

The winners: NASA's 19th annual Great Moonbuggy Race

April 16 2012



The team from the University of Alabama in Huntsville took top prize in the college division of NASA's Great Moonbuggy Race with a time of 4 minutes and 3 seconds. Credit: NASA/MSFC

America's space agency today crowned its vehicular engineering victors at the close of the 19th annual NASA Great Moonbuggy Race at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala. The team from Petra Mercado High School in Humacao, Puerto Rico won first place in the high school division; racers from the University of Alabama in Huntsville Team 1, claimed the college-division trophy.

The winning teams outraced more than 80 teams from 20 states, Puerto Rico, Canada, Germany, India, Italy, Russia and the United Arab Emirates. Approximately 600 student drivers, engineers and mechanics -- plus their team advisors and cheering sections -- gathered April 13-14

for the harrowing "space [race](#)."

Organized by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, the race challenges students to design, build and race lightweight, human-powered buggies. Traversing the grueling half-mile course, which simulates the cratered lunar surface, race teams face many of the same engineering challenges dealt with by Apollo-era lunar rover developers at the Marshall Center in the late 1960s. The winning teams post the fastest vehicle assembly and race times in their divisions, with the fewest on-course penalties.

The team from Petra Mercado, in its second year in the competition, finished the half-mile course in 3 minutes and 20 seconds. UA Huntsville brought home another win, finishing in 4 minutes and 3 seconds.

Finishing in second place this year in the high school division was Colegio Nuestra Senora del Perpetuo Socorro from Humacao, Puerto Rico. In third place was Arab High School Team 1 from Arab, Ala.



The team from Petra Mercado High School in Humacao, Puerto Rico won first place in the high school division with a run time of 3 minutes and 20 seconds.

Credit: NASA/MSFC

University of Puerto Rico at Humacao won second place in the college division; and Purdue University Calumet Team 1 from Hammond, Ind., took home third place.

Race organizers presented both first-place winners with trophies depicting NASA's original lunar rover. NASA also gave plaques and certificates to every competing team. Sponsor Lockheed Martin Corp. of Huntsville presented the first-place high school and college teams with cash awards of \$2,850 each.

Individuals on the winning teams also received commemorative medals and other prizes. (For a complete list of additional awards for design, most improved and spirit, see below.)

"NASA's Great Moonbuggy Race gets bigger and more exciting every year -- just like the career horizons NASA strives to open up to new generations of young engineers, scientists and explorers," said Tammy Rowan, manager of the Marshall Center's Academic Affairs Office, which organizes the race. "We seek to connect the classroom experience to a real, tangible future for every graduate -- one in which some of them, we hope, will be inspired to carry on NASA's mission of discovery and help us reap the benefits back home on Earth."



Colegio Nuestra Senora del Perpetuo Socorro in Humacao, Puerto Rico took second place in the high school division with a time of 3 minutes and 29 seconds. Credit: NASA/MSFC

The race is inspired by the original [lunar rover](#), first piloted across the moon's surface in the early 1970s during the Apollo 15, 16 and 17 missions. Eight college teams participated in the first [NASA](#) Great Moonbuggy Race in 1994. The race was expanded in 1996 to include [high school](#) teams, and student participation has swelled each year since.

NASA's [Great Moonbuggy Race](#) has been hosted by the U.S. Space & Rocket Center since 1996. The race is sponsored by NASA's Human Exploration & Operations Mission Directorate in Washington. Major corporate sponsors are Lockheed Martin Corp., The Boeing Company, Northrop Grumman Corp. and Jacobs Engineering ESTS Group, all with operations in Huntsville.

More information: [Full list of awards \(PDF\)](#)

For more information about the race, visit: moonbuggy.msfc.nasa.gov
[www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/ ... Moonbuggy Layout.pdf](http://www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/.../Moonbuggy/Layout.pdf)

Provided by JPL/NASA

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