Attention Welders: “We Need You”

The popular “I Want You” adage dates back to the War of 1812, but it also became a recruiting tool with the Uncle Sam Posters during World War II, to have a rallying point and get the support the country needed for volunteering to our military for the good of all Americans and democracy for the rest of the free world.

Today, similar to historic times, the call to welding is “We Need You.” That’s right, our industry needs you. And there are many ways to help, as detailed below.

• Talk about welding and its many career paths to individuals entering the job market.
• Promote and share the very interesting careers in welding.
• In this digital age, go to social media platforms like Instagram and look at how proud welders are of their craft.

Not many industrial segments can claim the bragging rights of welding and fabrication. A welder can work on projects ranging from bridges to high rises and aerospace to transportation. There are many diverse welded structures around the world.

The American Welding Society (AWS) has been there for our industry. This year marks its 100th anniversary; to view a timeline of memorable milestones since 1919, visit aws.org/100. The nonprofit organization advances the science, technology, and application of welding and allied joining and cutting processes worldwide. Examples of its reach include hundreds of industry volunteers forming many committees that create the AWS’s welding codes and specifications. In addition, the AWS Foundation awards various scholarships to our next generation of candidates entering the field.

Needless to say, welding, with its diverse avenues to follow, is one of the most important market segments in our industrial sectors.

The Welding Equipment Manufacturers Association (WEMCO), for which I currently serve as the chair, is a standing committee of AWS made up of volunteers from approximately 75 of the industry-leading welding equipment manufacturers. These companies are sustaining members of AWS and all work in various ways to support the current and next generation of individuals entering our welding industry.

WEMCO and the Careers in Welding Committee, a subcommittee of the AWS Foundation, targets individuals who will be our next generation entering the welding and cutting trade.

WEMCO also manages the annual Excellence in Welding Awards (formerly the Image of Welding Awards). This honor recognizes the individuals who have a positive impact on welding and point the way to the future of supporting the industry.

All of us who attended the WEMCO annual meeting in Doral, Fla., this February were honored to be a part of the AWS Centennial Celebration. One hundred years ago, a special group of volunteers united with the vision of how important joining materials together was to our country. They merged industries to form the American Welding Society and began building what would become the world’s foremost recognized organization for the development of procedures and joining welding processes. Thanks to all past and current AWS staff, members, and volunteers for this milestone.

We must recognize, as the AWS charter members did 100 years ago, how important it is that, in the next 100 years, we need you and those who follow in our footsteps to promote welding.

Every one of us needs to act as an ambassador, mentor, coach, or volunteer to support welding, our very special industry. We need to promote the value of the AWS and WEMCO memberships that come with networking, the spread of real-time industry information through digital channels, and traditional print like the Welding Journal.

AWS is the compass of change in our industry, but each of us needs to reach out to introduce and promote welding, especially to the younger generations. Make this welding promotion your special gift to AWS during its centennial year.

I’m happy to say I’m very proud of my welding career path, which has taken me to many steps of advancement. I have taken the many opportunities that this career has provided, all the way from welding and fitting to becoming a Certified Welding Inspector, quality control manager, and company president. My present volunteer position as WEMCO chairman has enabled me to travel to many locations around the world.

Welding is a wonderful trade that offers many paths. If you’re interested in pursuing it, remember these three parting words: “We Need You.”

Steve Fyffe
WEMCO Chair

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