



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

nerej

Port of Davisville prepares for offshore wind industry - by Steven King

February 14, 2020 - Rhode Island

Steven King,
Quonset Development Corp.

In her State of the State address, governor Gina Raimondo cited Quonset's proven track record of success, "We've added thousands of jobs at the Quonset Business Park," Raimondo said. "Electric Boat just keeps on growing, and more than two dozen companies have moved or expanded there. In fact, Quonset is bursting at the seams. It's a proven success."

With over 12,000 jobs at more than 200 companies, including one of every six manufacturing jobs in Rhode Island, Quonset Business Park is one of the state's leading engines of economic development and job creation. A 2019 report from Bryant University shows that the Park generates \$1.28 billion in annual income for Rhode Island families, \$128.8 million in tax revenues annually and supports 7% of the state's GDP.

But, Quonset is not content to rest on its laurels. The Business Park and the Port of Davisville, Rhode Island's only public port, have their eyes on the next big thing for Rhode Island's economy: wind energy. With governor Raimondo's commitment to powering Rhode Island with 100% renewable energy by 2030, Rhode Island is moving toward a new energy future, with Quonset's Port of Davisville preparing to play a critical role.

In addition to the record-breaking auto import business at the Port of Davisville, Quonset Business Park has played a key role in the wind industry, serving as a principal port for the nation's first offshore wind farm on Block Island. Quonset's waterfront was home to the heavy installation vessels and received various wind turbine components such as steel jacket foundations. Over 28 miles of undersea cable was unloaded and transferred to an installation vessel at the Port of Davisville. Quonset businesses were at the forefront of each stage of the wind farm's construction. Additionally, the component parts of every land-based wind turbine in Rhode Island was shipped across the pier at Davisville.

Ongoing upgrades to the state's key infrastructure will be essential to moving Rhode Island closer to

the governor's goal of 100% renewable energy by 2030. Governor Raimondo's proposed FY2021 budget includes a \$20 million investment earmarked for upgrades at the Port of Davisville. This investment will finance the Port Master Plan, adding capacity for offshore wind logistics. The proposal includes the construction of a new Pier at Terminal 5; dredging; and the rehabilitation of Pier 1 which was built in 1941. This bond will position Davisville to accommodate offshore wind project cargo and logistics staging while continuing to support the booming international auto import and processing business.

The governor's new bond proposal follows the successful public investment in Pier 2 in recent years with support from the General Assembly and overwhelming approval by R.I. voters. The Pier 2 project, which is nearly complete, includes construction of a new steel bulkhead for the north, south and east faces of the pier, dredging Narragansett Bay to accommodate larger ships, and extending Pier 2 by 232 feet to the north – creating a third berthing space at the port for unloading cars and other cargo.

Modern infrastructure is what makes Quonset the leading Business Park in the region, so we must maintain and enhance those assets in order continue to play a meaningful role in the growing offshore wind industry. The governor's latest proposed \$20 million investment in the Port of Davisville is an essential next step needed to prepare for the future of smart renewable energy production in Rhode Island.

Steven King, PE, is the managing director of the Quonset Development Corp., North Kingstown, R.I.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540