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American Welding Society Announces 2007 Professional Welders Competition Award Winners

***** 188 Welders from the U.S. and Canada competed for the grand prize of \$2500 *****

Miami, FL, November 21, 2007 – After 188 welders from across the United States and Canada went head-to-head in the ultimate welding challenge, only one walked away with the \$2,500 grand prize. The [American Welding Society](http://www.aws.org) (AWS) announced today that winner as well as the other 11 finalists of the 2007 Professional Welders Competition, which took place on November 12-13 at the FABTECH Int. and AWS Welding Show in Chicago, IL. AWS is the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the science, technology and application of welding.

The Professional Welders Competition is held every two years at the Fabtech Int. and AWS Welding Show. The next competition will take place in 2009 in Chicago, IL. The 2007 competition awarded cash prizes of \$2,500, \$1,000 or \$500 to the top three finalists. The grand prize of \$2,500 was awarded to Luis Aceves, welding instructor at the Manitowoc Crane Corporation in Manitowoc, WI. The second place winner, Kodi Welch of Menasha, WI, received \$1,000, and in third place, George Rolla of Murrieta, CA, received \$500. In addition, each of the top 12 contestants was awarded a duffel bag which included a variety of welding tools and equipment.

“This year’s Professional Welders Competition yielded a record number of contestants and we are thankful to all of our judges and support staff who were able to make this our most exciting event yet,” said Ray Shook, AWS Executive Director. “Unlike many manufacturing professions, welding skills must be honed over years of practice. Many of our contestants are veterans of the field who have turned their passion for the industry into lifelong careers and some have even ventured into artistic metalwork. This competition brings out the very passion that keeps these men and women in the industry and we are pleased to see them continue to participate in our competition.”

The top 12 competitors in the 2007 AWS Professional Welders Competition are:

1. Luis T. Aceves - Manitowoc, WI
2. Kodi Welch - Menasha, WI
3. George Rolla - Murrieta, CA
4. Mike Ho - Edmonton, AB Canada
5. George Crumley - Quinton, AL
6. Greg Larson - Hokah, MN
7. Kenneth Mapes - Laurel, MD
8. Joe Steenhoek - Colfax, IA
9. George Calancea Jr. - Douglasville, PA
10. Isaac Carrion - Austin, TX
11. Thomas Hiltz - Chana, IL
12. Doug Tennant - Green Bay, WI

The competition was timed and each welder was given five minutes to complete a 5/16 inch fillet weld using 5/32 inch E7018 electrode on low carbon steel. The welding procedure involved welding a 3x3x3/8 inch angle to a 1/4 inch thick horizontal plate using Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW). A team of AWS Certified Welding Inspectors judged the competition using the criteria for size and appearance of the fillet weld as stated in AWS D1.1/D1.1M:2006, *Structural Welding Code—Steel*. The judges' results were verified using automated inspection equipment supplied by Servo-Robot, Inc.

Volunteers from the AWS Indiana Section helped to organize and operate the competition, supported by instructors and students from the Chicago area, Wyoming and Texas. Sponsors of the competition included ESAB Welding and Cutting, The Lincoln Electric Corporation, Miller Electric Manufacturing Company, Wilson Industries, Servo-Robot, Inc., Jackson Safety Products, Great Lakes Air Systems, LAPCO Manufacturing, Markal Corporation, Arc One and Steiner Industries. Contest weldments were donated and prepared by Westfield Steel, Inc, Lift-A-Loft Corporation, Ivy Tech Community College and New Castle Area Career Programs.

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](#)."

Note: To view photos associated with this release, please visit the [press photo gallery](#) in AWS' press room: <http://www.aws.org/pr/photos.html>.

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