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## **Spring brings construction to Quonset Business Park**

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Spring is here, and with it we welcome a number of infrastructure improvement projects at the Quonset Business Park. The springtime undertakings come on the heels of a recent surge in construction, and a robust interest among construction, engineering, design and environmental companies for taking advantage of new federal funding for future activity.

Eight new building projects have been completed or set in motion in the latest display of the \$142 million in private investment at the Park in the last five years. They include:

- \* 40,000 s/f building in Kiefer Park;
- \* 10,000 s/f Commerce Park building;
- \* Two small business buildings;
- \* Retrofit of existing building for Electric Boat;
- \* Air National Guard Building;
- \* Army National Guard Building, and;
- \* National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration research and office building.

In addition to those construction projects, a number of infrastructure improvements at the park are also underway.

We have received bids for the Romano Vineyard Way Bridge project, and a Notice of Award has been issued to John Rocchio Corp., of Smithfield. The new bridge will connect the Gateway and Commerce Park districts of the Business Park, while improving rail safety and traffic efficiency. The project is funded in part by a \$3.88 million Economic Development Administration (EDA) stimulus grant. This work will improve access to 156 acres of developable land in the Commerce Park District of the park, land which can support an additional 998 jobs.

Work is underway on the NOAA building and the associated pier improvements. Quonset tenant Specialty Diving Services Inc. is the general contractor for the pier work..

We recently received bids for the Northrup Rd. improvements from Callahan Rd. to Commerce Park Rd. with Cardi Corp. of Warwick being the successful low bidder.

The demolition of two buildings is underway to clear more room for growth at the Gateway.

Still on hold from the winter months after starting late last fall, the upcoming completion of the Mainsail Rd. realignment will start up again as well.

These various infrastructure projects will help Quonset clear the way for the business growth coming down the chute, and make transportation at the park smoother and more efficient. With the help of recently awarded federal stimulus funding, even more activity is expected in the near future. The park is evolving into a very successful hub of business and industry.

Thirty-two firms have responded to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) submitted by the QDC calling for firms interested in working on infrastructure improvements at the Quonset Business Park and the Port of Davisville.

The \$22.3 million in federal TIGER grant stimulus funds, made possible in part by the hard work of the state's Congressional delegation, will be used to support development of a wind energy hub and short sea shipping initiatives at the Business Park. Projects will include pier, rail, road and terminal improvements. Quonset was one of only 51 applicants out of over 1,400 from across the country to receive a federal TIGER grant, which will result in hundreds of new jobs at Quonset once work begins.

Overall, we are excited to see the snow melt away and the inception and continuation of some large-scale projects. The federal stimulus money is providing crucial support for our plans to fulfill the Quonset Business Park's potential. We are encouraged that even in a down economy, our hard work is being recognized and rewarded, and that in turn we can continue to contribute to Rhode Island's economic development efforts.

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

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