

Canadian team places fourth in international EcoCAR competition

By **JOAN DELANEY**
Epoch Times Staff

Teams of engineering students across North America have been vying with each other in an ongoing three-year competition that gives them unprecedented access to the world of vehicle design.

In this year's contest, the 2010 EcoCAR: The NeXt Challenge, teams from 16 universities in Canada and the United States competed to convert a GM-donated SUV into a hybrid, fuel cell, or electric vehicle while maintaining performance, safety, and consumer appeal.

The University of Victoria placed fourth overall and won four awards, including the National Science Foundation (NSF) Incoming Advisor Award. The University of Ontario Institute of Technology placed sixth and won two NSF awards, while the University of Waterloo placed eighth and won the NSF Outstanding Long Term Advisor award.

The government congratulated the teams for their efforts.

"The EcoCAR competition offers an excellent showcase for the talent and ingenuity of these students, as well as bringing us closer to our goal of realizing the full economic and environmental potential of these technologies," Christian Paradis, Minister of Natural Resources Canada, said in a statement.

Mississippi State University placed first, with a score of 844 out of a possible 1,000 points. Second-place winner was Virginia Technological Institute, while Pennsylvania State University came third.

The EcoCAR challenge is a three-year collegiate advanced vehicle technology engineering competition established by the U.S. Department of Energy and General Motors. GM provides production vehicles, vehicle components, seed money, technical mentoring, and operational support.



L-R: Uvic EcoCAR team leader Jeremy Wise, Uvic President David Turpin, Minister of Healthy Living and Sport Ida Chong, and Minister of State for Sport Gary Lunn pose with the student-designed EcoCAR. UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

"When I look at the team members during this competition, I see passion in their eyes," Karl Strake, VP for Global Development at GM, said at the awards ceremony.

"That is what we need in this industry, and for the future of automobiles."

The finals for the 2010 competition, year two of the program, took place in San Diego last week. Aspects such as the vehicles' drivability and performance were tested at the GM Desert Proving Ground in Yuma, Arizona.

The students explore a variety of cutting-edge clean vehicle solutions, including full-function electric, range-extended electric, hybrid, plug-in hybrid and fuel cell technologies. They also incorporate lightweight materials

into the vehicles, improve aerodynamics, and utilize alternative fuels such as ethanol, biodiesel, and hydrogen.

The first year of the competition involved designing and modeling a proposed vehicle architecture and related component selection. In the fall of 2009, GM donated a new Saturn Vue to each school. In years two and three, students will make their design a reality and develop a working vehicle that meets the competition's goals.

The teams come together at the end of each academic year to compete in more than a dozen static and dynamic events. Prizes each year amount to more than US\$100,000.

Installed in the Uvic's vehicle were

a completely new powertrain, high voltage electrical system, and Uvic-programmed computer controllers. The vehicle can operate for up to 65 kilometres using only the electric motor powered by a lithium ion battery pack, before the engine is needed to extend the range, according to a press release.

Last year, Uvic placed second to the University of Ohio for its design of an Extended Range Electric Vehicle that runs on electric power and E85 ethanol, one of the fuels approved for use in the competition.

Natural Resources Canada and Transport Canada jointly contributed a total of \$500,000 to the program over three years.

HST could push more business into underground economy

HST CONTINUED FROM P1

"I think it's certainly going to fuel the underground economy ... when I look at an average person who's not receiving an 8 percent increase in terms of their income on an annual basis," he says.

"I just don't see a lot of people viewing it as a benefit and in turn I think it's going to reflect, at least on us as contractors, having to absorb these sorts of things to motivate purchasing and purchasing in a legitimate way."

A recent survey conducted by Harris/Decima for Bank of Montreal says the removal of the home improvement tax credits has affected the renovation plans of one in three Canadians, with many not being able to afford the renovation or having to delay it.

Dr. Lindsay Meredith, a professor of marketing at Simon Fraser University, says the 12 percent HST in B.C. and 13 percent in Ontario are large numbers and if consumers can get around paying the new tax, they will.

