



## PRESS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

Contact: Liz Ernst, Director of Public Relations

[Lizernst@acoustiblok.com](mailto:Lizernst@acoustiblok.com)

813.980.1400 x 210

---



### **Thermablok sponsors Team California in DOE's Solar Decathlon To Highlight Innovation, Future Green Jobs** *International architectural student competition set for National Mall, Oct. 9-18 2009*

TAMPA, Florida -- Living green is a matter of striking the right balance between innovation and environmental stewardship. With that in mind, Tampa-based Thermablok® donated 2,000 linear feet of its aerogel insulation material to some California architecture and design students participating in the 2009 Solar Decathlon, an international competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy that challenges 20 participating college and university teams to design, build, and operate the most aesthetic, energy-efficient, and welcoming solar-powered house.

When students from the California College of the Arts (CCA) and the University of Santa Clara, California (USC) began preparing for the competition, it was no surprise that they approached Thermablok® President and Founder Lahnne Johnson for help incorporating his registered aerogel insulation technology, developed by NASA, into their green home design.

Impervious to moisture and mold and unaffected by age, Thermablok is a natural ingredient for a project like the Solar Decathlon. The latest insulate answer to energy conservation and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, just one ¼-inch x 1½-inch (6.25mm x 38mm) strip of Thermablok added to each stud before hanging drywall breaks the *conductive* “thermal bridging” and can increase the overall wall R-factor by more than 40-percent.

Thermablok is almost weightless, using 30-percent recycled composite material consisting of more than 95-percent air, making it easy and inexpensive to ship and install. It is Class “A” fire rated with Cradle to Cradle Silver Certification.

--more--

Team California is out to prove that artistic design and engineering can work together to create a desirable living space with their *Refract House*, an innovative solar design that they say will offer real green technology solutions like Thermablok and other renewable energy sources, as well as opportunities to use energy more efficiently.

Utilizing their own craft and artisanal skills, and taking into account California's moderate climate, the students (all undergraduates ranging in age from 18 to 25) are designing and building the 800-square-foot home that "is completely powered by solar energy and doesn't compromise the planet, lifestyle, comfort, or aesthetics," said Kadee Mardula, a participating Santa Clara University student. "If we can do it, anyone can do it."

With climate change dictating the future of housing design and development, most people welcome new and innovative ideas for sustainability and green technologies. Situated in the San Francisco and Silicon Valley region, a hub of high-tech activity and environmental consciousness, Team California is uniquely qualified to take green living to a completely new level. Their motto: "Green living isn't a compromise. It's the new standard."

Students are scored in 10 different categories: architecture, engineering, market viability, communications, comfort, appliances, hot water, lighting, energy balance, and transportation. Each house must produce enough electricity and hot water to perform all the functions of a home and to power an electric car. The competition focuses on cutting edge energy efficient and renewable energy innovation while providing a unique green jobs training opportunity for each of the students

Team California is currently working on the construction phase, which is taking place on the Santa Clara University campus. Over the summer they will immerse themselves in the project. Once construction is finished, they will disassemble the house, truck it across the country to Washington DC, and reassemble it on the National Mall. It will be open for judging and public viewing October 8-18.

Started in 2002, the Solar Decathlon is a biannual event. Santa Clara University's involvement in the 2007 competition drew third place honors from the judges even though it was the smallest university involved in the competition, and the only one without an architectural school. It managed to beat out top competitors including Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Cornell University, as well as two-time winner the University of Colorado at Boulder. SCU earned top marks for its advanced engineering but lower scores in the design categories, which led to the invitation to partner with CCA in 2009.

Thermablok and its parent company, Acoustiblok, Inc. is proud to sponsor environmentally important projects in the worldwide community such as the Solar Decathlon.

###