



Media Contact:

Adrienne Zalkind

Phone: 800-443-9353 (ext. 416)

Email: azalkind@aws.org

MILLER ELECTRIC MFG. AND HOBART BROTHERS COMPANIES DONATE \$1 MILLION TO ESTABLISH WELDER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

American Welding Society's Effort to Reverse Nation's Shortage of Skilled Welders

MIAMI, FLA., October 3, 2006 — The American Welding Society (AWS) announced today that its foundation has received a \$1 million pledge from Miller Electric Mfg. Co. and Hobart Brothers Company to provide initial funding for the American Welding Society Welder Workforce Development Program.

The AWS Foundation will utilize the donation to fund increased training of entry-level welders and specialized training of existing welders in order to address the shortage of trained welders in the United States.

According to AWS and other industry research, the average age of a welder is in the mid-fifties. Fewer graduates entering the profession, coupled with the projected retirement of half of the experienced welding workforce, has led to a shortage of skilled welders that could weaken U.S. manufacturing and the overall economy.

The donor companies have selected Bruce Albrecht to represent them on an AWS Foundation committee to help establish the workforce program. Albrecht is an AWS board of directors member and a trustee of the AWS Foundation.

“It is the expectation of Miller and Hobart Brothers for this gift to serve as a catalyst for other welding-related companies to support this cause,” said Albrecht.

Miller Electric President Mike Weller said, “Miller was the first corporate sponsor of the AWS Foundation when it formed in 1990 to provide scholarships to welding students, and we continue to fund two AWS welding engineering scholarships, as well as the World Skills Competition Scholarship. We are proud to make yet another commitment to the future of welding in North America.”

Sundaram Nagarajan, Hobart Brothers group vice president, said, “Our industry must support the efforts that AWS has undertaken. We are extremely proud to be a founding sponsor of this program, but this must be an effort of the entire welding industry to address the critical shortage of welders.”

“When my wife and I pledged \$100,000 to launch this capital campaign just a few months ago,” said AWS Foundation Chairman Ron Pierce, “our vision was that others would step up to initiate efforts to have a powerful impact on the future. Today, our dream has been realized.”

Sam Gentry, executive director of the AWS Foundation, said, “We hope this unprecedented donation will encourage our other industry partners to join Miller and Hobart Brothers to help us build a stronger welding workforce for America.”

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 www.aws.org and click on "Pressroom."

About Miller Electric Mfg. Co.:

With headquarters in Appleton, Wis., Miller Electric Mfg. Co. (www.millerwelds.com) is a leading worldwide manufacturer of arc welding equipment and related systems for metalworking, construction, maintenance and other applications. Miller Electric is a wholly owned subsidiary of Illinois Tool Works Inc., Glenview, Ill.

About Hobart Brothers Company:

Hobart Brothers Company (www.hobartbrothers.com) of Troy, Ohio, is a leading manufacturer of welding filler metals marketed under the brand names Hobart, Tri-Mark, McKay and Corex. Hobart Brothers Company is a wholly owned subsidiary of Illinois Tool Works Inc., Glenview, Ill.

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