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Battery Workforce Challenge Names Year One Champion Teams

- Elite battery competition is a partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy and Stellantis

May 10, 2024, Chicago - The Colorado School of Mines and Arapahoe Community College team has been named the Battery Workforce Challenge (BattChallenge) year one champion, leading the way in the three-year collegiate competition. Second place was awarded to the Ohio State University and Columbus State Community College team, while the University of Alabama and Shelton State Community College team took third place. Teams were judged on the design of their electric-vehicle (EV) battery pack at the competition.

Year one of the competition focused on the design of the EV battery pack. The teams' focus spanned from the granular level of cell characterization and testing to the broader scope of pack-level design, encompassing thermal, mechanical and electrical considerations, while upholding stringent safety standards.

"We are energized by the collective efforts, dedication and ingenuity demonstrated by the students in year one," said Michael Berube, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Sustainable Transportation and Fuels in the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). "Together, we're preparing a skilled workforce needed to support industry's transition to electrification and a sustainable energy future."

The BattChallenge is an elite public-private partnership and North American collegiate engineering competition sponsored by DOE,Stellantis,and it is managed by Argonne National Laboratory.

The BattChallenge began in 2023 and features 12 North American university engineering teams,each partnering with a local community college. The teams were selected through a competitive process to secure a spot in the program. Students receive firsthand experiential learning and work closely with industry experts to tackle one of the most relevant real-world engineering challenges facing the automotive industry today.

"This remarkable talent of the students is clearly shown in this competition and matches perfectly toward our mission of building the battery workforce of the future," said Micky Bly, Stellantis senior vice president and head of global propulsion systems. "Stellantis is proud to support this initiative and encourage students to receive valuable real-world experience in the automotive EV space."

The next year of the competition (year two of the three) is geared toward building and testing the battery pack. Students will make revisions and improvements to their year one design and begin assembling the battery into their vehicle. Teams will receive a Ram ProMaster electric van from Stellantis for the remainder of the competition. In the final year, teams will integrate the battery pack into their vehicle and conduct comprehensive road tests.

Theâ€2024 Ram ProMaster EVâ€¯was introduced earlier this year and is designed specifically for electrification, featuring a unibody design that efficiently incorporates the production battery pack. The work van is suited to perform commercial activities, and this application serves as an exciting opportunity for students to design batteries for bigger vehicles.â€¯

At the year one finale, which took place at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago from May 6-8, dozens of engineering and sponsor-related category awards were given out, plus industry-provided prize money totalling $100,000. Perhaps

the most prestigious take-away is the invaluable real-world experience for students working with industry leaders and launching their careers. The series culminates in 2026.

Additional BattChallenge sponsors include American Battery Technology Company, BASF, Eaton, AVL, Dana Corporation, MathWorks, Analog Devices, Inc., and Gamma Technologies.

Battery Workforce Challenge
The collegiate competition is part of DOE's broader Battery Workforce Challenge Program, which also includes regional training with vocational and community colleges; STEM youth education; and an online tool for career and technical education. The program is dedicated to cultivating a diverse cohort of skilled engineers, technicians and workers to propel domestic battery technology forward.

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