



News Release
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CEO panel at GAWDA National Convention



DAVENPORT, IOWA (Nov. 5, 2021) – Six participants, including S.J. Smith CEO Richelle Smith-Brecht, participated in The CEO Track, the opening session to the GAWDA National Convention in Colorado Springs, CO in October.

Panel members included Smith-Brecht; Jason Krieger, president/CEO, American & Gas; Jenny McCall, president, WESCO Gas & Welding Supply, Inc.; Mark Raimy, CEO, Welders Supply Company; Wally Brant, CEO, Indiana Oxygen Company; and Alex Kennedy, CEO, Red Ball Oxygen. Discussion centered on the SWOT analysis, discussing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the industrial gas and welding industry.

When asked about what a good day as a CEO looks like, Smith-Brecht said typically, that is a day where “we are making decisions, pushing the company forward, with the values that are most important to S.J. Smith.”

“I love being involved with the employees, so a good day for me is being in a CI meeting, working with employees, understanding their strengths and what they’re bringing to the progress of the team. Communication for me is integral. Always, my job is ... making sure the company is going after the short-term and long-term goals, our vision, our mission statement and more importantly our values.”



One of the discussions centered on what the room and industry will look like in five years. “I was really pleased to see that growth in distributor numbers. I think you’re going to see a more online, younger group. And I think and hope we’ll see more distributors,” said Smith-Brecht

The GAWDA (Gases and Welding Distributors Association) National Convention is an annual event for business owners and the gas and welding industry’s top decision makers, addressing the market at the big-picture level and providing an occasion for strategic networking with industry leaders. S.J. Smith is a GAWDA member. For more information on GAWDA, go to <https://www.gawda.org/>

For more information on S.J. Smith, please contact us at 563-324-5237, or visit our website at sjsmith.com. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

About S.J. Smith

Since 1950, S.J. Smith has evolved into a dynamic company, using the latest technology to find cutting edge solutions for customers and provide quality products in a prompt and professional manner. In addition to being a primary provider of cylinder and specialty gas options, including industrial, medical, micro-bulk and laser-assist systems, and cryogenic and technical services, S.J. Smith also provides welding equipment, protective gear and accessories for specific needs such as ITB or MIG welding, arc gouging, plasma cutting and more.

Founded by Sylvester “S.J.” and Helen Smith, and expanded by their son Richard Smith, who joined the company in 1969, the company is now led by the third generation: Richelle Smith-Brecht, president and CEO; Eric Smith, director of operations and Christopher Smith, assistant pricing manager/expediter. S.J. Smith has 11 locations in Iowa, Illinois and Missouri which provide individualized service to customers large and small, based on the company values of honesty and integrity, safety and customer-driven excellence.

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