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## McKee Foods, City of Collegedale Break Ground on Little Debbie Park

COLLEGEDALE, Tenn. — August 27, 2021 — On **Friday morning, Aug. 27**, McKee Foods and the City of Collegedale held a ceremonial groundbreaking for the forthcoming Little Debbie Park to be built adjacent to the Collegedale Commons.

McKee Foods purchased the 10-acre parcel of land solely with the intent of donating it to the city for use as park space. Through a joint design process with the city, the park will feature some playground equipment, but the primary focus is on preserving open green spaces for multiple uses, such as picnicking and pick-up sports games, like football, Frisbee or soccer.

Participants in the ceremony representing McKee Foods were: Rusty McKee, executive vice president of Manufacturing; Connie Vaughan, Government Relations manager; and Jake Stone, project manager. The City of Collegedale was represented by Wayon Hines, city manager/engineer; and Collegedale City Commissioners. Joe Sawyer, vice president and senior landscape architect, represented Barge Design Solutions Inc, and Nic Cornelison, president and chief operating officer, represented P&C Construction.

“My family has a long history of enjoying nature and participating in outdoor activities of just about every kind,” McKee said. “It’s important to us that we preserve some of the beautiful spaces God has given to us here in our hometown so our neighbors, our friends, our employees and their families can enjoy them together for years to come. I cannot begin to tell you how happy and excited we are to see this community project get underway.”

“We are very excited about the Little Debbie Park at the Commons!” Hines said. “Starting in 1992 with the construction of Imagination Station, followed by the Veterans Memorial Park, our greenway system, the Thatcher Switch recreation area, the Kiwanis Park, the biology trails and the Commons, our city is known for our public spaces and parks. Now, due to the philanthropic efforts of some visionary donors, we are honored to add 10 more acres of public space with more than 400 trees and 5,000 shrubs, greenway connections to and through the park, a large pavilion with restrooms, several small pavilions, covered swings and a playground. It is donations like this that really move us from a city to a community.”

Construction of the park is estimated to take about a year.

### **About McKee Foods**

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.

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