The Granite Falls High School Eco Teams are busy with preparation for the highly anticipated international competition which takes place in Detroit, Michigan. The Shell Eco-marathon Americas® is just a few short weeks away and the cars will be heading out on April 1, 2015. This high-profile event challenges high school and college-aged students to design and build a car that will travel the farthest distance using the least amount of fuel. In addition, there are several other awards to apply for including the Vehicle Design Award, Technical Innovation Award, Communications Award, & Safety award. This year, the ShopGirls team, comprised of 6 girls, seeks to earn the Safety Award for the 5th time (out of 6 years competing). "The goal for this year is to win the Safety Award again. Safety is an off-track award, which means we not only need to represent safety in our cars, but we need to have safe clothing, tools, and practices in everyday life," said Dansil Green of ShopGirls. The Urban Autos, comprised of 11 boys & 1 girl, are going for the Technical Innovative and Vehicle Design awards. The teams will experience a new track in Detroit and they are excited for the opportunity to travel somewhere they haven't before. "We are excited for the opportunity and to be a part of this new challenge and venue," said Stephen London of UrbanAutos. Manufacturing Instructor, Michael Werner, also commented about the venue change, "We welcome change and are extremely excited about going to the Motor City this year."

This is the largest crew the Eco Program has had yet, with 18 team members and over 20 students participating! Both Eco teams, along with Manufacturing Instructor Michael Werner, and Industry Partners & Chaperones including Superintendent Linda Hall, will leave for Detroit, Michigan, on April 8th and return the 13th. This will be the 6th year Granite Falls has entered two teams in the Shell Eco-marathon Americas®. Last year, the teams built two brand new cars that were more modern and aerodynamic as ever before. This year, the teams have refurbished the cars and worked hard to improve areas of fault from last years’ 2014 competition. The Granite Falls Eco Teams continue to be the only Washington State team represented at the competition. Werner added, “The
competition is great exposure to the world and how to solve technical problems as well as practice communication skills. The kids are already learning so much about Public Relations and the importance of interviews, talking to media, broadcasting information via the web, etc.”

The Eco Teams started in 2009 with a grant for women in nontraditional roles. This sparked the beginning of the ShopGirls team as the first all-girls team to ever compete in the Shell Eco-marathon Americas®. Both the ShopGirls and UrbanAutos have had great successes thus far. Inspired by the innovation and experience, eco-program members have managed to obtain education offers from at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Stanford, Purdue, Cal Poly, Washington State University and the University of Washington. In addition, a number of the students are locally employed in machining and aerospace with some in apprenticeships.

“While the competition measures their success, the ultimate reward is applying hands-on what is learned in Academia to real-life scenarios in the working world,” said Werner. Werner was born and raised Switzerland. He completed a four year Metal Machining Apprenticeship in the Swiss Air Force Technical School, graduating 1979 with the top honor in his country. After mandatory military service as a helicopter mechanic, he worked for a small shop in the Principality of Liechtenstein where he machined race car engines and served on teams that ran BMW and Audi endurance racing cars.

Werner’s love for flying and vintage aircraft restoration brought him to the United States in 1985. Werner is a certified aircraft mechanic in Switzerland and the United States (A&P), and holds a commercial pilot license for single engine aircraft. In 1989 he established an American division for a Swiss Aircraft Interiors company.

Werner ventured into artistic woodturning. His work was showcased in the Smithsonian Museum “Fine American Craft” exhibit in Washington DC in 2005. He continues to teach woodturning locally and is frequently invited to present and demonstrate woodturning skills at fine art schools and symposiums throughout the United States and internationally. He also speaks frequently at CTE (Career and Technical Education) and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) conferences.
PICTURED
Nathaniel Hayter, Amadues Lutz, Stephen London, Andrew Amundsen, Robert Quininez, Ed Staheli

EcoTeams Website: http://live.gfalls.wednet.edu/ecoteams/
EcoTeams Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Granite-Falls-Eco-Car-Teams/120589641370059

MEDIA NEWS:
- ShopGirls Team Manager, Dansil Green, earns the Herald’s Super Kid recognition and shares interesting in pursuing Astronautical Engineering after High School. She has been accepted to MIT & Cal Poly. She is waiting to hear back from MIT.
  http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20150223/NEWS01/150229686

- 2014 Manufacturing Teacher wins ‘Innovative Teacher of the Year’ from Aerospace Center. The Herald & Mt. Loop Express covered the story on Michael Werner--
  http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20140707/NEWS01/140709411
  http://mountainloopexpress.com/teacher-of-the-year-michael-werner/

- The Road to Houston Documentary Series was awarded “2013 Best Web Documentary” at the International Cannes Corporate Media and TV awards. As part of the experience, both teams were featured in the Brightest Road Documentary that was part of the Road to Houston Documentary Series that was released last spring, 2013. There were a record number of 719 series submissions representing 40 countries at this International Competition and this series submitted by our students surpassed them all to achieve this highly prestigious award.

- KCP-Q13 Fox News covered the story in 2013:
  http://q13fox.com/2013/03/15/shell-ecomarathon/#axzz2PECPXrww

- The Herald covered the story in 2013: http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20130327/NEWS01/130329819


- Shell Eco-marathon Americas® website: http://www.shell.com/home/content/ecomarathon/