

## News - Winter 2001

### Western Regional Air Quality Modeling Center Now at CE-CERT

**C**E-CERT HAS BEEN SELECTED BY THE WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION TO SERVE AS THE HEADQUARTERS FOR A NEW \$1 million Western Regional Modeling Center (WRMC). The primary goal of this project is to help the western states and native tribes to design air quality plans to improve visibility in and around the National Parks.

WRMC's mission is threefold: (1) to provide visibility modeling in support of Clean Air Act implementation plans; (2) to provide training, technology transfer and capacity building for state and tribal agencies; and (3) to implement state-of-the-art models, chemical mechanisms and emissions inventories in support of visibility modeling. WRMC will be the common scientific resource for 13 states and 10 tribal nations. The Center will also work with the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The highest priorities for improved visibility are large wilderness areas and national parks. Road dust, smoke, vehicle exhaust and industrial pollution are all part of the curtain of haze that sometimes obscures many of the nation's best views of pristine natural settings. Gail Tonnesen, manager of environmental modeling at CE-CERT and the project director for WRMC, emphasized that this is an environmental problem, but also an economic one for states that rely on tourism. "We will run air quality models to simulate haze throughout the U.S., and then use the computer models to test the benefits and cost effectiveness of various strategies for improving visibility in the national parks," Dr. Tonnesen said. "The model allows us to experiment with alternative controls to optimize the benefits and reduce the costs. The states and tribes have discretion to adopt a particular plan, but they will be using the science from our model to make that decision."

Dr. Tonnesen has teamed up with fellow CE-CERT researcher Jim Lents, an expert in environmental policy, to tackle this project. WRMC is initially funded for two years but could be extended, said Dr. Tonnesen.

### Next Stop: Costa Rica

**T**EAM CE-CERT IS ON THE MOVE AGAIN -- THIS TIME TO COSTA RICA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RALLY DEL TROPICO. FOUR students, accompanied by a staff advisor from CE-CERT, will transport a hybrid-electric vehicle used for research on control strategies and energy management to Limon, Costa Rica for the rally. The UCR vehicle, along with approximately 24 other vehicles from North America, Central America, Europe and Asia, will be driven across the country of Costa Rica from March 28 to April 1, 2001. Each student who is participating in the rally has designed a research project or experiment to conduct while the vehicle is on the trip.

### Construction Update: CE-CERT's New Buildings

**C**E-CERT'S NEW OFFICE BUILDING AND THE ATMOSPHERIC CHAMBER BUILDING ARE ON SCHEDULE FOR OCCUPANCY IN EARLY SPRING of 2001. An open house for the campus and local community will take place in May of this year. The Grand Opening Celebration will take place in January 2002 to coincide with the tenth anniversary of CE-CERT.

[\[MAP\]](#) 1084 Columbia Ave., Riverside, CA 92507 | Voice: 951-781-5791 | Fax: 951-781-5790 | [info@cert.ucr.edu](mailto:info@cert.ucr.edu)

[University of California, Riverside](#)  
[Bourns College of Engineering](#)  
[Center for Environmental Research & Technology](#)