"As long as people are feeling a little bit poor, because of the amount of debt they're carrying and feeling put upon by the tax level that's hitting them—you're going to see some of this underground behaviour going on," he says.

Meredith says many people are also buying some of the big cost items now before the tax comes into effect to avoid paying more, leading to an "artificial little spike" in consumer expenditure.

After the HST comes into effect, he says, there could be a small dip, until inventory and businesses catch up again.

"There probably is some artificial demand created by this thing and once that demand has been met and the tax does come in then you're probably going to see a little lag in demand, until total consumer demand again catches up, starts to bite in again."

With reporting by Joan Delaney

Activists protest Toronto G20 security

G20 PROTEST: Alex Hindert of the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Centre for Social Justice speaks at a press conference outside Toronto's Metro Convention Centre Tuesday where the G20 Summit will be held on June 26 and 27. Activists criticized the extensive summit security plans and said they are being targeted for questioning by police and CSIS for organizing G8 and G20 demonstrations.

Hindert alleged people of colour in the coalition of groups planning to demonstrate were specifically targeted for questioning, with one member and his family being threatened about their immigration status by

police if they participate in the protests. CSIS, the RCMP, and Toronto Police have denied they're targeting civilians.



Activists said they are being targeted for questioning by police and CSIS for organizing G8 and G20 protests. CHRISTINA GAO/THE EPOCH TIMES

Kenney goes after immigration con artists

By **MATTHEW LITTLE**
Epoch Times Staff

PARLIAMENT HILL, Ottawa—Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney on Tuesday tabled the Cracking Down on Crooked Consultants Act to go after the con artists who cash in on the hopes of vulnerable would-be Canadians.

With promises of rapidly-approved citizenship, fraudulent immigration consultants swindle immigrants out of thousands of dollars, often providing nothing in return but doctored papers of fake driver's licenses and social insurance numbers.

New Democrat immigration critic Olivia Chow, who was a major force behind the bill, has said it is entirely possible it could be fast-tracked through Parliament barring any

major problems with the wording.

If passed, the bill will create a new, more powerful national consultant regulator that all immigration consultants will be forced to join. The organization will be similar to the professional organizations that regulate doctors and lawyers except that, in its initial stages at least, the new body will be overseen by the minister's office.

And where current law currently does little to nothing to punish fraudulent consultants, under the new act the criminal code will be modified to hand down strict fines of up to \$50,000 and two years in jail for those who break the rules.

"While most immigration consultants working in Canada are legitimate and ethical, it is clear that immigration fraud remains a wide-

spread threat to the integrity of Canada's immigration system," Kenney told reporters at the National Press Theatre.

Chow called the act a step in the right direction.

"We need tough, strong, effective legislation against crooked consultants. Not only do we need legislation, we need enforcement and we need education," she said.

Chow said the act was tough, as it makes immigration fraud a criminal offence, but she added that the new law would need to be supported with resources or it wouldn't "be worth the paper it is printed on."

Those resources would include training for immigration officers and better cooperation between police and the Canada Border Services Agency.

Accompanying Kenney Tuesday was the family of Irma Luque, Ricardo Miranda, and their son Christian who left Chile a dozen years ago to come to Canada where they fell victim to a fraudulent consultant.

The consultant, who Miranda says is still in operation today, took about \$8,000 from the family and all they got were fake papers.

Luque said the introduction of the new act was a momentous occasion.

"For me, this is very important, what happened today, because we wait 12 years for this moment. This is important because we can make a difference between the past and the future.

"There are a lot of good families waiting for something new, something to happen."



(L to R) Ricardo Miranda talks to Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney with Irma Luque (Miranda's wife) and their son Christian. MATTHEW LITTLE/THE EPOCH TIMES

Stress of caregiving hurts boomers' health, jobs

By **CINDY CHAN**
Epoch Times Staff

OTTAWA—Between caring for elderly parents, raising children, and looking after their own busy lives, baby boomers have a higher rate of depression than the previous generation, says an expert.

