



## Institute of the Environment

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### Media Release

## Solar Vehicle Goes Around the World: Pioneering Trip Around the Planet Soon Arriving at UCLA

Louis Palmer, a Swiss solar pioneer and inventor, is completing an ambitious plan to travel around the world in a solar-powered vehicle – the *Solartaxi*. The name is an invitation for people around the planet to take a ride on solar energy and solar technology to a cleaner, non-polluting future.

The University of California Los Angeles Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering in the Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Sciences is pleased to host the arrival of Louis Palmer to the City of Angels, a true Ambassador of Peace, Solar Energy and Clean Technology for the planet Earth.

After setting off from his Swiss hometown of Lucerne on July 3rd last year, his journey around the world will last one and a half years, taking passengers along the way, travelling over 40 countries, and totalling about 50,000 km. The aim of Palmer's project is to show that solutions to combat global warming are available. He is going to start his North American leg in Vancouver on Canada Day, July 1<sup>st</sup>, and will arrive in Los Angeles, California Jul 21.

"I have not paid a single cent for gasoline after driving two thirds around the world so far!" says Louis Palmer, the Swiss adventurer and solar pioneer. On July 3, 2007 he set off with his *Solartaxi* on this pioneering journey in Lucerne, Switzerland. Bertrand Picard, who is planning to fly around the world in a solar plane *Solar Impulse* in 2011, was the first passenger on board the *Solartaxi*, accompanying Palmer on the first stage of his journey. In times of depleting resources, high fuel prices and global warming, Louis Palmer of Lucerne is looking for alternative transportation technologies. The *Solartaxi* was designed and built by four Swiss universities: HTA - Technik & Architektur – Hochschule Lucerne, ETH – Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, University of Applied Sciences, Aargau and University of Applied Sciences, Berne. His mission: to make people more aware of climate change.

### 50,000 km with solar electricity

The *Solartaxi* consists of a solar vehicle and trailer with high-efficiency solar cells from Q-Cells. The vehicle is powered by 100% solar energy on its 50,000 km-journey around the world. 50% of the energy comes from its own solar cells on the trailer; the other 50% are produced, certified and fed into the power grid from the roof of the Swisscom building in Köniz and accessed via power sockets while en route. The *Solartaxi* thus uses electricity from 100% renewable energy and releases no emissions into the atmosphere. On his promotional trip, Palmer wants to demonstrate that sustainable technologies are already perfectly suited for everyday use and that they can even be used to go around the world.

### **Take a ride in a *Solartaxi***

The solar-powered vehicle has space for an additional person. Palmer makes use of this space to give various passengers a ride along the way – which is why the vehicle is called a taxi. The ***Solartaxi***, which travels at a maximum speed of 90 km/h on its three wheels, is equipped with luxurious, leather-covered bucket seats guaranteeing both fun and comfort. The ***Solartaxi*** has the unique ability to allow either the driver or the passenger to drive the vehicle as the steering slides across horizontally. This is also helpful when the driver sides changes from right to left as is the case in several countries along the way such as England, Japan and Australia. The ***Solartaxi*** is accompanied by a conventional vehicle driven by the German student Thomas Gottschalk. The accompanying vehicle is needed as it carries everything needed for a trip around the world.

### **Going east – and enjoying 40 countries along the way**

Louis Palmer set off eastwards on July 3, 2007 via Germany where he visited his main sponsor QCells. Via Eastern Europe, the Middle East, India, Indonesia, New Zealand, Australia and the Far East, he will arrive in Vancouver at the end of June. In Vancouver, a number of organizations are assisting on the trip logistics, including the Vancouver Electric Vehicle Association. His goal is to cover at least 50,000 km and to visit 50 countries and 5 continents. The project partner for this initiative is *Presence Switzerland* – an institution whose mission it is to present Switzerland abroad – together with the Swiss Embassies that are organising welcome events along the route. Travel between continents will take place by ship.

