



Wenatchee High School to Compete in Solar Drag Race

On June 21 the checkered flag will drop on the 4th Annual World's Only Solar Drag Race in Wenatchee's Olds Station Business Park. Everyone is invited to join the excitement as racers once again go head-to-head on the 820-foot course in front of the Confluence Technology Center on Technology Center Way. Racing preparations begin at 11:00 a.m. with the first race starting at Noon. "The race is held each year on the Saturday nearest the summer solstice," explained Jim White, race founder and coordinator.

Area schools are encouraged to attend the 2008 event, and begin planning their own entries for the 2009 contest. Bill Milosch, last years winning driver from Whidbey Island, says it best: "I set the record. It was a fantastic experience being involved with this project. I think that everyone involved learned a lot. All schools need to have projects like this!"

Spectators are encouraged to come check out the dragsters (some up to 20 feet long), cheer for their favorites and be inspired about uses of solar energy. They'll also have the opportunity to get behind the wheel of a solar go-cart, splash in a solar water fountain, and see the Port of Chelan County's Plug-in Hybrid Electric Toyota Prius.

The race is sponsored by the Port of Chelan County's PluginCenter.com and solar cells were donated by REC-Silicon and BP Solar. The race features three competitive categories: Open Division, College Division and High School Division. The 2008 event will be Wenatchee High School's inaugural year to enter. They're attempting to break the world's record of 29.5 seconds, set last year by South Whidbey High School.

WHS's entry was christened Project SARA, acronym for Solar Accelerated Racing Apparatus. Team members Eric Fode, Andy Parks and Aaron Martz received helpful

advice and assistance from instructor and advisor Doug Merrill, Jim White and other community members. “We really appreciate all the donations of materials and money we got from our sponsors for this project,” said Merrill. Sponsors included Wenatchee School District, REC Solar, Port of Chelan County, BP Solar, Full Circle Cycle, Midland Trucking, The Woodshop and Wenatchee Downtown Kiwanis.

Solar drag racing was conceived by Dr. Jim White, Chelan County PUD, who won the inaugural event in 2005. Jim’s role this year will be as event coordinator. “Racers must rely exclusively on sunlight captured by their vehicles’ solar cells (or thermal engines) to generate power over the ¼ kilometer [820 foot] race course,” Jim said.” No batteries or other pre-charged energy devices are allowed. Racers start from zero and accelerate down a straight track. To achieve speeds quickly requires efficient solar cells, lightweight construction, aerodynamics and some type of efficient transmission system between the wheels and motor.”

Visit the official Solar Drag Race site for results and photos from previous years, and more information on solar drag racing: <http://www.solardragrace.com> or call 663-5159.