

Among The Elite

UL Lafayette earns a place in the nation's 'solar village'

THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT Lafayette is one of only 20 colleges and universities from around the world chosen to compete in the U.S. Department of Energy's fourth Solar Decathlon.

Teams from those schools will each design, build and operate a small energy-efficient house that's powered entirely by the sun. Their entries will form a "solar village" on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in Fall 2009. UL Lafayette is the only Louisiana university represented in the decathlon.

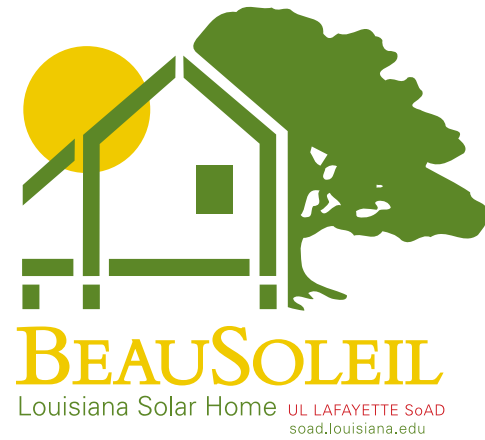
Other participants include Cornell University, Penn State, Technische Universität Darmstadt in Germany and Ohio State.

UL Lafayette's BeauSoleil Team will design and build the BeauSoleil Louisiana Solar Home over the next two years. BeauSoleil means "beautiful sun" or "sunshine" in French.

"It's kind of our CajunBot," said Geoff Gjertson, an associate professor in architecture at UL Lafayette and team coordinator.

CajunBot is the university's autonomous land vehicle, which has competed in three prestigious, national contests sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense.

The BeauSoleil Team represents col-



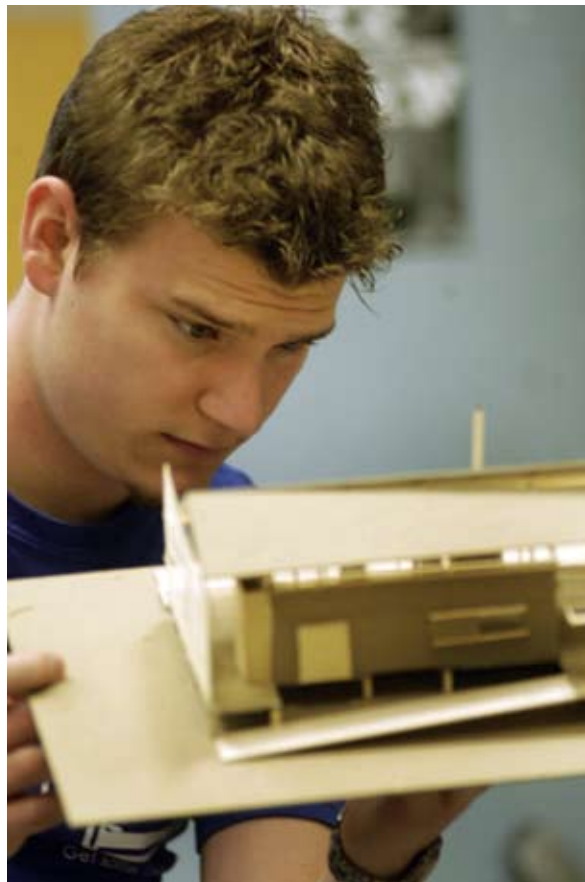
laboration among the UL Lafayette School of Architecture and Design, the College of Engineering and the College of Business. Architecture, design, business and engineering students, along with Louisiana System Built Homes and other community partners, will design and build the BeauSoleil Home over the next two years.

The Solar Decathlon gets its name from 10 specific areas of competition: architecture, engineering, market viability, communications, comfort, appliances, hot water, lighting, energy balance and transportation. Each house must produce enough electricity and hot water to perform all the functions of a home, including cooking and washing clothes. A house may earn extra points by generating a surplus of energy. The team that earns the most points is the winner.

There are three main criteria for the BeauSoleil Home. It must represent the region, be a marketable prototype and have a balanced hybrid of passive and active systems.

