



East Baton Rouge Parish School System
1050 S. Foster Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70806
Phone (225) 922-5400 FAX (225) 226-7900
www.ebrschools.org

MEDIA CONTACT:
Sonya T. Gordon
Public Information Officer,
Department for
Communications &
Community Engagement
(225) 922-5611 office
(225) 328-4763 cell
sgordon@ebrschools.org

Media Advisory

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****PHOTO ATTACHED****

Baton Rouge Magnet High School former students (*left to right*) Simon Shirazi (*in car*) and Ryan Herringshaw, current student Joey LeBlanc and teacher/advisor Peter Oelschlaeger with their solar-powered car.

SOLAR-POWERED SPEED: BRMHS Students Fuel Imagination With Sun Car

Baton Rouge, La. – None of them is 21 yet, but they have managed to harness the power of the sun and create a vehicle that runs on solar power. Over a **three-year period**, students past and present at **Baton Rouge Magnet High School** have joined **teacher Peter Oelschlaeger** after school, on weekends, over holidays and during the summer at various locations to draw up plans for and begin construction of a solar-powered car.

Today, although still a little rough around the edges, that car is a reality. Now the students just need to raise enough funds to finish the car, install upgrades and pay for travel and fees to compete in the national **Winston Solar Car Race** next July.

The Race is held every year – some years at the Texas Motor Speedway in Dallas and every other year as a cross-country race from Round Rock, Texas, to various destinations. In the race, which occurs in a series of heats when on a track, team drivers are limited to three hours per day behind the wheel with cars limited to six hours total race time daily.

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SOLAR CAR/2

“Mr. O” (for “Ozone”), as Oelschlaeger is affectionately called by his drafting and AutoCad computer drafting students, said the idea of creating a car locally came to **students like Simon Shirazi** when he heard about the Race years ago. “Now we just need sponsors to help us pay to finish the car and enter the race,” Oelschlaeger said. “We’ll put their ad on the car, on shirts and even on a trailer, if we ever get one.”

“It’s a great project for the students, because it involves so many fundamentals of learning – from physics, drafting and electricity to geometry and modeling and much more. We started with a copper frame and model – ripped from a remote-controlled toy car, then advanced to a rolling prototype within a year or so.”

“I was at Starbucks on a Saturday morning talking about the race with another student when we got the idea. We called some other guys in to talk about it, and the project just took off,” said Shirazi, who now has graduated from high school. “The Race is 2,000 miles total over 10 days (two five-day segments), so we really need to make something that will last. People have such a reaction when we’re running it.”

Since the first solar car plans were sketched out on a napkin that Saturday, the car has come a long way. When it was first given a test drive in June, the car went 30 to 35 miles per hour at half throttle and half battery with no solar panels engaged. On July 1, modifications brought the car up to 60-plus miles per hour – all out.

Ryan Herringshaw is a graduate of Baton Rouge Magnet High School who still works on the car. “It’s taught me so much from a hands-on perspective, and I think it will help now that I’ve begun studying architecture at Louisiana State University (LSU). I was selected as one of about 80 candidates from a pool of more than 1,200 to be accepted in the program.”

High school junior Joey LeBlanc agreed. He’s already putting his skills and knowledge to work preparing for a degree in mechanical engineering or civil engineering from LSU. But no matter how studious they are, boys will be boys. “We’ve already peeled out with the car,” LeBlanc said, “just not real fast.”

For more information or to donate to the project, contact Oelschlaeger at (225) 383-0520 or at poelschlaeger@eberschools.org.

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