

MNATC Sponsors Team of Young “Phoenixes”

In the final weekend of April 2017 Detroit’s Cobo Center played host to the annual Shell Eco Marathon: Americas—an event geared toward reshaping the future of sustainable transportation. The Eco Marathon asks teams of students from high schools and colleges throughout the Americas to design, build and drive the most fuel-efficient vehicles they can conceive in one of two categories: Prototype or Urban Concept. Upwards of 100 teams competed in this year’s Shell Eco Marathon: Americas and Mahindra NATC is proud to have sponsored one of them—the Troy, MI-based high school International Academy East.

A tuition-free high school-of-choice participating in the International Baccalaureate curriculum, International Academy East is home to some of the best budding engineering talent in the state. Among this talent is junior and team leader Parth Raut, who approached Mahindra NATC in search of support for this, International Academy East’s second year of participation in the Shell Eco Marathon. After meeting with Raut and several members of his team, it was clear that these students had a love for engineering and were dedicated to creating a future of more sustainable transportation solutions. While 95% of all first-time teams participating in the Shell Eco Marathon fail to pass the inspection phase of the competition, Raut and his International Academy East team, triumphantly-named Phoenix Fire, managed the feat in 2016. With the support of Mahindra NATC they sought to build on those results in this year’s competition.

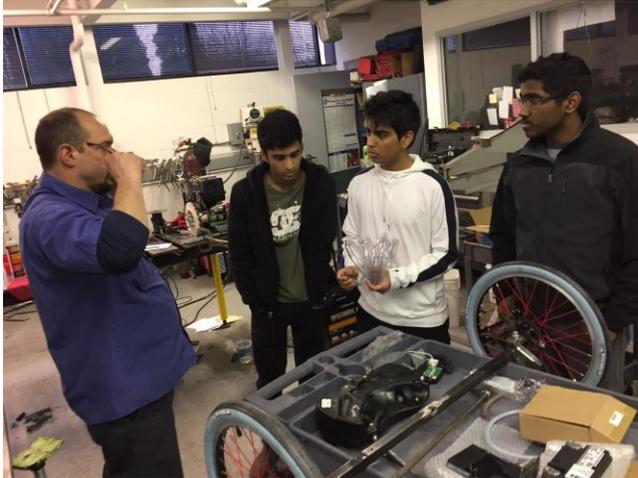


Team Phoenix Fire on Day 1 of Shell’s Eco Marathon 2017

Mahindra NATC’s support of Team Phoenix Fire exceeded just a financial contribution. Throughout the month of April various members of the team spent time in Mahindra’s automotive workshop receiving assistance from our technicians to hone various aspects of their vehicle. With so many members of team Phoenix Fire aspiring towards engineering careers it was rewarding for all of us at Mahindra NATC to see the students working so intently alongside industry veterans.

Despite some 11th hour scares, team Phoenix Fire’s vehicle arrived at Cobo Center on Friday, April 28th ready to compete.

Walking into the Cobo Center during Shell’s Eco Marathon Challenge, one finds it difficult to believe that a shortage of engineers exists in this country. When I visited, the hall was buzzing with thousands of engaged young people. College and high school students in vibrant team



Aspiring engineers from International Academy East receive guidance in MNATC's workshop.

uniforms scrambled and talked excitedly making last-minute adjustments to vehicles they had spent the better half of a year engineering. The immense floor of the Cobo Center was packed and partitioned into workspaces for each team, exhibitions of the latest in fuel-efficient technology, and Shell-bannered “Technical Inspection Stations” where entrant’s vehicles were deemed to pass or fail an exhaustive checklist of comprehensive inspections.

Team Phoenix Fire, competing in the Prototype category, looked sharp in fire-red t-shirts as they raced like so many other teams to make critical modifications to their vehicle. The composure of these students—none of who were over 18—was impressive. They calmly measured, cut and incorporated new implements to their car with a surprising assuredness. Led by Raut and team manager, Math teacher Jeffrey Watson, Team Phoenix Fire proved themselves untimidated by the scores of college teams surrounding their work station, among them entries from the University of Michigan, California Polytechnic State University and UCLA.

Ultimately, it was the Universite Laval of Quebec who’s Prototype entry took the crown at the 2017 Shell Eco Marathon, achieving a stunning 2,713.1 MPG fuel-efficiency with their *Alerion Supermilage* vehicle. Although the Mahindra-sponsored Team Phoenix Fire was unable to participate in the road racing phase of the competition due to inclement weather, we are proud to report that the team came together to pass the full technical inspection checklist for the 2nd straight year.

Mahindra NATC wishes all of Team Phoenix Fire a future filled with innovation and discovery, and offers thanks to all the young engineers who participated in the 2017 Shell Eco Marathon to help created a more sustainable future. Until next year!