MSU Formula Team's Innovative Racecar Designs Showcased at Detroit Auto Show

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The Michigan State University Formula Racing Team has been invited, for the fifth consecutive year, to display their innovative racecar designs at the North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) at Detroit's Cobo Center.

At this year's NAIAS, which opens to the public on Jan. 14, the MSU team is exhibiting two of the racecars built for past competitions: Car 71 (2009-2010) and Car 51 (2010-2011).

The MSU exhibit showcases the work of students who design, manufacture, race, and market a small, open-wheel racecar for the Formula SAE® (FSAE) collegiate competitions organized by SAE International (formerly Society of Automotive Engineers).

"We feel extremely fortunate to have been invited to the auto show for the fifth year in a row," says Brady Thom, a mechanical engineering senior and project manager for the MSU Formula Racing Team. "The ability to show the industry and the public, on the largest stage, what our student members are capable of building, is both exciting and important for our program. The many sponsors who support our team know the value of the education our members are receiving."

The Formula Racing Team is made up of about 20 primarily undergraduate students from across the university, with majors ranging from engineering to supply chain to economics. Throughout the year, they engage in a "design, build, race" project cycle that includes designing a vehicle, procuring and fabricating parts, building a prototype, and engaging in extensive vehicle testing.

In addition to designing and building a racecar, team members learn project management skills such as procurement, financing, and marketing. Students are responsible for securing in-kind and cash sponsors to make their plans a reality.

"We are delighted to once again be invited to participate in the auto show," says Gary Cloud, University Distinguished Professor and faculty adviser to the MSU FSAE Racing Team. "It gives students the chance to demonstrate their creativity in producing a new car every year under tight deadlines. Furthermore, it offers them experience in marketing their product, a necessary activity that engineers, by nature, often find challenging. Our sponsors, industry representatives, and visitors can see for themselves the high quality of the work of our students, as well as the knowledge and maturity they exhibit while presenting it."

The MSU team is now building Car 27 for this year's competition. They will be among 120 student teams from around the world participating in May in the Formula SAE® Michigan competition at the Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn, Mich.

Sponsors for MSU's NAIAS exhibit include Allegra Printing, ASAP Printing, Convention Show Services, D.E. McNabb Flooring, the MSU College of Engineering, Motor City Electric Co., the North American International Auto Show, and Skyline Exhibits.

The auto show runs through Jan. 22. More than 500 vehicles will be on display.

More information about the 2012 North American International Auto Show
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