



Advertising & Public Relations

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For Immediate Release

Serendipity Produces Big Results for Acme Brick Company and Tarleton State University.

In this instance serendipity (the fact of finding interesting or valuable things by chance) was a casual meeting between Ed Watson, President and CEO of Acme Brick Company, and James Hurley, President of Tarleton State University. Both were attending a meeting with other business leaders on ways to partner with the new Texas A&M University School of Law in Fort Worth.

Out of their casual conversation came a discovery that Tarleton was producing engineering graduates with a “hands on” practical approach to engineering challenges – exactly what Acme was seeking.

Tarleton then hosted Acme leaders on Tarleton’s campus in nearby Stephenville, Texas to meet engineering students and discuss job opportunities at Acme Brick Company. Senior Ben Price was hired after he graduated, followed shortly by his friend Kyle Thomas. Both were involved in the reopening of Acme’s Bennett plant located west of Fort Worth after a major renovation. During that time Cooper Kelly, another engineering student from Tarleton, was also working at Bennett as an intern. As Mike Shipley, Acme’s Vice President of Production puts it, “They hit the ground running and didn’t stop.”

Shortly thereafter, Tarleton engineering professors were utilized to evaluate Acme’s needs in the production process. After meeting with Acme plant personnel at Acme’s Bennett plant, the “Capstone Project” emerged with their recommendations for improvements and other manufacturing refinements.

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Acme Brick, p.2

In order to promote equipment reliability, the professors proposed creating a system to monitor major equipment and predict failures before they occur. A quality assurance program relying on Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) was also created to improve results for surface coatings of brick.

In 2025 Tarleton graduate Bella Pena joined Acme after learning from a professor that Acme was looking for engineers interested in PLC's (programmable logic controllers). Said Pena, "After I toured the facility at Bennett and met the people, choosing Acme was an easy decision."

Acme plans to add three or four additional Tarleton graduates this May. "This relationship with Tarleton and their outstanding graduates means that the future of Acme is in good hands.", said Acme's Mike Shipley.

Acme Brick Company, founded in 1891, sells quality building materials and design products for the home through over 50 Acme Brick Tile & Stone showrooms across 13 states in the Southwest and Southeast. The Bennett Plant is one of 15 Acme brick manufacturing facilities in four states. Acme is a wholly owned subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc. For more information visit brick.com.

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For more PRESS information contact: Ron Taylor / Ashley & Taylor Public Relations (817) 874-8206, ashleytaylorpr@gmail.com.

