

PRESS RELEASE – Contact David Luneau, hq@solarsplash.com

Dayton, Ohio June 15, 2015 – Twelve collegiate engineering teams competed in the 22nd annual SOLAR SPLASH[®] competition in Dayton, Ohio, June 10-14. Sponsored by IEEE-PELS for the ninth consecutive year, SOLAR SPLASH provides a showcase for the students' innovative boat designs and gives awards for endurance, sprint, maneuverability, and slalom on-the-water events, plus awards for technical reports, visual display, workmanship, and engineering design.

Each competitor is a student team that spends the previous year designing, constructing, and testing their solar boats. The boats, driven by a single skipper, vary greatly in appearance but must conform to size, power, and safety specifications. The boats compete in maneuverability and endurance events with solar panels in place on the crafts. Skippers, who must comply with weight limits, must be able to safely steer the boats around set courses. The same boats then compete in sprints but may have a different configuration which often does not include onboard solar panels. Batteries, however, must be charged by solar panels, many of which the students construct themselves. Rules for the event, as well as results and photos from the past 22 years, can be found at www.solarsplash.com.

Cedarville University (OH) placed first in the overall results and received the George Ettenheim Memorial World Championship Trophy. Middle Tennessee State University and Geneva College (PA) followed in 2nd and 3rd places. Cedarville finished first in the qualifying, endurance, and sprint events, and had the top technical report score, contributing to their overall winning point total. First-year entrant University of Southern Indiana was the top-scoring rookie team, edging out Ohio Northern University for that honor.

Storms in the area forced cancellation of the first round of sprints on Friday afternoon. The weekend weather was mostly sunny, permitting two rounds of the solar endurance event on Saturday and two rounds of sprints on Sunday. At the awards ceremony on Sunday afternoon, teams received competition awards for their boats' performances as well as design awards as judged by teams of engineering judges.

Cooperation and teamwork are important elements in the event so a sportsmanship award, a teamwork award, and a perseverance award are given each year. The students, typically three to a dozen or more on each team, spend the five days in the tented paddock area or near the water while their boats perform. Launching and removing the boats from the water are group efforts from each team. Pre-launch inspections include safety checks and verification of certified batteries and radios. While out of the water, teams must be ready for inspections by SOLAR SPLASH inspectors and by volunteer judges who question the teams regarding engineering decisions and designs.

A morning meeting is held each day so event officials, called Redshirts, can update the students on the day's schedule and answer questions. Lunch is provided on site each day and the afternoon ice cream break is a favorite with the students and faculty advisors. An opening day evening welcome dinner is held each year on Wednesday, the first day of the event.

The first SOLAR SPLASH competition was held in Milwaukee in 1994. Eleven competitors participated that first year. Since the initial competition, more than 90 American universities, ten international universities, and five high school teams have participated. Other competition locations have included New Orleans, Louisiana; Buffalo, New York; Fayetteville, Arkansas, and Cedar Falls/Waterloo, Iowa.

Dayton, Ohio, will be the site of the competition again in 2016. Dayton, which has a long history of engineering and technical innovation, offers a central Midwest location for the event.

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SOLAR SPLASH is a trademark of Solar Splash Inc., a non-profit organization formed to promote engineering education and interest in solar innovation. Solar Splash Inc. seeks to involve college and high school students in hands-on educational activity by hosting the SOLAR SPLASH competition each year in late spring or early summer.

By partnering with engineering societies, corporate sponsors, and local volunteers, Solar Splash Inc. facilitates the event by managing competition rules, arranging for the competition site, and providing meals and extracurricular events for the students participating. SOLAR SPLASH “Redshirts” are the officials who manage the five-day event each year. Dr. Jeff Morehouse, University of South Carolina; David Luneau, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and Dr. Roy Hogan of Sandia National Laboratories are the engineering officials of the event.