If everything works out, the ***Solartaxi*** will set a world record, namely the first motor vehicle not powered by fossil fuels to drive around the world on normal roads. Thanks to state-of-the-art telecommunications technology, Palmer is reporting daily from his pioneering trip in an online diary, which can be followed at [www.bluewin.ch/solartaxi](http://www.bluewin.ch/solartaxi). For more information on the journey, go to [www.solartaxi.com](http://www.solartaxi.com).

### **Announcing the Jules Verne World Solar Tour**

The Los Angeles leg of Palmer's journey from Jul 21-26 will include a number of public events at his arrival at UCLA on Jul 22, where a press conference will be held, a presentation seminar in the Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department, demo of the vehicle and free rides, a visit/presentation/demo at the Environmental Charter High School, a visit to Aerovironment, and a reception by the Mayor of Malibu and the Arts Festival followed by a presentation and demo.

The ***Jules Verne Solar World Tour***, a challenge to complete a tour of the world in 80 days named to celebrate the famous '80 Days Around the World' novel by the renowned author but ***entirely solar powered*** this time will be announced, and rules and details will be presented. The motivation is to complete a trip around the world that is entirely solar powered utilizing no fossil fuels, and to link communities, cities, organizations, schools, universities and companies that are solar powered, organic, sustainable, non-toxic and renewable everywhere on the planet.

### **Project partners**

Palmer has managed to gain support from many partners from various industries for his unique project. They include:

- **Q-Cells**
- **UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme**
- **Swisscom**
- **Technopark Lucerne**
- **Wave Communications**
- **Grebien Network**
- **MES-DEA Zebra Battery**
- **Schindler Apprentice Training**
- **Kühne + Nagel**

- **Servax Drives**
- **Rockwell Automation**
- **Ruthishauser Car polstery**
- **Alu Menziken**
- **Presence Switzerland**
- **City of Lucerne**
- **HTA - Technik & Architektur – Hochschule, Lucerne**
- **ETH Zurich – Swiss Federal Institute of Technology**
- **University of Applied Sciences in Aargau, Switzerland**
- **University of Applied Sciences in Berne, Switzerland**

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## Schedule

Jul 21 8am-12pm CMAA - Keynote Speaker – Construction Management Association of America – **Transportation Summit** - Sheraton Downtown Los Angeles

Jul 21 1pm-5pm ECHS – **Environmental Charter High School** - Lawndale

Jul 22 8am-5pm **UCLA** – MAE - University of California Los Angeles, Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Dept. – Institute for Sustainable Engineering – Solarmer, Inc.

The **Solartaxi** will be on display throughout the day for demos and free rides in front of the ENG IV building, 420 Westwood Pl., Los Angeles, CA 90095.

1pm-2pm Presentation – La Kretz Hall

2pm-3pm Press Conference and Discussion Panel

Louis Palmer, **Solartaxi** inventor and owner

Prof. Yang Yang, Yang Yang Lab, MES – UCLA

Shahin Farshchi, Ph.D. - Lux Capital Management, LLC

Tony Pereira, Moderator – MAE – MCL - UCLA

Jul 23 11am-2pm **Aerovironment**, Simi Valley, California

Jul 24 TBA

Jul 25 TBA

Jul 26 Malibu – **Arts Festival** – Reception by the Mayor of Malibu

## Media information

Pictures can be downloaded from: [www.solartaxi.com](http://www.solartaxi.com).

### Swisscom:

[www.bluewin.ch/solartaxi](http://www.bluewin.ch/solartaxi)

<http://solartaxi.blueblog.ch>

### Spiegel online:

[www.spiegel.de/solartaxi](http://www.spiegel.de/solartaxi)

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**ECHS** – [www.echsonline.org](http://www.echsonline.org)  
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**Malibu Arts Festival** – <http://www.malibu.org/page.php?id=81>  
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