The team's name, inspired by the Grammy-winning Cajun band, reflects the team's intent to relate the project to its Cajun roots.

"We'll bring our own kind of Louisiana,



Chris Dufreche examines one of the designs for the BeauSoleil Home.



By early April, several designs were under consideration for the BeauSoleil Home. One will be chosen by the end of the spring semester in May. Shown, from left, are students Chris Leger, Jean Paul Accomando, Chris Dufreche, Cat Guidry, Denisse Castro, Tim Dumatrait, Jeremy Cradeur and Dr. Geoff Gjertson, an assistant professor and BeauSoleil Team coordinator.



Geoff Gjertson

Cajun flavor to it. The competition includes a cultural aspect. It requires a team to serve a meal, prepared in its solar home, to other teams, something we're perfectly suited to do," Gjertson said.

"We figure we've got that portion of

Each house must produce enough electricity and hot water to perform all the functions of a home, including cooking and washing clothes. A house may earn extra points by generating a surplus of energy.

the contest won," he added, tongue-in-cheek.

Gjertson noted that UL Lafayette was drawn to the solar decathlon, in part, because it requires more than meeting technical specifications. "It's really got a lot of subjective things about living in a house and what a Louisiana house means," he said.

In addition to promoting Louisiana's culture, the BeauSoleil Home is intended to be affordable and practical.

"We're trying to make it a marketable and viable housing alternative, rather than a very high-tech toy that's beyond reach of most people," Gjertson said.

The BeauSoleil Team has done its homework. It cites 2005 census statistics that show the median household income in Louisiana was \$36,729. According to federal guidelines, a family with that income could afford a house that costs a maximum of \$100,000. So the cost of a 700-square-foot solar house could not exceed about \$145 per square foot.

UL Lafayette's interest in energy-efficient designs that complement Louisiana's landscape and culture is not new. "It's not a fashionable thing. It's part of our program," Gjertson said.

For example, two of its architecture professors, Edward J. Cazayoux and Hector LaSala, designed and built a solar house on university property more than 20 years ago. Their innovative design won an award from the U.S. Department of Energy and the house continues to be used as a teaching tool.

Faculty and students prepared UL Lafayette's application to compete in the 2009 Solar Decathlon. Forty universities applied; only 20 were chosen.

Gjertson said UL Lafayette wasn't intimidated by the caliber of the other applicants. "We may not have the resources of some schools that may be able to throw millions of dollars at a project, but we really make the most of what we have," he said.

"First and foremost, the design has to be there and it has to be an educational tool for students."

At press time, 12 UL Lafayette students were working on several possible designs for the BeauSoleil Home. They were scheduled to hold a charette, or public meeting, in early April to get feedback. One design will be chosen by the end of the spring semester in May.

In addition to working on its design, the BeauSoleil Team is busy raising funds. The U.S. Department of Energy provided \$100,000 to each of the 20 schools competing in the decathlon. But the BeauSoleil Team needs an additional \$300,000 to pay for research, construction material and transporting the home to Washington, D.C.

"We've been trying to get the word out far and wide and to develop partnerships and relationships with all kinds of different

VEHICLE SHOWS STUDENTS HOW TO GO GREEN

Some UL Lafayette students are tinkering with an SUV to learn how solar power can be harnessed as a practical energy source.

It's a solar utility vehicle donated by BP, a global oil, gas and chemicals company. Glenn DaGian, a 1972 graduate of USL, (now known as the University of Louisiana at Lafayette), presented it to the university in February. He's director of Government Affairs for BP in Texas.

The SUV is equipped with two electric motors totaling 30 horsepower and more than 170 pound-feet of torque, which makes it one of the most powerful all-terrain vehicles available. BP's 185-watt solar panel, which augments the vehicle's battery system and gives the SUV more range, is mounted on top. The four-wheel drive vehicle is capable of seating four people, can carry up to 880 pounds and can maintain a speed of 20 miles per hour. It has a 30-mile range.

"Very few schools can touch this type of technology," said Dr. Mark Zappi, dean of the College of Engineering. "Students will be able to study it and drive it. The benefits will go on for many years."

