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American Welding Society Foundation Names Robb F. Howell to Board of Directors

Miami, FL, January 7, 2008 – The [American Welding Society](#) (AWS), the world’s largest organization dedicated to advancing the science, technology and application of welding, and the [AWS Foundation](#) announced today it has named Robb F. Howell as a board trustee to the AWS Foundation board of directors. Mr. Howell’s 3-term will begin on January 1, 2008.

Mr. Howell’s decision to become involved in the welding industry came naturally. He is the grandson of William H. Hobart Sr., one of the original co-founders of the Ohio-based Hobart Brothers Company, which is now a subsidiary of [Illinois Tool Works Inc.](#) (NYSE: ITW), a manufacturer of advanced industrial technology. His father, William B. Howell, was an executive of Hobart Brothers Company for many years and a lifetime member of the AWS.

Having been associated with Hobart Brothers for over 20 years, Mr. Howell has a broad background in the welding industry. He has both domestic as well as international experience in operations, human resources and sales and marketing. He also served as a member of Hobart Brothers Board of Directors. Currently, Mr. Howell is owner and president of MCD Plastics & Manufacturing, an Ohio-based firm that produces precision-machined plastic components. Mr. Howell also currently serves as member of the Hobart Institute of Welding Technology Board of Directors.

AWS Foundation chairman Ronald C. Pierce, said “Mr. Howell’s dedication to the welding industry is aligned with the goals of the AWS Foundation, which in 2006 embarked on a \$10 million dollar industry capital campaign, [Welding for the Strength of America](#).” The campaign is aimed at facilitating programs and other initiatives designed at relieving the nationwide shortage of welders.”

It is estimated that there will be a shortage of at least 200,000 welders by 2010. At year-end 2007, the AWS Foundation has raised \$2.6 million toward the campaign effort.

“Robb is an excellent addition to our AWS Foundation board of directors,” said AWS Foundation chairman Ronald C. Pierce. “The shortage of skilled welders is one of the largest threats to the welding industry. We believe Mr. Howell’s enthusiasm and commitment to this field will translate into new ideas on ways in which AWS can help to unite, strengthen and evolve the industry, and make a real difference for future generations,” Pierce said.

Mr. Howell is a 17-year member of the American Welding Society and a long-time donor to the AWS Foundation. In 2000, Mr. Howell and his sister, Deborah H. Kurd, endowed a \$50,000.00 scholarship in their father’s name, the William B. Howell Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded annually to one student who is pursuing a four-year degree in a welding program at an accredited university.

Note: To view photos associated with this release, please visit the [press photo gallery](#) in AWS’ press room: <http://www.aws.org/pr/photos.html>.

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 more than 50,000 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](#).”