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Pump up that School Pride: Team Sunergy, App State’s Solar Car Racing Team, Comes in Second in the American Solar Challenge

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Senior sustainable technology and physics double major James Furr receives a celebratory dousing upon driving ROSE across the finish line during the 2018 American Solar Challenge. Team Sunergy tied for second place in the Cruiser Class category. Photo by Chase Reynolds

By Elly Murray

Team Sunergy, Appalachian State's solar car racing team, just finished a eight-day race across the United States on July 22, and came in second place! The American Solar Challenge is the second race that Team Sunergy has raced in this summer, after the Formula Sun Grand Prix.

The Formula Sun Grand Prix is a three-day track race that serves as a qualifier for the American Solar Challenge. Team Sunergy absolutely dominated that race, and after a few little technical mishaps, they earned 3rd place, qualifying for the American Solar Challenge!

The American Solar Challenge is a cutting edge race to determine which collegiate team has designed and built the most efficient and practical solar car. It's an eight day race from Omaha, Nebraska to Bend, Oregon, a distance of over 1700 miles.

Team Sunergy was competing with nearly 30 other solar car teams from across the United States, most of which were from engineering schools. Now, Appalachian State is by no means an engineering school, but maybe that was for the best. Team Sunergy is made up of such a wide variety of unique individuals from vast backgrounds of knowledge. They were all able to bring something new to the table and give the team an edge that none of the other schools had.



Photo by Chase Reynolds

For these races, Team Sunergy designed, built, and raced their own solar car, ROSE, which stands for Racing on Solar Energy. ROSE is the first solar car that Team Sunergy has built completely from scratch; in previous years they raced Apperion, who was originally a donation from Iowa State University.

Team Sunergy was extremely excited to come to the races this year with a car that was all their own. As Dan Blakeley, the founder and Executive Faculty Director to the team, said before the races that, “All of us are incredibly excited...to share this car with our community that we built from the ground up, that we’re going to be able to bring to a global stage. I think a lot of people in the community are going to be incredibly proud to see this car and hopefully support it at our races.”



The American Solar Challenge takes several factors into account when determining the scores of the teams; it's not just all about who crosses the finish line first.

But, finally, after a lot of waiting for the final score, it was announced that Team Sunergy had tied with Minnesota for second place! Team Sunergy was certainly ecstatic about how well they had done, especially after how much hard work and how many sleepless nights they put into the building of ROSE.

While everyone had certainly wanted to win, Blakeley had said before the races that "It's more the opportunity to learn, honestly. Yes, everybody wants to win, but there's a lot more learning and growth that goes into seeing our project than trying to get first place."

It is truly amazing that our little mountain school has been represented by Team Sunergy as one of the foremost pioneers in solar vehicle technology. App State may not be an engineering school, but the unique experiences of everyone at Team Sunergy are what truly gives us an edge.

Team Sunergy will move on to represent App State in the World Solar Challenge next summer, where they will go head to head with some of the top solar vehicle teams from around the world. Visit their website and follow them on social media to support our amazing solar vehicle team at all of their endeavors.

For more information on Team Sunergy, and for links to their social media, please visit <https://sunergy.appstate.edu/>



The members of Appalachian's Team Sunergy accompany their new Cruiser Class vehicle, ROSE, across the finish line during the 2018 American Solar Challenge. Team Sunergy tied for second place in the Cruiser Class category. Photo by Chase Reynolds





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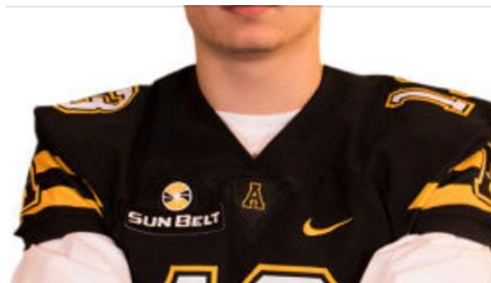
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