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Morada Middle School wins Garrett Morgan Sustainable Transportation Competition

Mineta Transportation Institute-sponsored event featured Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood.

San Jose, Calif., April 4, 2012 – A team from Morada Middle School, Stockton CA, has won the Garrett Morgan Sustainable Transportation Competition, which was sponsored by the [Mineta Transportation Institute](http://transweb.sjsu.edu) (transweb.sjsu.edu), an affiliate of San Jose State University. Morada's team, sponsored by Caltrans District 10 liaison Marcela Anderson and teacher Aaron Saas, created a project for a hybrid school bus that used fuel from grass clippings. Caltrans engineers Perfecto "Pat" Robledo and Homer Zarzuela mentored the students, whose presentation earned a \$1,000 cash award for their classroom.

The event was broadcast over the Caltrans network, which connected the competition sites for live streaming. This allowed US Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to address the students from Washington DC, where he took questions from each of the seven finalist teams. Retired Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta also addressed the group, as did Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty in Sacramento. A video of the broadcast is available at <http://1.usa.gov/Hb5q45>

Team representatives will travel to San Jose in June to receive their award at a banquet attended by national and state transportation leaders. Last year, the banquet's special guests included Assistant Secretary of Transportation Polly Trottenberg, former Deputy Secretary of Transportation Morton Downey, Secretary Mineta, several Caltrans officials, and transportation industry executives. Students have their photos taken with the officials.

Judges noted that the Morada team stated their problem and solution very well, that the students showed excellent follow-through, and that they applied the solution to a transportation mode they knew well – school buses. The project also demonstrated that the fuel sources were readily available, and the students understood that the buses would require financing and marketing.

"This year's competition was quite challenging," said Rod Diridon, executive director of the Mineta Transportation Institute. "Each of the teams had a strong project, and they were well prepared. The scores were the closest we've ever seen, so the Morada Middle School students have every right to be proud of their success. They beat some very tough competition."

Second place was awarded to Edna Brewer Middle School, Oakland CA, with its car powered by solar-sensitive ink and bovine methane. They were sponsored by Caltrans District 4 and Alfonso Miles, with teacher Amy Martinez.

Other finalists included Monument Middle School, Rio Dell CA, sponsored by Caltrans District 1 and Emma Cleveland, with teacher Sheryl Steiner; Redland Middle School, Rockville MD, sponsored by the American Public Transportation Association and Cheryl Pyatt, with teacher Kimberly McLurkin; St. Callistus School, Garden Grove CA, sponsored by Orange County Transportation Authority and Stella Lin, with teacher Joy Martin; and two teams from Tupelo Middle School, Tupelo MS, sponsored by the American Association of State Highway Officials and Linda Clifton and Monica Russell, with teacher Julia Smith.

ABOUT THE GARRETT MORGAN COMPETITION

Each year members of the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) Board of Trustees sponsor middle school classes around the country for a sustainable transportation study unit. The curriculum is developed by faculty at San José State University's College of Education, and the students create a sustainable transportation project based on what they have learned. The project is presented at a national videoconference competition featuring the US Transportation Secretary and other transportation leaders. The competition is named for Garrett Morgan, the son of former slaves, who went on to become a successful businessman in Ohio. He was the award-winning inventor of the gas mask and the first practical traffic signal. The MTI program is a complementary element of the US Department of Transportation's Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Futures Program.

ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

The Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) conducts research, education, and information and technology transfer, focusing on multimodal surface transportation policy and management issues, especially as they relate to transit. MTI was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was reauthorized under TEA-21 and again under SAFETEA-LU. The Institute has been funded by Congress through the US Department of Transportation's (DOT) Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by other public and private grants and donations, including grants from the US Department of Homeland Security. DOT selected MTI as a National Center of Excellence following competitions in 2002 and 2006. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI's focus on policy and management resulted from the Board's assessment of the transportation industry's unmet needs. That led directly to choosing the San José State University College of Business as the Institute's home. Visit transweb.sjsu.edu

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