

## **For Immediate Release**

# **SMARTTCP CHOSEN BY KERN STEEL FABRICATION TO AUTOMATE STRUCTURAL STEEL WELDING PROCESSES**

## **SmartTCP Automatic Welding Solution for Small Batch Fabrications to Shorten Welding Time and Increase Production Volume for leading Designer and Builder of Commercial Steel Constructions**

**Farmington Hills, Michigan** — September 16, 2008 – SmartTCP a leading supplier of automatic welding solutions, today announced it has been selected by Kern Steel Fabrication, of Bakersfield, California to automate its structural steel welding process. The robotic welding solution, which is designed for fabrications in small batch production, combines hardware and software into a flexible and efficient welding cell that will automate both the robot programming and the weld production of Kern's high mix, low volume parts.

"With the current shortage of expert welders coupled with the spiraling costs associated with finding skilled labor, we felt that automating our manual welding process was the next investment we could make that would give us a real return on investment given the very competitive climate of the structural steel industry," said Tom Champness, president of Kern Steel Fabrication. "The key however was to find a solution that addressed our high mix, low volume part requirement and the programming challenges associated with this mix. Typically, robot programming for welding is a complex and time consuming undertaking making it uneconomical for small batch production. We believe with SmartTCP's software the programming will be extremely quick and flexible."

In tests recently completed one of the company's parts, a structural beam with several flange ribs and web stiffeners, took the SmartTCP solution 4.5 hours to weld where the company's manual process took approximately 40-50 hours to complete. The company easily sees between 6 to 10 times savings in labor. Kern Steel Fabrication anticipates that the automated SmartTCP system will help them address the worldwide shortage of quality welding experts, save on labor costs and shorten its welding times, thereby significantly increasing manufacturing capacity and improving their bottom line.

"We are very excited to be working with Kern and to be able to offer this solution throughout the construction industry where large, heavy and complex welding projects with low volumes are common place," said Efi Lebel, founder and CEO of SmartTCP. "We are also excited to be working with Kern to integrate the construction industry's 3D detailing packages with the SmartTCP solution to provide the industry with the most comprehensive, efficient and cutting edge welding automation solution possible."

The SmartTCP solution to be implemented in the Kern facility will include a bridge gantry system 92' long with two head & tail positioners (30,000 lbs. capacity each) , one KUKA KR6 arc ceiling mount robot, welding equipment and the SmartTCP welding automation software.



**for fabrications in  
small batch production**

#### **About Kern Steel Fabrication**

Family run Kern Steel Fabrication has over 49 years experience in the design and construction of steel structures such as, commercial steel buildings, aircraft maintenance stands, schools, hospitals and other city and government buildings. The company is also a leader in construction of aircraft maintenance stands and aircraft maintenance platforms. Kern Steel Fabrication provides comprehensive design, engineering, manufacturing, delivery and assembly, as well as on-site technical instruction for system operation and maintenance. The company is ISO 9001-2000 certified and AISC certified for structural steel. For more information contact Kern Steel Fabrication at 661-327-9588 or visit their website at [www.kernsteel.com](http://www.kernsteel.com).

#### **About SmartTCP**

SmartTCP is the leading supplier of automatic welding solutions for fabrications in small batch production. The SmartTCP robotic welding solution reduces the need for expert welders, improves time to market, and increases production volume and quality. The gantry welding system is a turnkey solution that automates both the robot programming and the weld production and includes the hardware, software, installation, training and support during and after implementation. SmartTCP's revolutionary software automates complex and tedious robot programming tasks. It creates accurate and reliable robot programming, making it possible for job-shops and manufacturers to optimize the fabrication of high mix low volume parts. SmartTCP was founded in 2003 and operates an automatic welding demo lab out of its U.S. headquarters location in Farmington Hills, MI. For more information contact SmartTCP at 248-994-1041 or visit their website at [www.smarttcp.com](http://www.smarttcp.com).

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