

HOST INTRO: Governor Asa Hutchinson today (Fri) applauded a second announcement this month of new jobs coming to Fort Smith. Antoinette Grajeda from our content partner KUAF in Fayetteville has more.

TRT: 3:04

VO 1: Two weeks. Two job creation announcements. During the city of Fort Smith’s most recent proclamation Friday (Jan. 15), Mars Petcare announced a \$145 million investment in its Fort Smith facility, which is expected to create 120 new full-time jobs with room for growth in the future. Fort Smith site director Michael Poffinbarger said everything they do as a company is driven by the goal of creating a better world for pets.

QUOTE 1: “I see this passion.....for our business.” (:37)

VO 2: Mars Petcare has now invested about \$200 million in its Fort Smith facility since it opened in 2009. Gov. Asa Hutchinson said the state’s economic development team is always recruiting new business and new industry, but the joint mission of economic development is to support those businesses that are already here.

QUOTE 2: “And this expansion.....that confidence.” (:35)

VO 3: Friday’s announcement comes just over a week after Jonesboro-based Hytrol announced it would be expanding to the River Valley. The company is investing \$20 million to open an advanced manufacturing operation in Fort Smith, which will create 250 new jobs within five years. Secretary of Commerce Mike Preston said he was recently asked how Arkansas is able to continue announcing jobs and projects in the midst of a pandemic.

QUOTE 3: “Simple answer is leadership.....in your city.” (:25)

VO 4: The facility expansion will begin this month and is scheduled for completion in 2022. With the investment, Mars Petcare will add more than 200,000 square feet and two additional production lines, increasing production capacity by more than 40 percent. Reporting in Fayetteville, I'm Antoinette Grajeda.