



## *News Release*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SOLAR PANELS HELP COOL A CHILDREN'S HOME IN  
ACUÑA, MEXICO, THANKS TO GRANT SUPPORT FROM  
KNORR-BREMSE GLOBAL CARE NORTH AMERICA**

*\$107,350 in Funding Contributes to a Rooftop Photovoltaic System for  
Casa Hogar Esperanza That Delivers Cost-Efficient Cooling*

**AVON, Ohio – July 31, 2024** – Acuña, Mexico, is one hot place during the summer, with temperatures often exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit. A local children's home, Casa Hogar Esperanza, found the cost of running its air conditioning units to be prohibitive after a local company that had been paying for the electricity changed leadership and ended its charitable support. The home tried to keep the children cool by using the units only sparingly.

Enter Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America (KBGCNA) – an independent organization operating as the North American arm of a global nonprofit organization, Knorr-Bremse Global Care.

KBGCNA contributed \$107,350 in grant funding toward a 136-panel rooftop photovoltaic system to generate electricity for the home. The Bendix Foundation, directed by Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC (Bendix), contributed \$28,200 to the project. Additionally, Bendix donated the solar panels, which reduced the overall project cost by \$24,000. The grants funded the purchase and installation of the system and transformer, along with maintenance for 20 years, insurance, and remote oversight.

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The system has begun going online in stages. Once the home can use 100% of the energy produced by the panels, the system is calculated to reduce electricity costs by almost 90% while enabling the operation of the HVAC units. Average monthly savings are expected to be about \$2,500. The energy generation is so significant that the units will essentially run for free.

“Our support for Casa Hogar Esperanza and its children goes back many years, and we’re pleased to help meet their need for cost-efficient cooling,” said Maria Gutierrez, president of KBGCNA and senior director of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) at Bendix. “The effort aligns with KBGCNA’s larger mission to contribute to the well-being of underserved populations in the surrounding communities of Knorr-Bremse’s North American companies. Making a positive difference in the communities we call home is incredibly important.”

Knorr-Bremse is the global market leader for braking systems and a leading supplier of other safety-critical rail and commercial vehicle systems. It’s also the parent company of Avon, Ohio-based Bendix, which manages its own foundation in Mexico and is a significant employer in Acuña, where it has operated a major manufacturing complex for 35 years.

### **Cool Air, Warm Water**

Operating Casa Hogar Esperanza is White Stone Ministries, a nonprofit based in Del Rio, Texas, the sister city of Acuña across the U.S.-Mexico border.

“Depending on our financial situation, we are often unable to use the air conditioning units in each room – so, during the daytime, it’s usually extremely uncomfortable for the children and staff,” said Ron Sherman, executive director of White Stone Ministries. “We would turn on the AC units for only a few hours each night in order to make the bedrooms cool enough for the children to fall asleep. With the new system, we will be able to keep the entire home comfortable throughout the day and night, and probably spend less than \$300 or \$400 to do so.”

Sherman noted that the solar panels, installed on the roof over the dormitories, add a secondary level of insulation by blocking the sun from hitting the metal roof – meaning the AC units won’t have to work as hard.

Bendix also funded the purchase and installation of two on-demand hot water heaters.

“In the cold months, we struggled to have enough hot water for all the children to shower each evening,” Sherman said. “Many times, we ran out of hot water long before the last group of children was ready to take their showers. Now that problem is a thing of the past.”

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He added, "We are profoundly grateful for the investment of KBGCNA, the Bendix Foundation, and Bendix into our organization and for helping us to provide a much more pleasant environment for the children while at the same time lightening some of the financial burden."

### **History of Support**

Knorr-Bremse Global Care's support of Casa Hogar Esperanza started in 2014 when it helped fund the construction of a new house to replace an outdated smaller building. The Bendix Foundation supported the project as well. Children moved into the new home in 2015.

Afterward, the Bendix Foundation continued to support the house through volunteer events, along with repairs and general maintenance. Bendix and its Acuña employees also regularly sponsored and volunteered at activities to support the home.

The home later went through a challenging period and, for a year and a half, stopped operating. White Stone Ministries took over in 2021. The Bendix Foundation, which had supported the nonprofit in other endeavors, reestablished its connection with the home, providing legal and tax advice and funding projects, including roof and ceiling repairs, as well as a fence and shade for the pool. Casa Hogar Esperanza reopened in early 2022 and today is thriving, with 35 children, including one newborn, under its care.

Gutierrez credits Bendix Acuña's David Rountree and Hector Garcia, the KBGCNA project champions guiding the solar effort, for their work. Rountree, assistant plant manager, has helped nurture the relationship with the home since its earliest days. Garcia is an energy specialist who helped spec the system.

"Everyone who contributed to the solar project for Casa Hogar Esperanza has done so with an eye on helping the home be self-sustainable, which is among KBGCNA's key goals for all the projects it supports," Gutierrez said. "The home wants self-sustainability for itself – they are always thinking about how to maximize the use of the property – so this is a good partnership. We're looking at additional ways to help them and solidify the partnership further. KBGCNA is about funding projects, yes – but more than that, we want to create long-term partnerships."

### **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 Knorr-Bremse's

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three largest North American companies: Avon, Ohio-based Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC; Westminster, Maryland-based Knorr Brake Company; and Watertown, New York-based New York Air Brake LLC. 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 4,400 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 X, formerly known as Twitter, at [twitter.com/Bendix\\_CVS](https://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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