

Lexus and Scholastic to Award \$500,000 in Grants and Scholarships

September 28, 2009

Annual Contest Inspires Teens to Take Positive Action for the Environment

TORRANCE, Calif., Sept. 28, 2009 – Since launching in 2007, the Lexus Eco Challenge has inspired and empowered more than 8,500 middle and high school students to learn about the environment and take a stand to improve it. From educating the community about the benefits of solar ovens to producing bio-fuel from used fast food oil, students across the country have tackled a wide range of topics and issues. Students are once again invited to participate in the third annual Lexus Eco Challenge for a chance to win part of \$500,000 in grants and scholarships.

The Challenge has two distinct elements:

- ? Standards-based supplementary educational materials – encourages teachers to integrate creative lesson plans into their classrooms to help teach students about the environment.
- ? Competition to reward environmental action – helps young people apply what they've learned in class through the program and empowers them to make improvements in their community by participating in the environmental team challenges.

“We're anxious to see what this third year brings,” said Mark Templin, Lexus group vice president and general manager. “The competition is getting tougher as we see the teams working harder to plan and implement innovative, creative and effective programs. It's clear that the Lexus Eco Challenge is making a difference, and it's encouraging to know that we're inspiring the next generation to become responsible stewards of the environment.”

The Challenges and Rewards

The Lexus Eco Challenge registration opens on Sept. 28, 2009, and will conclude with the announcement of the first-place and grand-prize-winning teams during Earth Month, April 2010. Middle and high school teams, comprised of 5-10 students and one teacher advisor, are invited to participate in one or both of the two initial challenges, each addressing different environmental elements – land/water and air/climate.

For each of the challenges, teams will define an environmental issue that is important to them, develop an action plan to address the issue, implement the plan, and report the results. Submission deadlines are: Challenge #1 (Land/Water) – Nov. 6, 2009 and Challenge #2 (Air/Climate) – Jan. 19, 2010.

Each of the challenges will have 16 winning teams – eight middle school and eight high school teams. The winning teams will each receive a total of \$10,000 in scholarships and grants to be shared among the students, teacher and school. In addition, the winning action plans will be featured on a special Web page to inspire other students to take action in their communities.

In mid-February, the winning teams from the first two challenges will be invited to participate in the Final Challenge. Teams will be asked to reach beyond the local community and inspire environmental action around the world through innovative ideas that are communicated to a wide audience. From the Final Challenge entries,

14 first-place teams and two grand-prize-winning teams will be selected. Each of the 14 first-place teams will receive a total of \$15,000 in grants and scholarships, and the two grand-prize-winning teams will each receive \$30,000. The money will be shared by the students, their teacher advisors and their schools.

Judging Criteria

All entries for the initial two challenges will be judged on a variety of criteria, including the overall action plan and team effort, the quality of writing, and supporting materials. A select panel of judges will consider questions such as: does the action plan show the team's clear understanding of the environmental issue; does the action plan clearly describe the results; does the action plan communicate a persuasive argument; and does the action plan communicate team effort?

Full program information including rules and entry details can be viewed at www.scholastic.com/lexus.

Teaching Tools for the Classroom

The Lexus Eco Challenge educational materials developed with Scholastic are designed to align with national teaching standards for science, social studies, civics and language arts.

In addition to providing teachers with the information necessary to participate in the challenges, the Web site (www.scholastic.com/lexus) also has extensive tools for them to use in their classrooms. For each challenge, the Web site has lesson plans and teacher instructions including questions to help guide a discussion about the current challenge topic, facts about the topic, and guidelines for a specific classroom project.

Lexus' Environmental Efforts

Lexus is the leading luxury automotive brand in the United States, both in sales and in environmental stewardship. Lexus was the first luxury brand to sell hybrids and currently offers four low-emission hybrid vehicles. When Lexus began selling hybrids in 2005, it helped advance the concept of sustainability without sacrifice. To bring like-minded individuals together, it also developed the Lexus Hybrid Living site (www.lexus.com/hybridliving) that serves as a portal for people seeking a way to incorporate luxury and environmentalism into their lives.

The Lexus Eco Challenge is part of The Lexus Pursuit of Potential, a philanthropic initiative that generates up to \$3 million in donations each year for organizations that help build, shape and improve children's lives.

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