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AWS JOB FAIR UNITES SCARCE WELDING PROFESSIONALS WITH EMPLOYERS IN NEED

AWS Provides Resources for Employers Suffering from Industry Worker Shortages

Miami, FL, August 16, 2006 – The American Welding Society (AWS), the world’s largest nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the science, technology and application of welding, today announced it will host its second national job fair, allowing employers to meet one-on-one and possibly recruit from a pool of more than 9,000 welding professionals, a group that has been in short supply. The Job Fair will take place in room C-206 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, November 2, at the 2006 FABTECH International and AWS Welding Show, which will run from October 31 through November 2 at the Georgia World Conference Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

While the Southeast’s buzzing auto production market makes it an apt location to begin a welding-related career hunt, the need for qualified welding personnel – these include certified welding inspectors, welding engineers and welding sales associates – has been quickly growing across the nation and in some parts of the world. According to AWS and other industry research, the average age of a welder is in the mid-fifties. Fewer students entering the industry, coupled with the potential retirement of half of the country’s highly trained welding workforce, has led to a shortage of skilled welders and welding-related professionals that could weaken U.S. business and manufacturing.

“It is increasingly imperative that we maintain and grow America’s base of welding professionals to fill vacancies being left from retirees who performed critical work in major industries, including manufacturing, construction, auto production, energy, military, aerospace and more,” said AWS associate executive director Cassie R. Burrell. “One way in which AWS battles this problem is by connecting employers with welding-related professionals, not only at our Job Fair, but also through our exclusive online careers and recruitment resource center, JobFind.”

Unlike the AWS Job Fair, which provides instantaneous personal access to prospective employers, AWS’ JobFind is a web-based tool (located at <http://www.aws.org/jobfind>) that allows career-seekers to learn about various welding jobs, many of which are outside of the factory setting, such as welding inspection, research and engineering. Candidates can apply on-line for positions with prospective employers specific to the materials joining industry.

“The fact is,” continued Mrs. Burrell, “welding is one of the oldest and thriving fields. Stereotypes have tarnished the image of welding, invoking a ‘dark’ and ‘dirty’ work environment with little prospect for advancement and salary growth. However, the reality is often quite different. Welding careers can be lucrative and exciting, and can include many jobs that require very little or no factory work, such as inspection, sales, research, engineering and even entrepreneurial opportunities like owning your own job shop. Many people are not aware of the extensive list of welding-related professions, many of which have been known to command annual salaries between \$50,000 and \$100,000. And, with advances in welding and welding technology - such as the use of robotics and new materials – skilled candidates in all of these areas are needed more than ever before.”

Participation in the AWS Job Fair is available to AWS Welding Show exhibitors, and to AWS Sustaining and Supporting Company Members. All levels of welding professionals, from students just entering the workforce to veteran welders, are welcome at the AWS Job Fair.

Reed Robbins, maintenance supervisor at Connecticut-based OCI Chemical Corporation, said, “We were extremely pleased with our experience at last year’s AWS Job Fair, which provided a deep pool of welding candidates from entry-level welders to welding technology doctorates. As a leading chemical refinery, it is critical that we continuously recruit welders who have a wide range of skills, and the AWS Show, which attracts thousands of welding professionals on all levels, provides the perfect setting for us to meet and perhaps hire the industry talent we need.”

For more information about the AWS Job Fair, please contact Cassie Burrell at 800-443-9353, ext. 253; or Alfred Nieves at ext. 467. Career-seeking participants should dress professionally and bring a resume.

For details and free online registration for the 2006 FABTECH International & AWS Welding Show, please visit the website at <http://www.aws.org/expo/>.

About AWS

The American Welding Society (AWS) was founded in 1919 as a multifaceted, nonprofit organization with a mission to advance the science, technology and application of welding and allied joining and cutting processes, including brazing, soldering, and thermal spraying. Headquartered in Miami, Florida, and led by a volunteer organization of officers and directors, AWS serves nearly 50,000 members worldwide and is composed of 22 Districts with more than 200 local Sections. For more information, visit the Society’s website at <http://www.aws.org> and click on “pressroom.”

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