



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***Alternative Fuel on the Horizon?*  
Denison Eighth Graders Apply Lessons Learned  
To Demonstrate Their Solar-Powered Mini-Car**

*Smithfield Foods' Learners to Leaders™ Teams with ISU's Science Bound  
To Help Prepare Students for Science-related College Degrees*

DES MOINES, Iowa (April 25, 2008)—Applying lessons learned in the classroom, eighth grade students from Denison (Iowa) Middle School have developed a mini-car that is powered by solar energy.

And the car works, as the 11 Denison students demonstrated Friday night in Des Moines, much to their delight.

The students are participating in Smithfield Foods' Learners to Leaders™ program and also are enrolled in Iowa State University's (ISU) Science Bound program. As part of the Learners to Leaders and Science Bound programs, the Denison eighth graders are taking classes and engaged in projects that will prepare them to pursue science/mathematics-related college degrees.

The Denison students were in Des Moines to attend a dinner honoring 17 students from Des Moines-area high schools who have successfully completed the Science Bound program at their schools, each qualifying for a four-year tuition scholarship to attend ISU.

“This program has been a fantastic opportunity for my students, largely because they're learning by doing, which is the best way to learn,” said Collette Huntley, science

teacher at Denison Middle School. Huntley and Kathy Jones are the two teachers assigned to the Learners to Leaders and Science Bound students.

“As part of our unit on motion and movement, the students learned about such concepts as energy, thrust, resistance and friction,” Huntley said. “We’ve actually built three different cars to demonstrate various forms of energy.”

The first car, dubbed the “Puff-mobile,” was designed by the students and consisted of a sponge for the car body, drinking straws for the axles and LifeSavers candy for the wheels. “We used wind power—blowing on the car—to make it go,” Huntley said.

The second car’s design included a mousetrap, wooden wheels and a piece of thread, which tripped the mousetrap to create motion.

The solar-powered car entailed the most complex design. The car, made of plastic, is about six inches square and includes a miniature motor and solar panel the size of a small calculator, which the class received from Iowa State Extension Service.

“It has been a trial and error process, and the students have had a lot of fun designing and redesigning the solar car based on lessons they learned from the other two cars,” Huntley said. “They made their own decisions during the design process, and they did a far better job of designing the car than I could have done.”

Because of the many rainy and cloudy days in Denison, students resorted to a heat lamp to successfully test the solar car in their classroom, and are looking forward to using the sun as a power source. For the test run in Des Moines Friday night, they brought along several cars and their heat lamp.

“This has been such a wonderful experience for my students, and we’re so grateful to Smithfield Foods and Iowa State University for making it possible,” Huntley said. “Many of these students are from low-income families, and we’ve had parents thank us and thank us again for giving their kids the opportunity to get as much education as they can.”

The Learners to Leaders program in Denison is a partnership that includes Farmland Foods Inc., a Smithfield Foods independent operating company; the Denison Community School District; and Iowa State University’s Science Bound program. Learners to Leaders is providing learning opportunities to students who may not

otherwise have the chance to attend college due to academic, economic or social challenges. Participants include first-generation college-bound students, as well as low-income and minority students.

With funding from the nonprofit Smithfield-Luter Foundation, Denison students will participate in the Science Bound program through their senior year of high school. The program's focus is to equip students during their high school years to successfully earn science-related college degrees.

"The goal of the Learners to Leaders/Science Bound alliance is to help reinforce what we believe is the most critical part of any community's foundation, the education of its residents," said C. Larry Pope, president and chief executive officer of Smithfield Foods.

"We have always been firm believers in giving back to our communities, and we can think of no better way than to help these Denison students benefit from Iowa State's nationally acclaimed Science Bound program," Pope said. "The goal is to expose them to a wide range of career possibilities in science, mathematics and technical fields."

"The alliance between Science Bound and Learners to Leaders is an excellent example of the kind of productive partnerships involving businesses, universities and public schools needed to attract, prepare and enable students to excel in technical fields," said Dr. Connie Hargrave, ISU's Science Bound program director. "Given the challenges faced by school systems, programs such as this are absolutely critical if we are to maintain our international economic competitiveness."

Smithfield Foods is a global food company with operations in 13 countries through wholly-owned subsidiaries and joint ventures. Headquartered in Smithfield, Va., the company produces more than 50 brands of pork, beef and turkey products and more than 200 gourmet foods. Employing more than 57,000 people across the globe, Smithfield Foods is the world's largest producer and processor of pork and a leader in turkey processing, cattle feeding and beef processing.

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A mini-car powered by solar energy is demonstrated with a heat lamp Friday at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Des Moines. The car was built by eighth-grade students enrolled in the Smithfield Foods Learners to Leaders™ program. The educational initiative, funded by the Smithfield-Luter Foundation, helps students prepare to pursue education beyond high school. The students were in Des Moines to attend Iowa State University's Science Bound Honors Banquet.



Eighth-grade students enrolled in the Smithfield Foods Learners to Leaders™ program in Denison, IA, along with C. Larry Pope, President and Chief Executive Officer of Smithfield Foods watch a mini-car powered by solar energy operate Friday at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Des Moines. Pope and the students were in Des Moines for Iowa State University's Science Bound honors banquet. The Learners to Leaders program in Denison partners with Science Bound to help prepare students to pursue college degrees in science or mathematics.