

The United States Department of Energy has awarded the Orange County Great Park in Irvine the hosting rights for the 2013 Solar Decathlon. The biennial event brings collegiate teams together to compete on an international level while showcasing innovative new clean energy technologies.

"I am extremely proud that after carefully evaluating sites throughout the nation, the Department of Energy selected our Great Park as the location of this important international event," said Mike Ellzey, CEO of the Orange County Great Park Board Corp. "Staging the 2013 Solar Decathlon at the Great Park will focus worldwide attention on the entire solar renewable energy industry in Orange County and throughout California. The event will also greatly stimulate the local economy by bringing in tourism dollars from those attending."

Twenty international teams will come together at the competition to design and build solar-powered homes that are energy efficient, affordable, cost-effective and aesthetically appealing. The teams will spend nearly two years designing and creating the homes, which are then evaluated on 10 criteria, including comfort, engineering, communications, appliances, architecture and hot water. The homes will be on display and open for visitors to tour at a specially constructed Great Park Solar Village in the fall of 2013.

"The Orange County Great Park is proud and honored to be chosen as the host site for the 2013 U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon," said Beth Krom, chair of the Orange County Great Park Corporation Board of Directors. "This unique event fits perfectly with our vision and focus on innovation, sustainability and community engagement. We are excited and look forward to working with the Department of Energy, the participating universities and our community partners to put on an extraordinary event."

The 2013 event will be the first Solar Decathlon, launched in 2002, to be held outside of Washington, D.C. The Irvine Great Park was selected as the location following a national competition as part of the selection process. The Great Park received a large amount of broad-based community support from local agencies, educational institutions, clean energy organizations and elected officials.

Local agencies and individuals who voiced support of the project include the Orange County Business Council, the Building Industry Association of Orange County, CleanTechOC, Southern

California Edison, Superintendent Bill Habermehl of the O.C. Department of Education, Scott Samuelson, director of the Advanced Power and Energy Program at UCI, Senator Diane Feinstein, and **U.S. Representatives John Campbell** and Loretta Sanchez.