

Danny Epp and Ben Wiens, winners in the "Non-European countries" category

Fuel cells have long been a promising alternative to fossil fuels; but what such technologies have often lacked is cost-effectiveness and market maturity. One of the first commercially successful fuel cell systems was developed by two Canadians, Danny Epp and Ben Wiens. Since its commercial launch in 2001, the technology has been globally marketed by Vancouver-based Ballard Power Systems. Applications for the cells are chiefly to be found in emergency power generation in radio and mobile telephone stations, among other things for Motorola in Denmark. The system has also made a name for itself as a drive system for public transport buses, which are now operating in 15 cities around the world and to date have carried over seven million passengers.