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AWS LAUNCHES NEW ONLINE WELDING SCHOOL LOCATOR TO HELP EXPAND WELDER WORKFORCE

— *Searchable Database Lists Nearly 3,500 U.S. and International Welding Schools*

Miami, FL, April 3, 2008 – The [American Welding Society](http://www.aws.org) (AWS), the world’s largest organization dedicated to advancing the science, technology and application of welding, announced today that it has launched a new online welding school locator. This tool is designed to boost recruitment industry-wide and help relieve an intense shortage of welders. With nearly half of the North American welder workforce due to retire soon, the U.S. faces a potential shortage of more than 200,000 skilled welders by 2010.

Due to the rapid changes in the welding education community, AWS decided to upgrade its original welding school locator constructed by the AWS Education Committee in 2003. The newly enhanced version provides updated contact and other important information for nearly 3,500 U.S. and international welding schools. Located on the AWS Web site, www.aws.org, the welding school locator is available free to students, parents, teachers, and others in the welding community. Schools listed on the welding school locator are searchable by zip code, state, or city. In addition, many of the schools featured include specific welding program information, such as class capacity, internship availability, career paths, number of classroom shifts and types of qualifications received at completion.

“We are extremely pleased to make available a new and improved welding school locator exclusively on the AWS web site,” said Ray Shook, AWS executive director. “Several U.S. construction and manufacturing companies continue to report significant problems due to the shortage of welders. It is our mission to offer valuable tools, such as the welding school locator, to help draw positive attention to the industry and lead more students to careers in welding.”

The welding school locator is part of a broader AWS initiative, the *Welder Workforce Development Program*. In response to industry demand, the AWS Foundation, a subsidiary of AWS, initiated the *Welder Workforce Development Program* in 2006 to address the critical need for recruitment and specialized training of entry level welders while supporting industry workforce needs. The *Welder Workforce Development Program* is an essential component of the AWS Foundation’s \$10 million capital campaign, *Welding for the Strength of America*, which is aimed at facilitating programs, scholarships and other initiatives in support of the welding industry.

“Our quality of life is dependent on the strength of our manufacturing, construction and maintenance and repair industries and each needs welding professionals to thrive,” said Dennis

Marks, managing director, AWS Educational Services. “Even in a stagnant economy, there is always a need for welders, and with a ballooning shortage straining businesses across the country, there has never been a better time to enter the industry. The AWS welding school locator is the first step to a future career in welding.”

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](#).”

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