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Media Contact:
Dale McGlothlin (202) 341-8615
dm@seachangeglobal.com

Virginia Tech Uses NCFI's InsulStar Spray Foam Insulation for "LUMENHAUS"; Wins Top European Energy Efficiency Design Competition

Mount Airy, NC—Virginia Tech's innovative net zero energy, solar powered, super-insulated "LUMENHAUS" won first prize in Europe's 2010 Solar Decathlon. The international competition included 20 entries from top colleges and universities from around the world and by agreement of the Government of Spain's Ministry of Housing and the U.S. Government. The competition's goal is advancing the knowledge and dissemination of industrialized, solar and sustainable housing.

Virginia Tech's LUMENHAUS chose NCFI's InsulStar® high-performance spray foam insulation to help achieve top honors in this year's U.S. Solar Decathlon. LUMENHAUS won third place despite an unfortunate last minute technology glitch. The team that won this year's U.S. Solar Decathlon, The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, also used InsulStar in their top prize-winning "Gable House."

The European Solar Decathlon's 20 competing homes were judged in ten separate contests (thus, the "decathlon" designation) including: Architecture, sustainability, innovation, comfort conditions, construction and engineering, solar

systems and hot water, energy balance, usage, communications and social media, industrialization and market viability.

“This was the toughest competition by far,” says Joe Wheeler, associate professor of architecture, College of Architecture and Urban Studies, and one of only three faculty members of the smallest team in the competition. “It was judged by some of the most influential architects in the world like Australian Glenn Murcutt, winner of the Pritzker Prize and the AIA Gold Medal. Plus, we were head-to-head against the Germans and French at their game. They are so far ahead of the U.S. in energy efficiency work. For us, going over there and winning is a small miracle.”

Wheeler says his team needed a “super insulation” to help LUMENHAUS smartly use the energy it creates via its solar panel system, and help balance efficiency with user comfort. “We love InsulStar. We call our design ‘responsive architecture’, meaning the house can operate completely self sufficiently, responding to environmental changes. InsulStar insulates the walls and floor/undercarriage, and keeps the house airtight, with no drafts or leaks when it is closed up.”

NCFI sent GoldStar applicator, Mark Zammit, of Building and Design of Va., Inc. to apply the high performance spray foam to the LUMENHAUS. Zammit says, “I think it was fortuitous for us to be involved with this amazing project. My wife, her father, my son and daughter have all attended, or are attending, Virginia Tech. It’s a family pride thing for us to help their team win this international competition.”

Nelson Clark, senior vice president of NCFI, says his company is extremely proud of the role they played in both solar decathlon wins. “It’s a testament to our products and people. Winning not one, but two major energy efficiency

competitions is clear evidence InsulStar spray foam is a superior insulation product and the future of world building.”

Wheeler says InsulStar went above and beyond it’s intended use when the team was invited to bring the house to New York City to appear on ABC’s Good Morning America program back in January. “We designed the house so that it could be transported easily. In fact, we worked with engineers from a trucking/transportation company to help design the house so that only a wheel assembly and gooseneck need to be added for the home to go from our location in Blacksburg and in two hours be on the road headed anywhere. In January, we needed to put the home on the road and go to Times Square—in a major snowstorm. The InsulStar provided ideal protection for the chassis of the house, by keeping out water, ice, salt, and rocks.” Wheeler concludes, “If it can do that in those extreme conditions, it can surely provide protection and comfort for a home in normal living conditions.”

Wheeler says Virginia Tech next current projects include a village approach called “Lumenocity”, which he says will be solar powered, have an open plan, use computer technology, flexible architectural design and energy efficiency to be the “iPhone” of houses. He also guarantees they will use InsulStar. “It’s the next generation insulation.”

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**For more information, or to arrange an interview on this subject contact:
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About NCFI www.ncfi.com www.insulstar.com

NCFI was organized in 1964 by research chemist, Dr. H. W. Bradley and Barnhardt Manufacturing Company. NCFI is headquartered in Mount Airy, NC and manufactures polyurethane foam chemical systems for spray foam-in-place insulation (SPF), roofing, marine floatation, packaging, specialty molding, and many other uses. The company also offers a complete line of flexible foams for furniture seating, transportation seating,

bedding, carpet underlay, and packaging. NCFI has manufacturing plants in Mount Airy, Hickory, N.C., Dalton, GA., and Salt Lake City, UT. To learn more about NCFI please visit www.NCFI.com.