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## McKee Foods Delivers First of Two Trucks to Bradley County Schools PIE Innovation Center

COLLEGEDALE, Tenn. — January 18, 2023 — McKee Foods Corporation today delivered the first of two promised retired class 8 commercial trucks, previously owned and operated by McKee Foods, to the PIE Innovation Center in Cleveland, Tenn. The trucks will be used in the PIE Center’s fleet maintenance technician development training courses giving Bradley County students hands-on experience in a real-world fleet maintenance environment in preparation for later career aspirations.

Representing McKee Foods for the delivery were John Williams, Fleet Maintenance manager; Darrell Wright, Fleet Maintenance superintendent; and Matt Calloway, Fleet Maintenance supervisor.

“In the U.S., class 8 vehicles sell for an average of more than \$150,000 each,” Williams said. “This represents a huge cost for any size operating fleet, so regular preventive maintenance and repair work goes a long way toward stretching the value of the dollars invested in the fleet. McKee Foods knows that an investment in practical education environments like the PIE Center assures that there will be a pool of savvy fleet maintenance professionals who are job ready for careers that are both personally and financially rewarding. That helps industry but, more importantly, it helps the young men and women who choose to pursue this career path.”

McKee Foods has a long partnership with the PIE Center. Williams and Wright have both been very involved in the development of the fleet tech program and also helped with the design and layout of the educational space, the curriculum and the selecting of the tools and equipment the students will need. Calloway served as an interim instructor for the program while Bradley County Schools searched for a permanent instructor.



“Bridging the gap between business and industry is the goal of Bradley County Schools,” said Arlette Robinson, Bradley County Schools CTE director. “Working hand in hand developing this Truck Technology program with McKee Foods as our partner has been a personification of this goal. We are extremely grateful for the guidance and support of John Williams, Darrell Wright and Matt Calloway, the vision of Debbie McKee-Fowler and the financial contributions of the McKee family. It is exciting to imagine the possibilities and see them come to life.”

### **ABOUT McKEE FOODS CORPORATION**

*McKee Foods, a family bakery with annual sales of about \$1.4 billion, is a privately-held company based in Collegedale, Tenn. The McKee Foods story began during the height of the Great Depression when founder O.D. McKee began selling 5-cent snack cakes from the back of his car. Soon after, he and his wife, Ruth, bought a small bakery on Main Street in Chattanooga, Tenn., using the family car as collateral. Today, the company employs more than 6,250 people in Collegedale, Tenn.; Gentry, Ark.; Stuarts Draft, Va.; and Kingman, Ariz. It creates and produces Little Debbie® baked goods, Drake’s® cakes, Sunbelt Bakery® snacks and Fieldstone® Bakery food products. Visit [mckeefoods.com](http://mckeefoods.com) for more information.*

### **ABOUT PIE INNOVATION CENTER**

*The PIE Innovation Center is a unique complex that will house K-12 education, postsecondary education, nonprofits, and business and industry under one roof. The PIE Innovation Center will create an intensive, strategic student experience through collaboration with business, industry, and nonprofit organizations. This educational experience will give students a vision for their future through embedded work-based learning and experiential learning in STEM, changing learning pathways, and promoting design thinking. Education and workforce development promote the concept of teamwork and collaboration. The PIE Innovation Center truly makes this happen by providing students within our region with on-site business settings to engage in real-world work experiences; the necessary skills to be college and career-ready; state-of-the-art educational opportunities in CTE focus areas of welding, machining, mechatronics, chemical technology, Information Technology, work-based learning opportunities; post-secondary educational opportunities. The PIE Center is made up of the following sections: Career Residency; Compass; Conclave; Connect; CORE, Commons. Medium/Heavy Truck Technology; and The Technology Center. Visit [bcspie.org](http://bcspie.org) for more information.*

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