



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM FUNDED BY
KNORR-BREMSE GLOBAL CARE NORTH AMERICA AND BENDIX
IS EMPOWERING WOMEN WITH CAREER OPTIONS

*Thanks to the \$35,000 Grant, Up to 80 Women in Acuña, Mexico, Are Learning the Skills
Needed to Start Their Own Business in Culinary Arts or Cosmetology*

ELYRIA, Ohio – Sept. 21, 2021 – Up to 80 women in the Acuña, Mexico, area have been or will be learning a new skill set that can be used as the foundation for starting their own business in the fields of culinary arts or image design techniques/cosmetology. And some of them already have.

It's been possible thanks to a dual-track vocational training and empowerment course recently offered by Instituto de Capacitación para el Trabajo del Estado de Coahuila (ICATEC), a local training institute, and funded by a \$35,000 grant from Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America (KBGCNA), the philanthropic arm of Munich, Germany-based Knorr-Bremse.

The global market leader for braking systems and a leading supplier of other safety-critical rail and commercial vehicle systems, Knorr-Bremse is also the parent company of Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC, the North American leader in the development and manufacture of active safety, air management, and braking solutions for commercial vehicles. Bendix is a significant, over 30-year employer in Acuña, and operates a major manufacturing complex there.

KBGCNA, in partnership with its representatives at Bendix Acuña, funded the program in support of its larger mission to contribute to the education and well-being of underserved populations in its service areas.

Opening the Door for Opportunities

Identifying the need, ICATEC wanted to increase access for local women to the skills, training, experience, and confidence that would empower them to be more self-sufficient. With a proposal in hand, they solicited support from KBGCNA to create educational programming in two focus areas: culinary arts and cosmetology. Bendix also contributed to the effort, supplying financial support through the local Bendix Foundation and oversight of the project through a designated employee project champion.

The effort was a success, as earlier this summer, the first cohort of 40 women graduated from the inaugural session, having specialized in one of the two vocational tracks offered. And currently, ICATEC is gearing up for a second cohort of 40 women to begin the training courses during the fall.

“Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America and Bendix are proud to support this vocational and career training for women in partnership with ICATEC,” said Maria Gutierrez, president of KBGCNA and director of corporate responsibility and sustainability at Bendix. “All women should have the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge required to live an empowered life, allowing them to be self-sufficient or to start their own business if that’s their goal. We’re happy to be a part of that by creating a program that gives women the skills and training they need to do this.”

The new program for area women is the latest example of Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America, Bendix, and ICATEC partnering for the good of the community. Other recent efforts include a vocational training program in light manufacturing skills that benefited hundreds of at-risk youth in Acuña.

A Program for Women of All Ages and All Walks of Life

Enrollment for the two-track program was open to women of all ages living in the Acuña area. ICATEC promoted the courses locally, including through the local women’s empowerment center and the women’s shelter (Opciones Dignas), as well as through its social channels.

“We didn’t want to limit the age range of the students because we know that there are all

kinds of women in different stages of their lives in need of this kind of empowerment,” said Jacqueline Perez, Acuña plant manager and project champion. “Some have children, some don’t. Some just need an option to be able to provide for themselves and be independent. To offer the greatest overall impact, we opened the program to any women interested.”

Both the culinary arts and cosmetology tracks of the women’s empowerment training program offered capacity for up to 20 students per session, with each course comprising 180 hours of instructional coursework set to be completed within a few months.

Besides teaching students the fundamentals of each vocation with a practical and hands-on curriculum, each educational track also included a course on administration and human development, so students could learn how to manage business financials and reinvest to spur business growth.

In addition to covering the cost of the coursework for up to 80 students, a portion of the grant funds was also used to purchase equipment for the program. For the culinary track, that included professional cooking equipment such as a convection oven and professional blenders, as well as mirrors, hair dryers, and styling tools for the image design techniques course.

Additionally, Bendix – through the Bendix Foundation – contributed to the program by presenting a graduation gift to each student at the conclusion of the course. The gift featured supplies that could be helpful in starting their business. For example, students in the image design course track received lighted makeup mirrors and storage cases, while culinary students received baking supplies and measuring equipment.

A Sense of Achievement Despite the Pandemic

The first cohort of 40 women began their coursework in early 2020 and completed the program during the summer of 2021. Even with the programming delays experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment remained high. When the program wrapped up, 39 of the original 40 women attained completion.

“With the challenges of COVID-19, it would have been easy to drop out, but they didn’t,” Perez said. “The fact that they persisted through the pandemic shows their determination to improve their outlook on the future.”

Ultimately, many of the graduating women also expressed their sense of achievement during the program’s closing graduation ceremony.

“It was really gratifying to know that we can make such a big difference in these women’s lives,” Perez said. “Prior to this program, many of them were dependent on their

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Sept. 21, 2021/Page 4

partner or spouse for all of their income. So this program is giving them a new skill set to empower them and is helping them to feel independent.”

The second cohort of 40 women is set to begin the second round of coursework in September 2021. Meanwhile, those who recently completed the program are already putting their skills to use.

“During the graduation ceremony, a few of the participants expressed that they were grateful for the opportunity to be able to learn a new skill set and also how to manage a small business,” Perez said. “And now, we’ve seen that some of the women who participated have already started their own businesses and have begun to market themselves on social media.”

About Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America

Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America Inc. (KBGCNA) is an independent organization operating as the North American arm of a global nonprofit organization – Knorr-Bremse Global Care. With an aim to address local social challenges more effectively, KBGCNA investments are centered in the surrounding communities of KB’s three largest North American companies: Elyria, Ohio-based Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems; Westminster, Maryland-based Knorr Brake Company; and Watertown, New York-based New York Air Brake. Funding activities are championed and supported by the employees of each of the three local companies. Follow us on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/company/knorr-bremse-global-care-north-america-inc](https://www.linkedin.com/company/knorr-bremse-global-care-north-america-inc).

About Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC

Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems, a member of Knorr-Bremse, develops and supplies leading-edge active safety technologies, energy management solutions, and air brake charging and control systems and components under the Bendix® brand name for medium- and heavy-duty trucks, tractors, trailers, buses, and other commercial vehicles throughout North America. An industry pioneer, employing more than 4,100 people, Bendix – and its wholly owned subsidiary, R.H. Sheppard Co., Inc. – is driven to deliver the best solutions for improved vehicle safety, performance, and overall operating cost. Contact us at 1-800-AIR-BRAKE (1-800-247-2725) or visit [bendix.com](https://www.bendix.com). Stay connected and informed through Bendix expert podcasts, blog posts, videos, and other resources at [knowledge-dock.com](https://www.knowledge-dock.com). Follow Bendix on Twitter at twitter.com/Bendix_CVS. Log on and learn from the Bendix experts at [brake-school.com](https://www.brake-school.com). And to learn more about career opportunities at Bendix, visit [bendix.com/careers](https://www.bendix.com/careers).

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