AWS Executive Director Ray Shook Makes Plans to Retire

MIAMI, February 20, 2017. In a recent announcement by the AWS Board of Directors, it was disclosed that AWS Executive Director Ray Shook plans to retire at the end of 2017. Shook will retain a professional relationship with AWS in 2018, in a capacity that will be defined more precisely as his retirement date approaches. The AWS Board of Directors, AWS Staff, and Ray Shook are committed to a process that will result in a successful succession of leadership at the American Welding Society.

Mr. Shook joined AWS in 2002, and will have occupied the Executive Director position for 15 years at the time of his retirement. In this and other occupational roles, he has been closely associated with the welding industry for 44 years.

During Mr. Shook’s tenure with AWS, the Society has experienced significant growth in membership (surpassing 73,000 members). Revenues increased from $15 million to more than $40 million annually, and corresponding significant growth in revenue surplus and net assets.
Mr. Shook also spearheaded the alliance of the AWS Welding Show with FABTECH, a move that created North America’s largest annual metalworking exhibition.

During Mr. Shook’s tenure, the Society has experienced solid expansion globally, and it moved into a new 125,000-square-foot world headquarters in 2012. As a part of this global growth, AWS made the first acquisition in its 95-year history in purchasing the leading welding show in Mexico, Weldmex, in 2007. This effort was expanded in 2009 to include the FABTECH Brand and show partners in Mexico, and in 2016 the partners acquired a finishing show in Mexico, COATech.

Under Mr. Shook’s leadership, two other organizations – the Resistance Welding Manufacturing Association (RWMA) and the International Thermal Spray Association (ITSA) – merged with AWS. In 2015, AWS acquired WEX (World Engineering Exchange), which had previously served independently as the fulfillment partner for AWS codes and standards. Prior to the WEX acquisition, AWS acquired the WEX China Division, with offices in Beijing and Hong Kong.

In addition, Mr. Shook led a team effort to partner with the Indian Institute of Welding (IIW India), initiated by meetings with IIW India officials in Chennai, in 2006. Since then, AWS has provided a special section of editorial material for publication in each issue of the Indian Welding Journal, thus sharing technological advances in welding with a wide audience in India.

Prior to AWS, Mr. Shook spent close to twenty-five years at Hobart Brothers Company in various sales and marketing positions, and most notably as the President of the world’s largest welding training organization, the Hobart Institute of Welding Technology. He also served as Vice President of Sales and Marketing with Stillwater Technologies in Troy, Ohio, a manufacturer of resistance welding products, for five years prior to joining AWS.
Mr. Shook served for six years on the Board of Directors and as Vice President of the International Institute of Welding, which is comprised of 58 member countries and acts as the worldwide network for welding knowledge exchange.

Mr. Shook earned a BS, Cum Laude, from Grace College, Winona Lake, Ind., and served on the college’s Alumni Advisory Board for many years.

In announcing his plans to retire, Ray Shook expressed his deep gratitude to AWS volunteers and staff in helping meet the goals set forth for the Society. He stated, “I cannot overemphasize the importance of enduring support from AWS volunteers, staff, and general membership in helping the Society grow and achieve positive results over the past 15 years. I have enjoyed my job tremendously, and have every confidence that AWS will continue to prosper in the years ahead.”

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 73,000 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 and click on “Pressroom.”