

**Long Beach Report** (Mar. 8, 2014) -- A bright sunny day propelled solar powered model cars, designed and built by roughly 400 students on 69 teams from 19 schools (grades 6-12) in Long Beach's 5th annual Solar Grand Prix.



Photo by Dan Halverson

The event has steadily grown since it was created a half decade ago by Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske. The event doesn't rely on taxpayer dollars; it's funded by donations and sponsorships (details below)...and takes place prior to the fossil-fuel powered Grand Prix downtown.

Several weeks ago, participating students were given a donated (see below) Solar Car Kit containing a solar panel and an electric motor. The students then used their creativity and their own materials to design and build an efficient and reliable solar powered model car. The vehicles race in head-to-head elimination rounds, and the winner of those rounds is the team whose vehicle traverses the 20 meter (65 ft.) course in the shortest time.



Race teams with their vehicles on their marks and set. Photo by Dan Halverson

At the stated signal, the race teams uncover their model cars' solar cells and the cars take off. Photo by Dan Halverson

20-meter wooden tracks were constructed by the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters since the competition began in 2010. The solar car kits and student supplies were purchased with generous donations from Signal Hill Petroleum and Sares-Regis. Donations also cover the costs of providing t-shirts, awards, track materials, lunch and other materials needed for the competition.

Sponsors of the Solar Grand Prix 2014 include: Signal Hill Petroleum, Pacific Pointe at Douglas Park by Sares-Regis Group, Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters, The Port of Long Beach, Segue to Solar, Supervisor Don Knabe, AES Alamitos, P2S Engineering, Keesal, Young and Logan, Dr. Mike Walter, Long Beach Lifeguards Association, Bethany Lutheran School, and Partners of Parks.