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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SOLAR RACING NEWS**

## **Cars to Race Along Route 66 without a Drop of Gas**

**Chicago, Ill., July 5, 2001** - As many as 35 race cars will leave Chicago July 15 in the first-ever attempt to travel America's historic Route 66 without spending a penny on gasoline. In a year that has seen unpredictable energy and gasoline prices, these drivers are betting that sunshine will take them all the way to Los Angeles, a feat that has never been tried in the 75-year history of the highway.

The cars are part of the American Solar Challenge (ASC), an educational sporting event in which university teams, companies and clubs from around the world compete to build and race solar-powered cars across the country. "The American Solar Challenge demonstrates the potential of renewable energy," said Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham. "In the future, with the Department of Energy's research efforts into promising technologies, renewable energy can contribute to our nation's energy supplies."

The race begins at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago and follows what remains of Route 66 through Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. The 2,300-mile journey ends in Claremont, Calif. July 25.

"The race challenges young engineers and scientists to find new ways to solve energy and transportation problems. Participants get excellent practical education through building their own cars and completing the race," said Race Director Dan Eberle. Gasoline is not a concern for race drivers. The cars are propelled by electricity that's generated by sunlight. No external power source can be used to charge batteries. Instead the racers use solar, or photovoltaic, cells to convert sunlight into electricity. That means weather and energy management will play an important role in the race. The more sunlight available, the faster the cars will run and the more energy can be stored in their batteries. But in any weather, the teams must make strategic energy

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management decisions to maximize their sunlight "fuel."

Typical aerodynamic designs for the one-person vehicles make them look more like spacecraft on the "Star Wars " movie set than conventional passenger vehicles. The cars typically are low, sleek and colorful, with solar cells covering much of the car body. "It will be fascinating to see the solar cars pass by some of the old Route 66 icons," said Mike Turrentine a member of the University of Rolla, Missouri race team, which won the 1999 SunRayce solar car race. "We'll see firsthand how transportation technologies have changed in the last 50 years."

The American Solar Challenge is the longest solar car race in the world. Solar racing as a sport has been around for more than 10 years with race events conducted regularly in the United States, Australia and Japan. Previous solar car races in the United States have been along routes from Florida to Michigan; from Washington, D.C. to Florida; from Indiana to Colorado; and from Dallas to Minneapolis. The American Solar Challenge racecars can be tracked on the Internet at [www.formulasun.org/asc/tracking/index.html](http://www.formulasun.org/asc/tracking/index.html). July 15-25 through use of a global positioning satellite system that will pinpoint the location of participating cars. Daily race results also will be posted at [www.formulasun.org/asc/](http://www.formulasun.org/asc/). The car with the fastest cumulative time from Chicago to Claremont will win the Challenge. The race is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, its National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), EDS, and Terion. The U.S. Department of Energy is committed to researching and developing clean and cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies and maintaining America's technological competitiveness and energy security. The Department's science and technology agenda complements private sector research and development efforts by investing in areas that promise long-term energy, economic and environmental benefits. NREL is DOE's premier laboratory for renewable energy and energy efficiency research and development.

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Terion Inc. is an industry leading business-to-business wireless application service provider using two-way wireless communications. The company, which operates in the U.S. and Canada, will provide real-time tracking of all of the ASC solar cars during the race. Each vehicle will be equipped with Terion's FleetView(tm) cellular-based location and asset management system as used in the transportation industry for trailer tracking and monitoring. Real-time tracking data will be available through Terion's unique Web software. Knight Transportation and Terion are sharing the underwriting for the vehicle tracking system. ASC's mission is to advance renewable energy and electric vehicle technologies, promote educational and engineering excellence, encourage environmental consciousness and teach teamwork. The race provides hands-on experience for students, allowing them to build their technical skills for the 21st century marketplace.

Editors Note: The American Solar Challenge racecars will pass through the following checkpoint locations. Dates are approximate because of the nature of the race. For coverage information contact Gary Schmitz at the following numbers: Before July 13 - 303-275-4050, July 13-16 at 303-915-1575 and between July 17-25 at 909-869-4863.

July 15-16      Springfield, Ill. -- Lincoln Land Community College

July 15-16      St. Louis, Mo. -- EDS Building

July 16-17      Rolla, Mo. -- University of Missouri-Rolla

July 17          Neosho, Mo. – WalMart

July 17-18 Tulsa, Okla. -- Air and Space Center

July 17-18 Edmond, Okla. -- University of Central Oklahoma

July 18-19 Sayre, Okla. -- Southwest Oklahoma State University

July 18-20 Amarillo, Texas -- Don Harrington Discovery Center

July 18-20 Tucumcari, N.M. -- Mesa Technical College

July 19-21 Albuquerque, N.M. -- University of New Mexico

July 19-22 Gallup, N.M. -- Cultural Center

July 19-23 Flagstaff, Ariz. -- Northern Arizona University

July 20-23 Kingman, Ariz. -- Powerhouse Visitor Center

July 20-25 Barstow, Calif. -- Barstow College

July 25 Finish: Claremont, Calif. Downtown at Yale Avenue

ASC is a Formula Sun Event \* P.O. Box 30 \* Freeman, Mo. 64746