



Canadians make finals for `solar decathlon'

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PETER GORRIE
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A team from three Canadian universities, including Ryerson, is among 20 finalists in an international competition to build homes run only by solar power.

Its "North House" project involves a house loaded with new solar features and will also examine whether they could be applied to housing, including high-rises, across Canada.

Each team in the "Solar Decathlon" gets \$100,000 from the United States Department of Energy to design and build a demonstration house. The buildings are to be erected for judging and public display at a "Solar Village" on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. in September 2009.

The Ryerson team also hopes to get its project displayed at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, before it's moved to a permanent home at the Kortright Living City Centre, northwest of Toronto.

"We're absolutely ecstatic," said Mark Gorgolewski, an associate professor of architectural science at Ryerson and one of the 10 Ryerson faculty and 12 students on Team North.

The team also includes staff and students from the University of Waterloo and Burnaby B.C.'s Simon Fraser University.

A second Canadian team, headed by the University of Calgary, is also among the 20 decathlon finalists.

"I'm thrilled," said Lauren Barhydt, a master's student at Waterloo and a student team co-ordinator. "It's rare that students have the opportunity to be involved in a project of this magnitude – collaborating with institutions across the country, working on the cutting edge of sustainable design and manufacturing, and addressing the changing needs of Canada's northern regions."

In the competition, each team's solar house will be judged in 10 areas: architecture, engineering, liveability, marketability, comfort, power generation for space heating and cooling, water heating, and powering lights and appliances.

The decathlon is held every two years.

The energy department funding covers only a small part of the cost of each house. Each team must raise the rest. The North House is expected to cost more than \$1 million, including the expense of shipping it to the Solar Village.