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EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL 6 P.M., 8/16/07:

Cook Group Awards Major Financial Grant To Support Innovation In MCCSC

\$150K goes to Foundation to help create New Tech High School

Bloomington, Ind. - Cook Group Incorporated will make a \$150,000 grant this year to assist the Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) embark on an innovative restructuring effort aimed at improving the quality of education for all students, the company announced today.

The majority of the grant, which includes significant matching funds to encourage similar donations from other community organizations, institutions and individuals, will go to assist MCCSC to implement its "New Tech High School" model, explained Cook Group President Kem Hawkins.

"Cook Group believes that while our public schools have been successful, they must change dramatically in order to engage all students more effectively and to allow each student to reach his or her potential and develop the skills necessary to succeed in today's rapidly changing, highly interconnected global economy," Hawkins said in making the announcement. "Nothing can be more important for the future vitality and economic well-being of our community than to ensure that all our children receive the highest possible quality education during their formative years."

The grant to the Foundation of Monroe County Community Schools will significantly bolster the foundation's funding capacity, making it one of the state's best K-12 school foundations. The resources of the Foundation of Monroe County Community Schools and other public secondary school foundations, however, pale in comparison to the annual voluntary support for institutions of higher learning such as Indiana University, which has annual support of over \$300 million, and an endowment of over \$1.2 billion, and out-of-state universities such as Harvard, Yale and Stanford that have endowments greater than \$10 billion.

"That needs to change if we are to succeed in our critical mission of educating our young people," stressed Hawkins, who taught music at Bloomington High School before joining the Cook organization more than 25 years ago. "Based on the state funding formula, MCCSC is ranked in the bottom segment of the 290+ school systems in the state. While it would be great if the funding formula could be improved through the General Assembly to more appropriately fund the needs of this and other school systems, we can't wait around for the state or federal governments to solve our problems or create our opportunities! We must come together as a community to make this happen."

The key to making this a success, Hawkins added, is generating additional community support and working closely with MCCSC leadership to promote positive change within the school system.

"The more our community provides financial support, time, creativity and active participation in New Tech and similar efforts by MCCSC, the more success we are likely to have," Hawkins said. "Given the leadership within the school corporation and its commitment to making these initiatives, we as a community have a responsibility to do everything in our power to implement these vital initiatives for the enhancement of our children's education."

Cook Group, Inc.

The world's largest privately held medical device manufacturer with international headquarters in Bloomington, Ind., COOK® (www.cookgroup.com) is a leading designer, manufacturer and global distributor of minimally invasive medical device technology for diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. Cook Group also owns and operates real estate, retail management and travel services businesses. Through its real estate development and management company, CFC, Inc., the Cook Group family of companies has placed a special emphasis on preserving architecturally significant buildings in Bloomington and south central Indiana. Cook Group won the prestigious Medical Device Manufacturer of the Year Award for 2006 from *Medical Device & Diagnostic Industry* magazine.

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