American Welding Society Supports Workforce Development Goals of Manufacturing Day

Miami, Fla., September 10, 2015 – Facing a shortage of over 374,000 welders by 2024, the American Welding Society (AWS) is focused on strengthening the future of the welding industry and is a proud sponsor of Manufacturing Day on October 2, 2015.

Welding is essential for the joining of materials in the major manufacturing industries and as the manufacturing industry in the U.S. continues to grow, so does the need for skilled welders. Through continued learning and advanced training, AWS strives to inspire a new generation to see the opportunities available in the welding industry.

Because welding is a hands-on career, AWS strives to make the outreach to the new generation of workers hands-on as well. In 2012, AWS introduced a custom-made 53 foot Careers in Welding Trailer, the mobile exhibit travels across the country and lets visitors experience welding first-hand through a virtual reality welding game created by Lincoln Electric.

On the trailer, participants grab a helmet and welding torch equipped with internal monitors that allow them to experience what it would be like to weld in different environments. Others on board the trailer can see the participant’s welding performance on the screen and similar to a video game, the “welders” earn a score based on the quality of their welds.

“The Careers in Welding Trailer has allowed AWS to travel to different venues across the country and introduce welding to a younger generation that might not have ever considered welding as a career choice,” said Monica Pfarr, corporate director of workforce development at AWS. “The hands-on
approach to exploring welding opportunities has been phenomenal. As visitors exit the trailer they are looking at the scholarship information we have available and they are asking for welding school locations. This is exactly the kind of outreach we needed to attract more people to the industry.

Once a person starts to explore welding career opportunities, AWS continues to support their interest and help guide them on their career path. At www.careersinwelding.com visitors can learn about the different industries that employ welders and then link to a welding school locator that lets them search for training centers close to home. And this summer, AWS launched an innovative career planning management system – AWS WeldLink, to bring together individuals, businesses and schools in the welding industry.

AWS WeldLink is architected to address the complete lifecycle of professional welder development. The system allows individuals to create an online profile that will aid them in mapping their current skills and knowledge by tracking education, certifications, and work history, then uses that information to match them with welding career paths, locate welding programs, and directly enroll in training programs through AWS Learning, AWS’s online education program offering innovative online courses. Users can also view open positions in top companies with direct connection to apply. Anyone interested in exploring welding career paths can create a profile at www.awsweldlink.org.

Education and training are vital to the future of welders and the manufacturing industry. AWS Learning online programs offer online courses, virtual conferences, podcasts and online educational library that support continued learning.

“As welding and manufacturing become more high-tech and high-skilled, now is the time to develop innovative ways to attract young people to the industry,” said Pfarr. “Manufacturing Day is a prime example of the industry coming together to showcase the importance of manufacturing and the need to strengthen its workforce.”

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 worldwide, including brazing, soldering, and thermal spraying. Headquartered in Miami, Florida, and led by a volunteer organization of officers and directors, AWS serves more than 70,000 members worldwide and is composed of 22 Districts with 250 Sections and student chapters. For more information, visit the society’s website at http://www.aws.org.