DaGian, a political science graduate, said the vehicle's



A Bad Boy Buggies representative demonstrated the solar utility vehicle's power by using its reverse gear to climb the outdoor stairs of Martin Hall.

silent operation is an advantage. "The solar utility vehicle is primarily useful for wildlife parks, areas where noise or pollution is a problem," he said.

Current uses for the solar buggy include wildlife areas, such as Yellowstone National Park and the Sandy Point State National Park in Maryland. DaGian said the solar panel could be adapted to applications involving boats.

DaGian and BP are also working on a charging station that uses solar panels to recharge the SUV when its not in use, eliminating the need to have an electrical source to charge the buggy.

DaGian developed the solar panel and attached it to the vehicle, which was manufactured by Bad Boy Buggies in Natchez, Miss. The SUV given to UL Lafayette was the 14th developed by DeGian, BP and Bad Boy Buggies. ■

people. For example, we're looking at a partnership with Catholic University of America, which is in Washington, D.C., because it would be a great help for the logistics of the competition up there. Maybe it could help us collaborate on part of the project," Gjertson said.

Many state and local leaders have expressed interest in the BeauSoleil Home, he continued. The BeauSoleil Team is working with them to see how they can help.

In addition to benefiting UL Lafayette students, the BeauSoleil Home will draw national and international attention to the university.

In 2007, about 120,000 people toured homes in the "solar village" on the National Mall.

But Gjertson said public exposure is also measured by "impressions," which refers to the number of people who read published information about a project or see coverage by broadcast media.

"In 2007, decathlon officials calculated that there were over 600 million impressions, which means that 600 million people were exposed to the project," he said. That number is expected to grow to a billion after documentaries about the decathlon are completed and distributed.

Gordon Brooks is dean of UL Lafayette's College of the Arts, which encompasses the School of Architecture. He said the potential impact of the BeauSoleil House is huge.

"Every now and again, a project comes along that has transformative powers. This is one of them." ■

 beausoleilhome.org



Scott Chappuis checks out a proposed design.

PR Major Earns Student Editor Post

A JUNIOR MAJORING in public relations is the newest student editor of *La Louisiane*.

Megan Broussard of Lafayette began her magazine duties in March. She will also serve as student editor for the Fall 2008 issue.

The position gives a UL Lafayette student the chance to be involved in

member of several honor societies.

"I have worked with Megan in her role as president of the Public Relations Student Society of America and she is a dedicated leader who has the ability to make deadlines under pressure," said Dr. Dedria Givens-Carroll, an assistant professor in UL Lafayette's Communication Department.

Broussard serves in the legislative branch of UL Lafayette's Student Government Association. Each college has elected representatives: a president and a minimum of two senators. She is SGA's Liberal Arts president.

Earlier this year, Broussard arranged the Liberal Arts Career Day Job Fair and conducted a fund-raiser for the Public Relations Student Society of America. In 2007, she was in charge of a fund-raiser for Kappa Delta and coordinated an International Coffee Hour to help UL Lafayette international students become integrated into college life.

Broussard has worked part-time at Le Centre International de Lafayette. She was an intern for the Bobby Jindal Campaign for Governor and for the American Heart Association's office in Lafayette. She is a former reporter for the *Vermilion*, UL Lafayette's student newspaper.

This summer, Broussard will spend six weeks in France as a participant in UL Lafayette's Study Abroad Program.

After graduation, she plans to pursue agency work in the field of public relations and eventually enter into corporate public relations, applying the writing skills she honed while working for *La Louisiane*.

"In public relations, it is important to know all styles of writing," Broussard said. "At *La Louisiane*, I'm learning techniques specific to magazines that will make me a more well-rounded writer and, in turn, a more effective public relations practitioner."



Megan Broussard

almost every aspect of magazine production, from planning content to editing articles to checking print quality during press runs. The student editor also serves as a liaison between the student body and *La Louisiane*.

"Megan's resumé is already lengthy and impressive. It reflects active participation in campus organizations and events, leadership skills and a strong work ethic," said Kathleen Thames, editor of *La Louisiane*.

Broussard is president of the Lafayette chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America and a member of Kappa Delta Sorority. She has maintained a 4.0 grade point average and is a

Fraternity Returns With Larger Membership



PI KAPPA ALPHA Fraternity has reclaimed its place on campus.

