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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **American Welding Society Adds \$1.1 Million to Scholarship Endowments**

*Miami, Fla., November 5, 2008* – The American Welding Society (AWS) has added \$1.1 million to the multimillion-dollar portfolio of scholarship endowments of the AWS Foundation. The funding from the American Welding Society’s cash reserves will enable the AWS Foundation to dramatically increase its scholarship awards to future welding professionals.

“This major new endowment is specifically targeted to those individuals who are seeking a career in welding,” said Sam Gentry, executive director of the AWS Foundation. “This will help meet the urgent need for welding personnel in the American workplace.”

With retirements of welders exceeding new welders coming into the field, there is a projected shortage of 200,000 welders in the U.S. by 2010. According to Gentry, the average age of a welder is currently about 54.

Welders are now needed in manufacturing and construction, particularly in major energy and infrastructure projects across the country. Local AWS District volunteers are going to be the primary means of distributing the new scholarship money in accordance with local industry needs.

“Volunteer leaders in AWS Districts know the needs and trends of local industry,” said Gentry, “so they can efficiently distribute scholarships to the best candidates, whether they are entering a technical school program or a college.”

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.

A video distributed by the AWS Foundation features Jay Leno and other television personalities stressing the need for welders and the benefits of a 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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