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## **AWS HONORS 2006 IMAGE OF WELDING AWARD WINNERS**

### *Tells the Stories of Honorees Instrumental in Advancing Image of Welding*

Miami, FL, September 20, 2006 – The American Welding Society (AWS) and the Welding Equipment Manufacturers Committee (WEMCO) announced today the recipients of the 2006 Fourth Annual Image of Welding Awards. Issued in seven categories, these awards recognize individuals and organizations that have shown exemplary dedication to promoting the image of welding in their communities.

Each award winner will be honored at the Image of Welding Awards Ceremony taking place at 10:00 AM on November 2, 2006, at the FABTECH International and AWS Welding Show. The Show will run from October 31 through November 2 at the Georgia World Conference Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Following are the 2006 Image of Welding Award winners and their individual stories:

- **The Individual category award is presented to Christopher Coble.** Christopher Coble, a North Carolina State graduate, is the managing director for the welding program at Environmental Air Systems (EAS), a mechanical contractor and manufacturer of custom air handling units with 600 employees serving the Southeastern U.S. Mr. Coble has modernized EAS' welding program by creating an automated identification and tracking system, which has streamlined the company's ability to share important data and gain access to information on pertinent welding procedures, qualifications and techniques. An advocate of continued education, Mr. Coble is creating EAS' first educational program that will allow employee's to train on-site and earn certifications in various welding procedures. Ronald Gardner, mechanical pipe superintendent at EAS said, "EAS has committed to a progressive welding program and the continued education of employees. We could not achieve this without Christopher's experience in the field of welding and countless hours of enhancing programs for this company."
- **The Section (AWS local chapter) category award is presented to the AWS Indiana Section.** As one of AWS' most active Sections, the Indiana Section is committed to encouraging students and others to get involved in the field of welding. This year, the Section conducted the Indiana Skills USA contest and both the Indiana State and Indianapolis Regional skills contests. Section members must devote an extraordinary amount of time and effort to fully manage these contests, including providing materials and scouting judges. The Section is also conducting contests on a county level throughout the state to encourage more students to get involved. The Mid-West Team Welding Competition is the Section's largest event. Local schools, community leaders and companies gather together for this three-day event, which involves 20 high school welding teams from across Indiana, Kentucky and Illinois. By conducting contests such as these and encouraging members of the community and local schools to get involved, the Indiana Section has been a true leader in communicating the importance of welding in today's world.

- **The Large Business (200 or more employees) category award is presented to the Hobart Institute of Welding Technology.** Founded in 1930 as a part of the Hobart Brothers Company based in Troy, Ohio, the Hobart Institute of Welding Technology has built its reputation as a first-rate educational institution that began training welders during the World War II era. The success of the school's training programs led to its rapid growth over the last 75 years. Today, the Institute has graduated 85,000 students and is recognized internationally. Additionally, the Institute houses the John H. Blankenbuehler Memorial Library, which includes one of the most comprehensive collections of welding books, research and related subject materials. The Institute's modern 100,000 square-foot facility includes 150 welding booths, 13 classrooms and four laboratories. With 20 instructors boasting 400 years of expertise, the Institute offers a wide range of welding training, including technical continuing education; specialized training; welder qualification and certification; field training; and full-service arc welding training. The Institute holds accreditations from the Commission of Career Schools, Colleges of Technology, the Ohio State Board of Career Colleges and Schools, and the AWS.
- **The Small Business (less than 200 employees) category award is presented to Keville Enterprises, Inc.** Established in 1991, Keville is a full service construction management and inspection services firm. With 95 employees and 12 offices countrywide, Keville provides both quality control and quality assurance welding inspection services to agencies across 20 states, including highly revered companies such as Amtrak and the US Postal Service. Keville has been featured in *Construction Journal Magazine* and recently, one of its employees was honored by AWS as the Certified Welding Inspector of the year in 2005. Keville has shown superior dedication to promoting the Image of Welding throughout its communities by encouraging its employees, many of whom hold various AWS certifications, to get involved. One such example of this is the efforts of Keville's Certified Welding Educators, who provide welding training at the Boston Local 7 Ironworkers Union as well as the Local 56 Pile Drivers Union apprentice training programs. Additionally, the company's Certified Welding Engineers have provided weld inspection training to numerous engineering firms and transportation authorities.
- **The Distributor (welding products) category award is presented to the Indiana Oxygen Company.** Founded in 1915, the Indiana Oxygen Company is one of the oldest gas and hard goods distributors in the United States. From its birth as a small family business, the company has evolved into a well-respected network of nearly 50 warehouses and branches throughout Indiana. In fact, Indiana Oxygen is the official gas supplier of the Indianapolis 500 and runs a garage at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. As the company continues to thrive in Indiana's welding market, its corporate culture is reminiscent of days long ago. Its associates are encouraged to participate and support AWS local Section initiatives and the company remains heavily involved in community events promoting welding education, including the prominent Skills USA and Mid-West welding competitions.
- **The Educator category award is presented to Leland Vetter at Eastern Wyoming College.** "It's really about people, not welding," said Leland Vetter, as he reflects on his successful tenure as a welding instructor at Eastern Wyoming College. When Mr. Vetter was tasked to build the College's first welding program at only 22 years old, he recalls, "I was scared, but I knew one thing for sure – I knew how to weld." And he proved it. Over the years, the program has earned him and the school much acclaim, largely due to its success as a training center for a variety of professionals, not only welders. His approach to teaching in the classroom is akin

to that of a demanding boss who expects high-quality workmanship and respect for the field. “We take welding very seriously,” Vetter said. “We begin early in the morning and go until early evening. There is no room for students who miss class, come in late, or do not put 100% into their training to be a competent welder.” In its 26th year, the program has been expanded to include machine tooling, hydraulics, and specialized welding curriculum. Enrollment has grown from 13 to over 50 students, and most of the instructors are prior graduates. EWC’s welding department is an AWS Accredited Testing Facility and the program has received over \$400,000 in donations from private individuals and businesses in the community of only 5,000 people. Vetter continues to regularly visit local high school vocational students to talk about his career and encourage others to join the field.

- **The Educational Facility category award is presented to PipeFitters' Local Union 597 Training Center, Mokena, Illinois.** It’s difficult not to notice the vast beige and yellow state-of-the-art training center that sits adjacent to a tranquil lake in the Village of Mokena. It is the new pride and joy of the PipeFitters' Local Union 597. This spacious facility is equipped with nearly 100 welding booths, each with its own exhaust system, high-quality coupon holding fixture and mutiprocess welding machine. The training center also boasts computer rooms with 40 student stations, modernized lecture hall, 250-seat auditorium, and a complete HVAC instructional and practical area. With courses in SMAW, GTAW, MIG, Downhill, Orbital and Mechanical Pipe Welding, the facility trains on a wide variety of metals, including aluminum, carbon steel, copper, stainless steel, chrome and titanium. Graduation requirements for apprentices and journeymen are challenging, but with a student to instructor ratio of 8 to 1, students are never short of attention. The training center has become of the most revered in the industry, raising the bar in welding education.

### **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 WEMCO**

WEMCO is a standing committee of the American Welding Society. The committee is comprised of executives from welding industry suppliers to promote the welding equipment market. Enhancing the image of welding as a critical industry is amongst their priority programs. For more information on WEMCO membership and benefits, visit the committee's Web site at [www.aws.org/wemco](http://www.aws.org/wemco).

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