The Zeta Omega chapter voluntarily disbanded in 1990 after its membership dwindled. It was founded in 1968.

Two years ago, it got a fresh start. "We were colonized as the second largest fraternity on campus in 2006 and continue to grow our numbers," said Noah Brandon, a UL Lafayette senior who is Pike's recruitment chairman. That was a major step toward earning a charter in 2007.

This year, UL Lafayette's chapter has 51 members. It occupies the former Sigma Nu house on Fraternity Row.

"The men of Pi Kappa Alpha have worked two long years to reestablish their fraternity on campus," said Roquee A. Forson, UL Lafayette's assistant dean of students. "They are a welcome addition to our Greek family."

Brandon said many Pike alumni have told him they're pleased about the chapter's return to campus and are "impressed with the quality of men we have recruited and the successes they've achieved on and off campus."

For example, PKA received an academic achievement award last year presented by UL Lafayette's Office of Greek Affairs.

The fraternity supports Faith House, a local shelter for battered women. It has raised \$4,000 for the agency last year and \$10,000 this year.

Andrew Bullock, president of the Zeta Omega chapter, said members helped renovate the shelter last year. "We also held a candlelight vigil for victims of domestic violence in Louisiana, raising awareness of the issue and of Faith House," he said.

The Zeta Omega chapter is one of five PIKE chapters at Louisiana universities.

Fresh design earns accolades for senior student

THIS IS NOT YOUR mother's fruit bowl.

UL Lafayette senior Sarah O'Brien's innovative bowl expands and contracts to store and display various types and sizes of fruit. It features separate compartments that help minimize bruising and significantly reduce the transfer of ethylene gas that causes over-ripening.

"I made the model out of thin polypropylene cutting boards," O'Brien told *La Louisiane*. A patent on her design is pending.

O'Brien named the bowl, "Elizabowl." The name, she said, is "a nod to the collars worn during the Elizabethan Period, which I believe the bowl resembles."

Her design placed first in the 15th annual Student Design Competition held by the International Housewares Association. A total of 215 project entries were submitted from 27 International Design Society of America-affiliated design schools.

Her prizes: \$2,400 and an all-expense-paid trip to the International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago



A patent is pending for Sarah O'Brien's innovative fruit bowl.

in March.

For students like O'Brien, who is majoring in industrial design, the housewares show offers the opportunity to meet potential employers or representatives of companies that might produce their designs. This year, it attracted about 60,000 visitors from more than 100 countries, who were all focused on buying and selling the latest products.


"Winning projects are selected for their innovation, understanding of production and marketing principles, and

quality of entry materials. All winners will be recommended as candidates for design internship positions for IHA member companies," said an IHA spokesman.

The Elizabowl was O'Brien's second entry in the IHA competition. She received an honorable mention in 2006 for a candelabra that's size is adjustable.

Two other projects have earned her honorable mentions in a national competition. They were chairs constructed of cardboard for the American Institute of Architecture Students' Chair Affair competition.

Earlier this spring, O'Brien presented her work at the IDSA district conference in Savannah, Ga. She and some classmates had presented their portfolios to a panel of three design professionals. O'Brien was chosen to represent UL Lafayette's program, along with student representatives from eight other universities.

 www.obrien-design.com

DEBATE TEAMS WILL REMEMBER NEWCOMERS FROM UL LAFAYETTE



Shown, from left: Ezekias Mondesir, Josh Vercher, Jordan Landry, Samantha Marks, Dustin Domangue, Justin Canten. Not shown: Brandy Stanton, Chapman Matis

The UL Lafayette Policy Debate Team had fewer members than many of its opponents, said Dr. Scott Elliot, its coach. "It was common for as many as 10 coaches from other schools to 'scout' UL debaters in preliminary rounds in an attempt to figure out how such a small program could be beating such well-established teams," he said.

UL Lafayette's new Policy Debate Team has made a name for itself already.

The six-month-old group participated in the Novice National Championships this spring.