Dr. Richard Earle, managing director at the Canadian Institute of Stress, describes this as a "triple-decker-sandwich generation" for the world's boomers, a term generally referring to those born during the approximately two decades of strong employment and economic growth post-World War II.

"What we're noticing at the Canadian Institute of Stress and throughout the research literature is a significant rise in mood disorders, including depression, in that baby boomer age group, which is 46 to 64," said Dr. Earle.

In Canada, about 10 percent of baby boomers are still raising children while looking after—or just beginning to look after—elderly parents, he said.

"Then it's not just a sandwich generation—it's a triple-decker sandwich because they're looking after husband or wife and job and the rest of it."

Research shows that as many as 4 in 10 boomers are experiencing an unusually high level of stress which can lead to depression, Dr. Earle said.

About 32 percent say they've had to cancel travel plans, 34 percent have dropped personal hobbies and interests, and well over 70 percent say the balancing act is interfering with their ability to fulfill responsibilities at work.

There are emotional impacts as well—a feeling of not being able to find pleasure from things they used to enjoy, Dr. Earle explained, "and within that, not being able to concentrate, to focus on what they're doing, making decisions, and certainly sleep disturbance."

In Canada, boomers are defined as those born between 1947 and 1966. They number more than 8 million and make up about a quarter of the population.

Statistics on American boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, are almost identical, except that the United States has about 80 million baby boomers and they are reporting slightly higher impact on their jobs than Canadians due to stress from home, Dr. Earle said.

He noted that baby boomer issues and the increase in the rate of depression are much the same worldwide, including in such diverse places as Japan, the Middle East, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, India, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

Everywhere, "the core of the problem is very similar"—juggling the demands of caring for parents and children are causing stress.

In particular, Japan has an extremely low birthrate and a significantly older average age than almost any other country, Dr. Earle said. "You have fewer younger people to take care of more older people." Japan has also been dealing with the boomer depression issue

longer than other countries.

As the first wave of boomers turns 65, their needs have been prompting services and research interest in every area from health and lifestyle to leisure and travel, from art and technology to financial services and economic planning.

A recent study by the U.S.-based Hartford Financial Services Group, a major provider of employee-assistance programs, found that more than 80 percent of boomers report feeling moderate to high levels of stress from providing care or support to children, spouses, and/or parents.

Moreover, 46.6 percent said they felt worried about how caregiving is impacting their job, with 68 percent saying they missed work or left work early due to caregiving duties in the last six months.

University of Waterloo and Royal Bank of Canada launched a retirement research centre last month, noted as the first collaborative approach of its kind between academic researchers and the fi-

nancial services industry aimed at providing solutions and advice to boomers for retiring planning and living.

At last week's 2010 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences held at Montreal's Concordia University, University of Montreal professor Jacques Légaré presented a paper showing that aging boomers will have to either pay for their own care or find support from sources outside their immediate family circle.

Prof. Légaré said that about 70 percent of elderly care currently comes from spouses or children. However, today's boomers have fewer children to care for them. In addition, the rise in divorce, common-law unions, and blended families means that many boomers may not have a partner to rely on within a stable relationship as they age.

Meanwhile, average life expectancies are rising, putting further demands on society and boomers to create new support systems for tomorrow's seniors.

The Canadian Institute of Stress is a charitable organization founded 30 years ago by Hungarian-Canadian Dr. Hans Selye, known as "the father of the stress field," who published the world's first scientific paper to identify and define stress in 1936.

The institute tracks trends in research literature and provides education to the public, healthcare professionals, and workplaces in Canada and other countries on earlier detection of stress problems and methods for controlling stress.

"There are so many things that catch our attention, quite challenging, disturbing things happening in this world," said Dr. Earle. "[But] the world will work out well to the extent that we look after ourselves and our families in a more informed way."

He recommends that baby boomers "get refocused back on one's own family situation and basically on ourselves—not in a selfish way, but in a self-maintaining way."