

STUDENT DESIGNERS GO CONVERTIBLE WITH 'SWITCH-RICH ARCHITECTURE'

BY STACIA MOMBURG

LOOKING TO BEAT THE CROWDS for the best bargains on Black Friday, the infamous first shopping day after Thanksgiving?

Thanks to Cal Poly students, you could sleep overnight at the head of the line in a shopping cart that converts into a cozy one-person tent.

Awaking refreshed and ready to shop, you could then convert the tent back into a shopping cart, avoiding the mad grab for store carts.

Innovative – and sometimes quirky – designs like this one are part of the College of Architecture and Environmental Design's annual Design Village competition, which pits teams of architecture, construction management and engineering students from universities across the West against one another.

The event challenges student teams to design livable structures that will actually serve as a temporary shelter for team members during Cal Poly's annual Open House weekend each April.

The 2006 theme, "Go Convertible: The essence of switch-rich architecture," celebrated changeable, movable and interactive designs.

Sustainability criteria further challenged the 52 teams to consider the environmental elements of Poly Canyon – sun, wind, rain and topography – when creating their structures.

Conceived by two Cal Poly architecture students in 1974 as an event in which students leave their everyday creature comforts behind to share their housing with real creatures that inhabit the canyon, Design Village has blossomed into a national event. □

