Business Bytes: New fuel cell yields recognition

MENOMONIE — Kenneth Smith, an associate with the UW-Stout Discovery Center, has been named the 2012 WiSys Innovation Scholar.

The award honors discoveries made by UW System faculty, staff or students that benefit society. Smith has developed a pressure-balanced proton exchange membrane fuel cell, also known as a polymer electrolyte membrane fuel cell. PEM fuel cells transform the chemical energy liberated during the electrochemical reaction of hydrogen and oxygen to electrical energy.

A team made up of students and another from Schmit Prototypes of Menomonie supported the project.

The technical innovations of the new fuel cell are protected through WiSys, which promotes research and development through resources at the UW System’s 11 comprehensive campuses and helps transfer successful ideas to the private sector.