



North America's Largest Metal Forming, Fabricating & Welding Event

## **NEWS RELEASE**

# **STUDENTS COMPETE FOR GOLD AT WELDING “OLYMPICS”**

### ***3-Day Student Competition to Run at FABTECH International & AWS Welding Show***

**ATLANTA, GA., September 26, 2006** – Sparks will fly at the 2006 SkillsUSA Weld-Off, an “Olympic” event in student welding. The Weld-Off, a component of the SkillsUSA Competition, will highlight the 2006 FABTECH International & AWS Welding Show taking place on October 31 to November 2 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

Five SkillsUSA student competitors, who were selected from a group of twenty-four, will compete at the Weld-Off this year, and only three will qualify to advance to the SkillsUSA U.S. Open Weld Trials as part of the 43rd annual National Leadership and Skills Conference, a showcase of career and technical education students, taking place in Kansas City, Missouri on June 25-28, 2007. The U.S. Open Weld Trials champion will then have an opportunity to represent the United States at the 39th World Skills Competition on November 11-22, 2007, in Shizuoka, Japan.

The Weld-Off, sponsored by the American Welding Society (AWS), involves the testing of skills on several welding processes and techniques, including plate, pipe, stainless steel, aluminum sheet metal and pressure vessel welding. In addition to the intense physical conditioning, written skills and welding code interpretation will be judged by AWS Certified Welding Inspectors. Contestants must be active SkillsUSA members who are currently enrolled in or holding a degree from a welding program.

The AWS U.S. Open Weld Trials winner will receive a four-year scholarship worth \$40,000 from the AWS Foundation and sponsored by The Miller Electric Manufacturing Co. In addition, the winner will receive a four-year complimentary full AWS membership, an AWS Certification and up to \$1,000 in AWS publications.

The SkillsUSA program includes local, state and national competitions in which students demonstrate occupational and leadership skills. At the annual national SkillsUSA Championships, welding is included amongst 84 occupational and leadership skill areas in which over 4,600 students compete.

AWS has a track record of success at the international contest. In fact, since 1991, the AWS sponsored competitors have won two gold, one silver and three bronze medals at the World Skills Competition.

“This year, the competition will be intense, but the students are ready for it,” says Branden Muehlbrandt, the competition’s shop master and silver medal winner at the 1995 World Skills Competition. “They have been honing their skills and devoting a great deal of time and effort to succeed at this level of competition. The SkillsUSA program provides a way for students to test their aptitude level in a competitive environment that is both exciting and educational. My participation in previous year’s competitions was instrumental in the development of my welding career. I not only learned to master several welding techniques, but also I was able to gain valuable lessons about team work and became committed to this critical field. These students are passionate about welding and we are excited to watch them grow into the future leaders of this industry.”

The FABTECH International & AWS Welding Show is cosponsored by AWS, Fabricators & Manufacturers Association International (FMA), and Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME). Based for decades in the industrial heartland of Chicago and Cleveland, the 2006 event takes place for the first time ever in the Southeast – a region seeing robust growth in metal fabricating, manufacturing and infrastructure.



American Welding Society  
[www.aws.org](http://www.aws.org)



Fabricators & Manufacturers Association Int'l  
[www.fmafabtech.com](http://www.fmafabtech.com)



Society of Manufacturing Engineers  
[www.sme.org/fabtech](http://www.sme.org/fabtech)

This is the largest event in North America dedicated to showcasing a full spectrum of metal forming, fabricating, tube & pipe, and welding equipment and technology. Several special show events and features will take place this year, including an opening keynote by John Engler, president of the National Association of Manufacturers.

Show organizers are projecting an estimated 17,000 attendees and more than 850 exhibitors will gather at the FABTECH International & AWS Welding Show to exchange products and services, network with peers, problem-solve, and educate the industry on the latest technologies. Representatives from major industries, including aerospace, agriculture, appliance, and automotive OEMs and their suppliers, to construction, heavy equipment, military and defense, mining and utilities, recreational equipment, and non-automotive transportation, attend this show to see new products and gather ideas and information to make their companies more productive and profitable.

More than 2,000 products and solutions from leading manufactures will be exhibited representing the following technologies and processes: metal forming and fabricating; arc welding; tube & pipe; stamping; assembly; robotics; resistance welding; press brakes; punching; bending; brazing & soldering; safety; hydroforming; lasers; finishing, cutting; controls; inspection; lubrication; consumables; coil processing; software; tooling; material handling; and more. To learn more about the FABTECH International & AWS Welding Show, please visit the website:

<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."

**About FMA:**

The Fabricators and Manufacturers Association Int'l, headquartered in Rockford, Ill., USA, is the world's largest non-profit educational association dedicated exclusively to metal forming and fabricating professionals. Visit [www.fmanet.org](http://www.fmanet.org)

**About SME:**

The Society of Manufacturing Engineers is the world's leading professional society supporting manufacturing education. Through its member programs, publications, expositions, and professional development resources, SME promotes an increased awareness of manufacturing engineering and helps keep manufacturing professionals up to date on leading trends and technologies. Visit [www.sme.org](http://www.sme.org)

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