



American Welding Society



NEWS FROM AWS

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American Welding Society Appoints New Director to AWS Foundation SOS Team

Connie Bowling to Lead the AWS Foundation's SOS Gulf Coast Division for Welder Workforce Development

Miami, FL, May 28, 2008 – The [American Welding Society](#) (AWS), the world's largest organization dedicated to advancing the science, technology and application of welding, recently announced the appointment of Connie Bowling as director of the [AWS Foundation's](#) Solutions Opportunity Squad (SOS) Gulf Coast Division within its *Welder Workforce Development Program*.

In this role, Ms. Bowling will lead SOS endeavors in the Gulf Coast. The SOS team is made up of new AWS staff individuals who consult with and build strategies for end users and welding educational institutions. The SOS was created as part of the AWS Foundation's *Welder Workforce Development Program*, which was launched in 2006 to contend with the growing shortage of skilled welders in the United States. It is estimated that there will be a shortage of at least 200,000 welders by 2010.

“We are pleased to welcome Ms. Bowling to our AWS Foundation and new SOS team,” said Ray Shook, AWS executive director. “Our *Welder Workforce Development Program* is one of our most important initiatives, and the SOS team is a critical part of its future success. We are pleased to be able to expand our SOS team and focus on specific regions throughout the U.S. that have a heavy welding industry concentration both in business and education. The strength of this program can mean a brighter future for our industry and thousands of students and other individuals who seek a positive career choice.”

Ms. Bowling has been working in the welding industry for nearly 10 years in both welding engineering and manufacturing engineering capacities. She last served with Bell Steel Company in Pensacola, FL, where she managed purchasing and quality assurance. Ms. Bowling previously held positions as a welding engineer at Atlantic Marine Inc. in Mobile, AL, and a supply management engineer at John Deere

Seeding Group in Moline, IL. Ms. Bowling received her Bachelor of Science degree in welding engineering at The Ohio State University.

AWS' *Welder Workforce Development Program* is intended to address the critical need for recruitment and specialized training of entry level welders while providing for industry workforce needs. This is an entirely new kind of program designed to fulfill an immediate need for welders across North America. The program was born out of a generous \$1 million donation from Miller Electric Manufacturing and Hobart Brothers, as well as a \$100,000 contribution from AWS Past President Ron Pierce and his wife, Joyce (among many other donors). It is a critical 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 has raised \$2.6 million toward the campaign effort.

*****Note: To view photo and caption, please visit the [press photo gallery](http://www.aws.org/pr/photos.html) 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 about 160 sections and student chapters. For more information, visit the Society's website at and click on "[pressroom](#)."

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