Two UL Lafayette students, Justin Cantu and Dustin Domangue, placed fourth out of more than 100 teams from around the nation. They claimed an upset victory over Binghamton University in octo-finals. That was significant because Binghamton was ranked as the No. 1 debate program in the country at the start of the competition.

During the championships, UL Lafayette defeated teams from Cornell University, the United States Military Academy, New York University and other schools across the nation.

ZEUS CAFÉ TO BRING MEDITERRANEAN FLAVOR TO CAMPUS

Students will soon have another dining option on campus: Zeus On the Geaux.

Zeus Café, a popular Lafayette restaurant that serves Greek and Lebanese food, will operate the new takeout eatery. It will be located next to Rougeou Hall, in a small building known as On The Geaux.

On the Geaux was constructed in 2005. It replaced the former Snack Hut, which had served meals for several decades. On the Geaux housed vending machines for snacks and soft drinks. It was closed earlier this year, due to consistently low sales.

"I think Zeus Café will be very successful at our university," said Patrick Pappion, general manager of Sodexho, the university's food service provider. "It is a favorite among American and inter-



Zeus's specially prepared hummus

national students alike, as well as faculty and staff. If it attracts the business we expect, Zeus may even be allowed to open on other campuses in the UL System."

Zeus Café has four locations in Lafayette.

Zeus On the Geaux is expected to offer an abridged version of Zeus Café's menu, including its popular Chicken Sharwerma dish and a Gyros plate.

Hours of operation are tentatively set for 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays. Students will be able to dine indoors or in a patio area next to the café. Zeus On the Geaux will accept the Cajun Card for payment of meals. The Cajun Card is like a debit card for UL Lafayette students.

According to an agreement signed in February, Sodexho and UL Lafayette will each receive a percentage of Zeus On the Geaux's net profit. The restaurant will also pay the university a monthly fee.

Pappion said UL Lafayette students have expressed an interest in eating healthier and more diverse food than what has traditionally been served on campus.

According to the American Heart Association, most of the fats in a typical Mediterranean diet are monounsaturated fats, which don't tend to raise blood cholesterol levels as much as saturated fats.

There is less heart disease in Mediterranean countries than in the United States, according to the AHA. But the difference may not all be attributable to diet; lifestyle factors may also play a role.

A study funded by the National Institutes of Health suggested that a Greek-Mediterranean dietary pattern has significant potential for cancer prevention.

Students 'Work With Their Hands and Give With Their Hearts'

SOME UL LAFAYETTE STUDENTS spent their spring break working on a Habitat for Humanity project that will provide 12 homes for families displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

UL Lafayette hosted the 2008 X-treme Spring Break in late March. It was joined by students from McNeese State University in Lake Charles, La., and Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, La. Also lending a hand were members of UL Lafayette's AmeriCorps program, some university personnel, and Habitat for Humanity volunteers and staff.

The workers began constructing 10 sheds near Kaplan, La. The units were to be used to store building materials during a Habitat for Humanity blitz in April. Six houses were to be built in less than two weeks. Six more residences are scheduled to be built there this summer.

"You have really made a tremendous difference," Dr. Kim Hunter-Reed, executive vice president of the University of Louisiana System, told volunteers at the construction site.

"When students and young people work with their hands and give with their hearts, then we know that our next generation, and the generation that will come afterward, will continue to make an enor-



UL Lafayette students Kim Wooten and Matt Carlini were busy hammering nails and sawing boards during Spring Break.

mous difference in our state and our nation," she said.

Melinda Taylor, executive director of Habitat for Humanity in Lafayette, thanked

the volunteers for their service. "Without these sheds, our jobs would be a lot more difficult," she said.

Some of the college students were housed in Bourgeois Hall on UL Lafayette's campus during the six-day project.

Candace Urbanowski, president of the UL Lafayette Student Government Association and a senior majoring in public relations, was coordinator of this year's X-Treme Spring Break.

"We've learned how to swing a hammer appropriately, how to cut safely and how to make sure our measurements are right," she told *The Advocate* newspaper in Baton Rouge.

X-treme Spring Break is a UL System initiative that started in 2006 with McNeese State University and Southeastern Louisiana University. Nicholls State University hosted last year's event.