Student teams announced for seven-month solar boat project

Western Municipal Water District to support three Western Riverside County for Solar Cup competition

Riverside, CA – Each spring, dozens of Southern California high school teams compete in the annual Solar Cup competition at Lake Skinner. What the community sees is a three-day event where the teams race in endurance and speed categories, but what takes place during the months leading up to the final event is where the hard work comes in.

Solar Cup is student water education program hosted by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) and its member agencies. Due to capacity restrictions, only a limited number of teams can participate. Students apply for a coveted sponsorship spot as a participating team in the program.

As the school year was beginning, Western Municipal Water District (Western) sent out a call for team applications. Teams can only participate if they have an MWD member agency secured sponsor. This week, Western announced the sponsorship selection of three Western Riverside schools: Elsinore co-op team (Elsinore, Lakeside and Temescal Canyon high schools) Centennial High School and Eastvale STEM academy.

“Western is an advocate of supporting student water education programs. As we have more people retiring from their work at water agencies, we sometimes struggle to find people interested in careers in water. What they learn from participating in Solar Cup is relevant to just about any job in an actual water district,” shared Western’s General Manager Craig Miller. “The students who participate learn about engineering, alternative energies, communications, teamwork, design, writing, water quality and stewardship. It’s truly a fantastic opportunity for these students.”

During the seven-month program as the students build their boats, they are also required to submit milestone reports, including technical reports for electrical and mechanical engineering. Throughout the school-year the students attend a boat building workshop and several technical workshops. The culmination of months of hard work eventually leads teams to Lake Skinner for the final race weekend competition where they get to race one another on the water. The public is welcome to attend the race weekend from May 17 – 19.