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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Industry Veterans Named to Head Welding Foundation Board

Miami, Fla., November 5, 2008 – Gerald D. Utrachi has been named chairman and Richard J. Seif has been named vice-chairman of the board of trustees of the American Welding Society (AWS) Foundation.

Utrachi is president of WA Technology in Florence, S.C. Previously, Utrachi served with ESAB Welding and Cutting Products as vice president of equipment marketing. His unique background combines management experience in research, engineering, and marketing.

Utrachi is an industry expert in submerged arc welding. He has educated an entire generation of sales personnel, end users, and distributors in a wide variety of welding processes and equipment through personal training and the development of training materials. He has written for numerous publications and has been awarded five U.S. patents. He served as president of AWS in 2007, and has been a board member of the AWS Foundation since 2000.

Utrachi replaces Ron Pierce, who had been chair of the AWS Foundation since 1993, and has now been named honorary chairman and trustee emeritus of the AWS Foundation.

Seif is senior vice president of global marketing for Lincoln Electric in Cleveland, Ohio, and also has responsibility for Lincoln's Automation Division, technical training, and service for the U.S. He also directs sales and marketing for the Sub-Saharan region of Africa. He has served as an AWS Foundation trustee since 2004.

Since 1989, the AWS Foundation has distributed about \$4 million in scholarships for welding education aimed at careers such as welders, educators, engineers, and researchers. The foundation also employs a field staff to coordinate the efforts of local companies, government offices, and schools to help meet workforce needs.

The focus of the AWS Foundation has been on solutions for a severe shortage of skilled welders needed to work on America's aging infrastructure and in the booming energy sector. Industry is facing a shortfall of 200,000 skilled welders by the year 2010.

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 more than 200 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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