Career of the Month: Underwater Welder

Job Description:
An underwater welder works underwater performing various industrial tasks, including building offshore oil platforms, repairing ships, and maintaining underwater pipelines. Apart from being trained in welding techniques, they must have advanced skills in both diving and welding. Underwater welders use specialized equipment that is safe for use in water. They must also be able to inspect, research, test equipment and conduct experiments.

Pay and Job outlook:
According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Mean hourly wage for the job category of Commercial Diver, which includes Underwater Welder, is $26.38 and the Mean annual wage is $54,880. The top 10% of workers in the category earn $45.40 or $94,440. However, many Underwater Welders are paid project-by-project. Factors that can affect pay include diving depth, dive method, the diving environment, and length of experience.

The industry that employs the most Commercial Divers is the “Other Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction”. States with the highest employment level in this occupation include Louisiana, Texas, Florida and California. The American Welding Society (AWS) says that demand for this job is based on supply and demand; however, demand has been increasing due to 1) deep-sea oil and gas development and 2) marine infrastructure repair and development.

Required Training:
Most Underwater Welders must complete three different training programs: Commercial Diving, Welding and Underwater Welding. These three programs can be taken separately or through a comprehensive underwater welding program. Certifications are also common requirements and can include: a commercial diving physical examination, a commercial diver certification card, and an American Welding Society certified welder certification.

Web Resources:
http://www.trade-schools.net/trades/underwater-welding.asp
http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes499092.htm
http://www.aws.org/education/plunge.html
http://www.careersinwelding.com/students.php

College/Program:
To find an entry-level job you should choose an accredited school, ensure hands-on-experience and pass certification. This job also requires you to be open to travel and be fit enough to pass physical examinations. This bulletin board highlights a few programs that could begin a career related to underwater welding, marine technology, and marine science.