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NEWS RELEASE

Veteran among the First to Get Sustainable Management Degree

New online degree opens the door to a promising job

Chippewa Falls, Wis. – (July 13, 2011) – At a time when the unemployment rate for recent military veterans is more than two points above the national average, Gary Gilles managed to land his dream job right out of school.

The Chippewa Falls native graduated in May with a Bachelor of Science in Sustainable Management from UW-Stout. He quickly turned his senior project into a full-time position as an energy analyst with GDS Associates Inc. in support of Wisconsin's Focus on Energy program.

Gilles served four years in the U.S. Air Force. He earned an associate degree in electrical engineering technology in 2005 and was among the first to sign up for a new online Sustainable Management degree being offered by four University of Wisconsin campuses in cooperation with UW-Extension Continuing Education, Outreach and E-Learning.

"It had always been my goal to complete my bachelor's degree, but I could never find the right degree program or the time. But sustainability is my passion, and with a lot of family support and the convenience of an online degree program, I persevered."

Gilles found his opportunity in the final course in the Sustainable Management curriculum: a project in which students apply their knowledge to an industry-specific challenge. Gilles worked with GDS Associates, a consulting and engineering firm that employs 170 people in five locations across the country. His project centered on energy efficiency and renewable energy on dairy farms.

"Wisconsin is known for its dairy industry. If Wisconsin dairy farms can compete more successfully with innovations in energy efficiency and renewable energy, the well-being of all our residents is improved," said Gilles. "I'm grateful for my new career, which gives me not only opportunities to advance but is also one which I truly enjoy."

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“We are very pleased to see the first graduates from this program moving into jobs,” said David Schejbal, dean of Continuing Education, Outreach and E-Learning. “We have a tremendous talent pool among Wisconsin adults who began college sometime in the past but never finished, and they make excellent returning students who work hard and know what they want.”

The Bachelor of Science in Sustainable Management is one of several online degree completion programs that UW-Extension Continuing Education, Outreach and E-Learning has developed in partnership with UW campuses to increase the number of Wisconsin degree holders. For more information about the UW Sustainable Management program, please visit <http://sustain.wisconsin.edu>. For information about all other UW System online degree programs, please visit <http://ecampus.wisconsin.edu>.

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(The unemployment data cited is available at www.bls.gov/news.release/vet.nr0.htm)

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