin, TX to the outskirts of Indianapolis, IN, hosted by Green Mountain Energy.

In 2002, Dell Computers became the Title Sponsor of the Winston Solar Challenge. Dell hosted the 2002, 2004, 2006 closed-track events at the Texas Motor Speedway, the 2003 Challenge to Florida's Solar Energy Center, the 2005 Challenge to NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab (Pasadena, CA), and this year's 2007 Challenge to Newburgh, NY.

Sponsors for the 2007 race include Dell Computers, The Winston School, the Texas State Energy Conservation Office, The Lightner Sams Foundation, TERION, and the TX Motor Speedway. The Dell-Winston School Solar Car Challenge is a part of The Winston School in Dallas, and is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) educational institution.

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