

**Media Contact:**  
Adrienne Zalkind  
800-443-9353 (ext. 416)  
[azalkind@aws.org](mailto:azalkind@aws.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Lincoln Electric Supports American Welding Society Foundation in Campaign to Relieve Welder Shortage**

- *Lincoln to contribute \$300,000 and marketing support*
- *New welding career video to be produced by Lincoln and AWS Foundation*

**MIAMI, FL., April 28, 2008** — The [American Welding Society](#) (AWS) announced today that [The Lincoln Electric Company](#) will donate \$300,000 to the AWS Foundation to help relieve a nationwide shortage of welders. In association with this donation, Lincoln and the AWS Foundation will collaborate on new marketing initiatives to promote welding careers and help bolster the ranks of welders.

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 continuing retirement of experienced welders, has led to a shortage of skilled welders that could weaken the U.S. manufacturing sector and overall economy.

Lincoln will donate the funds over a two year period beginning in 2008. Lincoln will also contribute marketing support and partner with AWS to produce a promotional welding career video to be used online, in classrooms and throughout industry. The video will feature several well-known personalities who have sponsorship agreements with Lincoln.

In addition, this donation will support the AWS Foundation's *Welder Workforce Development Program*. The foundation launched the program in 2006 to address the critical need for recruitment and specialized training of entry-level welders while supporting industry workforce needs. It 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. At year-end 2007, the AWS Foundation had raised \$2.6 million toward its campaign effort.

Ronald C. Pierce, AWS Foundation Chairman, said, "This generous contribution to our campaign will enable AWS to launch much-needed programs and marketing initiatives toward the promotion of welding careers. Lincoln Electric has always been a very important partner to AWS, and their continued support helps us build a stronger welding workforce for America."

The AWS Foundation will utilize this donation to fund new programs and marketing initiatives for the recruitment of welders and promotion of welding careers. In addition, funds will support the foundation's Solutions Opportunity Squad (SOS), which is made up of new AWS staff individuals who consult with and build strategies for end users and welding educational institutions. They will also support local AWS Sections, businesses and other organizations that have specific workforce development needs.

“We are proud to participate in these AWS programs,” said Richard Seif, senior vice president, Global Marketing, Lincoln Electric, and AWS Foundation board trustee. “This campaign is new territory for all of us. We are excited about the direction in which AWS is headed to attract the best and the brightest to the industry and we are particularly impressed with their SOS team. The shortage of welders is one of the most important issues facing our industry. It is absolutely critical that we make motivated, organized and responsible individuals aware that welding is a safe and rewarding career option. We feel the video will also become an important tool since it will give us a way to directly reach those who are looking into new or different career paths.”

Lincoln Electric has been an AWS Sustaining Member Company for 71 years. During its history of involvement with the AWS, the company and many individual employees have endowed scholarships, funded awards and served with the AWS Foundation, including incoming AWS President Victor Matthews, a 44-year Lincoln employee.

#### 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 53,000 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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