



## *News Release*

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**BENDIX PARTNERS WITH FLEECE & THANK YOU TO MAKE AND DELIVER NEARLY  
200 HANDMADE BLANKETS TO HOSPITALIZED CHILDREN IN CLEVELAND**

*Virtual Event Allowed Volunteers from Across Bendix Locations to Participate in the  
Company's Annual Blanket-Making Project for the First Time.*

**ELYRIA, Ohio – May 17, 2021** – Searching for a safe activity through which employees could give back to the community might have been difficult during a pandemic, but Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC (Bendix) found a powerful solution in 2021. Earlier this year, the company partnered with Fleece & Thank You, a Farmington Hills, Michigan-based community service organization, to make and deliver handmade fleece blankets to hospitalized children.

The virtual blanket-making event took place in February, when employees from multiple Bendix locations made 184 hand-tied fleece blankets from the comfort of their own homes. The majority of the handmade blankets were shipped back to Bendix's Elyria headquarters at the end of the month, and the blankets were delivered to the Cleveland Clinic in March, for distribution by its Child Life team to hospitalized children.

"What's unique about Fleece & Thank You is that their efforts are all about connecting recipients with volunteers through an expression of thanks," said Maria Gutierrez, Bendix director of corporate responsibility and sustainability. "Ultimately this was a big reason for the project's success. Employees across locations also had the opportunity to connect by taking part in a new service activity, together."

Every blanket Fleece & Thank You provides includes a personal video message attached to it from the blanket-maker to the recipient in the hospital, who can then send a thank-you message back to the maker.

### **A Cherished Activity, Re-Imagined**

Making blankets for children is not new for Bendix Elyria employees: The headquarters has hosted on-site blanket-making events for more than seven years, Gutierrez said, donating the blankets to a local children's home. But since March 2020, when the pandemic first prompted Bendix employees to work from home, communal volunteering activities across Bendix locations have been largely nonexistent.

"We knew we couldn't house our on-site event this year," Gutierrez said. "We decided to research organizations that could help us host this event in a virtual manner – and that's how we came across Fleece & Thank You. This organization caught our attention because they provided the materials, an opportunity for our people to volunteer from home, and a real connection to the beneficiaries: the people and organization that would receive the blankets. We always strive to have our volunteers see and feel the impact of their work, and this was perfect."

What's more, Gutierrez said partnering with Fleece & Thank You allowed Bendix to open up this cherished project to employees at other Bendix locations for the first time. The event was kicked off throughout the organization in mid-February. Employees had the option of returning the blankets to the Elyria office for delivery to the Cleveland Clinic, or shipping them back to Fleece & Thank You to benefit a local Michigan hospital. Some 53 employees from Bendix locations in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Texas participated in the virtual project.

### **Growth for a Community Service Organization**

For Fleece & Thank You, Bendix's participation contributed to the organization's growth across the country during a challenging time.

"We're always exploring ways and opportunities to raise awareness of our work," said Nicholas Kristock, founder and executive director, who noted that the organization aims to deliver some 30,000 fleece blankets to hospitalized children annually. Traditionally, this has been done through blanket-making events, but the organization now offers remote, virtual, and in-person blanket-making events, allowing volunteers to connect via video conferencing while they make blankets.

"Due to the pandemic, Fleece & Thank You has had to postpone or cancel its large-scale blanket-making events, which meant fewer comforting blankets for children who are hospitalized," Kristock said. "Thankfully, individuals, community groups, and corporations,

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including Bendix, have stepped up to host virtual events, creating these blankets from the safety and comfort of their own homes. The need for comfort is everywhere, especially in these times, so it's wonderful to see how our mission can be expanded to help children in Cleveland."

Gutierrez was especially impressed by the organization's commitment to connecting blanket-makers with the children who receive blankets. Typically, the organization has handled collection and delivery of the completed blankets to hospitalized children and creation of the video thank-you messages.

For Bendix's event, those thank-yous continued – but on a larger scale. Bendix delivered the completed blankets to the Cleveland Clinic's Child Life team, sharing photos and words of gratitude with volunteers. Representatives from the Cleveland Clinic were overwhelmed by Bendix's support, while Bendix volunteers were delighted to see their efforts come to fruition.

"We received multiple comments from our participants who were thrilled to be part of an organization and a program that's giving back to the community, even during the pandemic. Many people told us how easy and fun it was, and that it was a teachable moment for their children. And they really appreciated the opportunity to give back without having to compromise their safety," Gutierrez said. "Working with Fleece & Thank You also gave us the ability to participate at home but still able to see how our labor of love impacted the children. It was very fulfilling to know that our work could help to keep people connected during these trying times."

**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](http://bendix.com). Stay connected and informed through Bendix expert podcasts, blog posts, videos, and other resources at [knowledge-dock.com](http://knowledge-dock.com). Follow Bendix on Twitter at [twitter.com/Bendix\\_CVS](https://twitter.com/Bendix_CVS). Log on and learn from the Bendix experts at [brake-school.com](http://brake-school.com). And to learn more about career opportunities at Bendix, visit [bendix.com/careers](http://bendix.com/careers).

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