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Registration Open for GAWDA’s Spring Management Conference

The Association’s Annual Spring Convention is May 11-13 in Boca Raton

HOLLYWOOD, Florida – The Gases and Welding Distributors Association (GAWDA) has scheduled its annual spring conference of distributor and supplier members for May 11-13, and registration for the event now is open.

The Spring Management Conference (SMC) is being held at the Boca Raton Resort & Club, a Waldorf Astoria Resort. Several hundred GAWDA members and their guests are expected to be present. Attendees are the owners, presidents, CEOs, COOS, and sales, marketing, and operations executives at welding and gases distributor and supplier companies from across the United States and several locations in Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean, along with their guests.

Keynote speakers for the conference include:

- Chris Mapes, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Lincoln Electric Holdings, Inc.
- Alan Beaulieu, president and principal of ITR Economics, a new GAWDA consultant, who will present a talk on the industry economic forecast
- Curt Steinhorst, of the Center for Generational Kinetics, an expert on communication with and by millennial-aged people
- Kelly Latimer, the Women of Gases and Welding Luncheon keynoter. She is a test pilot for Virgin Galactic who also served 20 years in the U.S. Air Force as an instructor pilot who flew military transport and combat missions.

Also featured in the business session is a program presented by GAWDA Supplier Member George Ratermann, of Ratermann Manufacturing. He will lead a panel discussion titled, “Generation Next, Part 2.” It will feature a panel that looks at the consumer-customer transaction component of the industry from the millennial and Generation Next age-group perspective. Panelists will describe their interests, communication style preferences and the approaches they prefer as customers dealing with a business.

The goal of the program is to provide a better understanding of generational differences that can occur in the customer-relationship space.

The spring conference also features a trade show for the industry. The GAWDA Contact Booth Program, which houses more than 100 GAWDA member exhibitors, showcases the latest product developments and a range of services that can help distributor members run their businesses more profitably and efficiently.

GAWDA also will announce the winners of its annual scholarship program. The association has awarded a total of \$94,000 (in the form of 47 scholarships for \$2,000 each) since the GAWDA Foundation program was established in 2013. The program is designed to encourage young people to consider and follow careers in the welding and gases distribution industry.

Members can register for the event functions and associated activities directly via the GAWDA portal at www.gawda.org.

GAWDA represents more than 500 small to very large welding equipment and industrial gas distributors, as well several hundred manufacturers, suppliers, and service providers to the welding and industrial gas industry. GAWDA's mission is to promote the safe operation and economic vitality of distributors of industrial gases and related welding equipment and supplies. For more information, visit: www.gawda.org.