

Puerto Rico teams take top spots at 20th NASA Great Moonbuggy Race

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Team 1 from Teodoro Aguilar Mora Vocational High School won first place in the high school division. Credit: NASA/MSFC

(Phys.org) —NASA today declared the winners of the 20th NASA Great Moonbuggy Race at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala. Team 1 from Teodoro Aguilar Mora Vocational High School of Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, won first place in the high school division; racers from the University of Puerto Rico at Humacao claimed the college-division trophy.

The winning teams outraced more than 89 teams from 23 states, Puerto Rico, Canada, India, Germany, Mexico and Russia. Approximately 600 student drivers, engineers and mechanics—plus their team advisors and cheering sections—gathered April 26-27 for the 20th "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 Teodoro Aguilar Mora Vocational High School, in its third year in the competition, finished the half-mile course in 3 minutes, 24 seconds. The University of Puerto Rico at Humacao, who won second place in the college division in the 2012 race, brought home a first-place win, finishing in 3 minutes, 32 seconds.

Finishing in second place this year in the high school division was Jupiter High School Team 1 of Jupiter, Fla. In third place was Jupiter High School Team 2.



Jupiter High School Team 1 won second place in the high school division.
Credit: NASA/MSFC

International Space Education Institute/Moscow Aviation University "Team Russia" of Moscow won second place in the college division; and Middle Tennessee State University of Murfreesboro took home third place.

Race organizers presented both first-place winners with trophies depicting NASA's original lunar rover. Sponsor SAIC of Huntsville provided every participating moonbuggy team with a commemorative plaque. Sponsor Lockheed Martin Corp. of Huntsville presented the first-place high school and college teams with cash awards of \$3,000 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.)

The race is inspired by the original [lunar rover](#), first piloted across the moon's surface in the early 1970s during the Apollo 15 mission, and used in the subsequent Apollo 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. Major corporate sponsors for the race are Lockheed Martin Corporation, The Boeing Company, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Aerojet and Jacobs Engineering ESSEA Group, all with operations in Huntsville.

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

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