

Student Teams Ready to Battle Lunar Terrain at NASA's 17th Annual Great Moonbuggy Race

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More than 100 student teams from around the globe will drive their specially crafted lunar rovers through a challenging course of rugged, moon-like terrain at NASA's 17th annual Great Moonbuggy Race in Huntsville, Ala., April 9-10.

Some 1,088 high school, college and university students from 20 states and Puerto Rico, Canada, Germany, Bangladesh, Serbia, India and Romania are expected to participate in the race at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center.

Students begin to prepare for the event each year during the fall semester. They must design, build and test a sturdy, collapsible, lightweight vehicle that addresses engineering problems similar to those overcome by the original Apollo-era lunar rover development team at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville in the late 1960s.

The buggies are based on the design of those classic rovers, which American astronauts drove across the moon's surface during the Apollo 15, 16 and 17 missions in the early 1970s. Teams of students build their vehicles using trail bike tires, aluminum or composite-metal struts and parts. The best teams drive trains, gears, suspension, steering and braking systems they find or construct.

Top prizes are awarded to the three teams in both the high school and

college/university divisions that post the fastest race times, which include assembly and penalty times.

A variety of other prizes are given by race corporate sponsors. These include "rookie of the year" and the "featherweight" award, presented to the team with the lightest, fastest buggy.

NASA's Great Moonbuggy Race is one of many educational projects and initiatives the agency conducts each year to attract and engage America's next generation of scientists, engineers and explorers. They will carry on the nation's mission of exploration to uncharted destinations in our solar system.

"[NASA](#) is committed to inspiring young people in science, technology, engineering and math, and the Great Moonbuggy Race is an excellent way for us to reach out to young people and get them excited and involved in technical opportunities available to them," said Mike Selby, an avionics technical assistant in the Marshall Center's Engineering Directorate. While completing his engineering degree at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, Selby was a member of the school's moonbuggy teams, helping them to a second-place finish in 1995 and to first place in 1996. Since 2001, he has served each year as a volunteer scorekeeper.

More information: For more information about the competition, visit: moonbuggy.msfc.nasa.gov

Provided by JPL/NASA

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