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WITC Marine Repair Technician Graduate Awarded Scholarship from MRAA Educational Foundation

Matt Gruhn, President of the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas traveled to Ashland where he presented Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College and marine repair technician graduate, Nathan Smith of Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, with a 2014 MRAA Technical Scholarship for $3,000.

“We are excited to be a part of this and we are honored to be here to present the scholarship,” said Gruhn. “It’s always nice to see in person the people that these scholarships go out to every year and to recognize their desire to make an impact on our industry.”

Smith will use the scholarship to advance his education and skills in WITC-Ashland’s state-of-the-art marine lab. He will be back on campus next semester taking advanced marine engine rebuilding and advanced marine engine systems courses.

“It’s a huge opportunity for me,” said Smith. “I’m excited about the courses and what I’ll learn this next semester and just a huge thank you; I’m very gracious that I received the scholarship.”

Smith hopes to begin his career as a marine mechanic when he finishes the advanced courses at WITC and he has a job offer pending at Shipyard Marine in Green Bay. “It’s a large dealership, tenth year in a row now that they’ve received a top 100 dealership award in the nation, so I’m really looking forward to the opportunity to go to work for them.”

Scholarship winners were announced on November 19 at the Marine Dealer Conference & Expo in Orlando, Fla. WITC, along with Broward College and WyoTech Daytona, received a $3,000 scholarship to help train students for technical careers in the recreational boating industry.

“We recognized your school because of the types of training that you do and the fact that the motors that you are testing, using and working on are all running motors and then your proximity to the lake and getting out and doing water testing,” said Gruhn. “It’s just a really strong program and that’s what we like to see and encourage and help continue to develop as we move forward in this industry.”

The award was presented to Smith at WITC-Ashland’s graduate and scholarship reception on December 12. The MRAA Educational Foundation awarded the 2014 scholarships to technical colleges firmly
committed to expanding their marine technical offerings and graduating an impressive number of qualified marine technicians annually.

“I’ve learned a ton from the basics all the way up to the more advanced troubleshooting procedures and techniques, and I couldn’t ask for much more,” said Smith. “I’ve really been happy with what I’ve learned here and the entire experience with the whole school.”

The marine repair technician program at WITC-Ashland, which is the only one of its kind in Wisconsin, prepares graduates for a career in the marina and marine service and repair industry. This three-semester, hands-on program includes instruction in marine engine service, operation, diagnosis, repair, equipment installation, maintenance, and rigging new boats. Students work on two- and four-cycle gasoline engines, drive systems, transmissions, fiberglass boat hulls, electrical systems, and consumer-supplied products.

Ranked 4th best two-year college in the nation by *Washington Monthly* magazine, WITC serves the educational and career needs of more than 25,000 residents of northwestern Wisconsin each year. With multiple campuses, WITC offers career-focused associate degree programs, technical diplomas, short-term certificates, customized business training, and a wide array of courses for personal or career enrichment. WITC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of Wisconsin Technical College System. WITC is an equal opportunity/access employer and educator. For more information, call 800.243.9482 or visit witc.edu.

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**CUTLINE INFORMATION:** Nathan Smith, a graduate of WITC’s marine repair technician program, was recently awarded a $3,000 scholarship from the MRAA Educational Foundation. Pictured from left, Mary Gillen – MRAA Marketing Coordinator, Matt Gruhn – MRAA President, Nathan Smith – WITC Marine Repair Technician Graduate & MRAA Scholarship Recipient, Todd Larson – WITC Marine Repair Technician Instructor and Tim Edwards – WITC Marine Repair Technician Instructor.