

Energy industry veteran steps out on his own, looks to commercialize innovative biogas purification system

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Article by Nick Williams – MKE Biz Journal 3/20/2019

[Bryan Johnson](#) spent years in consulting and management roles within the energy industry.

In 2015, however, he wanted to start his own venture and founded a startup company – Energy Tech Innovations.

"I always had a passion for these projects," Johnson said.

Now, Johnson, who is in his 50s, is gaining some attention for his innovative biogas purification system, which he said may prove to be the lowest-costing biogas upgrading process to produce renewable natural gas on the market.



Bryan Johnson is president and founder of Energy Tech Innovations in Milwaukee

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District has allowed Johnson to pilot his system at the district's wastewater treatment facility on Jones Island. Johnson is also one of 50 finalists in the Wisconsin Governor's Business Plan Contest, one of the premier competitions for entrepreneurs in the state. If ETI advances to the top 12 in the competition, he'll compete for \$100,000 in prizes.

Johnson currently operates out of a co-working space inside the 98,000-square-foot Global Water Center operated by The Water Council in Milwaukee, where more than 45 tenant organizations from across the globe work in water-centric research and testing. In 2016, Johnson was accepted into The Water Council's BREW Accelerator, an accelerator for water-centric startup companies.

Johnson's system uses a water wash method to purify biogas to produce renewable natural gas and carbonated water.

Upon graduating from the BREW Accelerator, Johnson received a \$50,000 investment from The Water Council. Through the BREW program, Johnson was able to work with academics at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, who have validated his company's method.



To the left of the photo is Energy Tech Innovations renewable energy gas pilot system at the MMSD wastewater treatment plant on Jones Island.

ENERGY TECH INNOVATIONS

Before starting ETI, Johnson, a University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate, worked at Donahue and Associates, an engineering consulting company in Sheboygan specializing in the waste management field. He then worked at Veolia and more recently a number of privately held companies that involved engineering and energy project development.

With a bevy of experiences involving biogas-related engineering and energy applications, Johnson developed his own sustainable biogas system, one that can yield a capital cost savings of 30 percent or more compared with other biogas upgrading systems on the market, he said. He built his 12-foot prototype mostly from his home's garage.

"I decided it was now or never," Johnson said.

Johnson is looking to co-develop his system with larger, more established companies, using their marketing capabilities and supply chain network to manufacture and eventually sell ETI's patent-pending biogas purification systems, primarily to wastewater treatment facilities first and later expanding to food and beverage processing companies and agricultural operations.

The biogas energy equipment market is pegged at more than \$4 billion in the U.S. and Johnson estimates 5 percent of this market could utilize his company's equipment.

The pilot on Jones Island will continue this spring to collect more data, Johnson said.

For more information, please visit ETI's web site at: <https://www.energytechinnovationsllc.com/>