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Brownback attends Hostess ribbon cutting

■ Company celebrates expansion of Emporia facility

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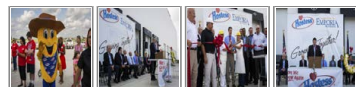
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Dustin Michelson

Brownback attends Hostess ribbon cutting

Dustin Michelson/Gazette



Posted: Friday, July 18, 2014 2:23 pm | Updated: 3:26 pm, Fri Jul 18, 2014.

By **Jesse Murphy** The Emporia Gazette |  **0 comments**

A ribbon cutting for the new \$30-million expansion of the Hostess plant in Emporia was met with mild July weather and a large crowd on Friday morning.

City Commissioner Rob Gilligan opened the ceremony held in the new parking lot west of the facility's addition.

"It's obviously a great opportunity for the City of Emporia, for the region and for Hostess, LLC.," Gilligan said. "As they continue to grow and expand through smart plans and investment and strong leadership between the groups and re-invest it back in Emporia. We appreciate their recognition of Emporia and naming Emporia as their flagship plant."

Andy Jhawar, Apollo and Metropoulos and Co., an investor that helped bring Hostess back last year, spoke to the group of employees, chamber members and the crowd.

"From the ownership perspective ... we're very humbled by the great progress that Hostess has made over the last year," Jhawar said. "And really none of it would be

possible without the great efforts of the community and really, frankly, all of our team members that have been unbelievable."

Bill Toller, President and CEO of Hostess, also went to the podium and spoke about the employees of the plant.

"I'll tell you, companies aren't about equipment even though they are expensive and the investments are expensive," Toller said. "Companies are about people, and they're about brands."

Governor Sam Brownback made an appearance as well.

"The Twinkie is back," he declared to applause from the crowd. "Putting a twinkie in our eyes and a smile on our face. And that is a great thing. It's a fabulous iconic product of the United States, a fabulous iconic product of Emporia for many many years.

"I'm glad to see the plant come back. It's creating jobs, and opportunities and progress."



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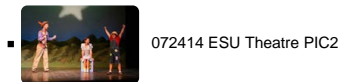
Brownback spoke about business opportunities in the state, and that there have been 55,000 new private-sector jobs since he has been governor.

Hostess employs about 350 people here in Emporia, and the 36,000-square-foot warehouse will be pumping out 1,100 Twinkies each minute once the new production line is fully operational.

The plant re-opened in mid-july last year after being shut down in November 2012.

The \$30 million improvements include a \$25 million bakery line.

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