



1 Oakwood Blvd., Suite 195, Hollywood, FL 33020 / 844-251-3219 - 954-367-7728 / [gawda@gawda.org](mailto:gawda@gawda.org)

## **NEWS - July 17, 2017 - For Immediate Release**

### **Registration Now Open for GAWDA's Fall Convention, Contact Booth Program Annual Conference is Oct. 1-4 in New York; Hall of Famer Coach Lou Holtz is Speaking**

**Hollywood, Fla.** --- Registration is open for the next national meeting of the Gases and Welding Distributors Association (GAWDA), which takes place in October 1-4 in New York City. The event is being hosted at the New York Marriott Marquis at Times Square and Broadway, and its theme is, "Bullish on GAWDA."

Also open for registration is the conference's annual fall Contact Booth Program. The half-day showcase of industry vendors, products and services takes place on Tuesday, October 3. John Ospina, executive director of the association, notes that since available spaces for the booth program tend to fill quickly, GAWDA members who want to reserve exhibit spaces should sign up as quickly as possible.

Details of the fall meeting schedule and contact booth program can be obtained on GAWDA's website ([gawda.org](http://gawda.org)), where the association also hosts an online registration form for members and their guests.

#### **Presenters Named**

Three key conference presenters have been announced. College Football Hall of Famer Coach Lou Holtz will address the gathering, according to Ospina. A head coach for 34 years at both the college and professional levels, Holtz is the only coach in National Collegiate Athletic Association history to lead six different programs to bowl games.

In addition, Alan Beaulieu, GAWDA chief economist and president and principal of noted economic forecasting firm ITR Economics, will offer his outlook for the U.S. economy. Daniel Van Der Vliet, executive director of the Smith Family Business Center at Cornell University, is scheduled to lead a panel discussion on family businesses.

#### **GAWDA Gives Back at \$2 Million**

GAWDA also will present checks to two New York City-based organizations as part of its continuing GAWDA Gives Back program. Over the past 17 years since the initiative began, GAWDA members have contributed just over \$2 million to non-profit organizations, and that sum has been distributed to 22 groups in 13 different communities across the United States. The program was begun as a way to leave gifts of goodwill and tangible resources with the communities that host the association's annual business meeting. In 2016, GAWDA presented \$190,000 to two Maui, Hawaii organizations.

This year, the groups Candlelighters and Headstrong have been selected to benefit from GAWDA Gives Back. Candlelighters assists children who have cancer and their families. The group provides practical help as well as friendship and support, plus opportunities to enjoy fun experiences in New York, during a child's treatment. Headstrong offers free and confidential mental health treatment for military service veterans in what it says is an "evidence-based, cost-free, stigma-free and frictionless mental health treatment program for post-9/11 combat veterans that works."

### **Installation of New President**

GAWDA 2017-2018 President Mark Raimy, of Welders Supply Company – A Raimy Corporation, based in Erie, Pa., will preside over the conference. His one-year term comes to an end at the meeting, and the association installs its next president. Ned Lane, of CeeKay Supply, of St. Louis, Mo., will lead the organization for the 2017-2018 year. Also on the schedule are the election of additional officers, board of directors and standing committee meetings and the presentation of funds from GAWDA's year-long charitable contributions initiative.

GAWDA members seeking details about meeting events, more information about the contact booth program or to register to attend can reach Membership Services Manager Stephen Hill (shill@gawda.org); call 844-251-3219 (toll free) or 954-367-7728; or go online at: [www.gawda.org](http://www.gawda.org).

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### **About GAWDA**

Founded in 1945, the Gases and Welding Distributors Association (GAWDA) is dedicated to promoting the safe operation and economic vitality of distributors of industrial gases and related welding equipment supplies. Through its *GAWDA Gives Back* campaign, association members have donated almost \$2 million over the last 16 years to 22 different charitable organizations in 13 communities across the U.S. Since 2013, GAWDA and its members also have provided scholarships totaling \$94,000 to 47 young people interested in studies leading to careers in the industry. For more information, visit the association's website at [www.gawda.org](http://www.gawda.org).