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Progress at Quonset: New luxury cars and going green

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Progress at Quonset continues at the usual steady pace, with exciting developments around every corner. The news this month includes a new luxury car vehicle moving to Quonset, and some efforts we have made in going green.

NEW CARS ALL THE TIME

The Port of Davisville continually attracts new car makers to its superior facility.

The latest in positive vehicular news is that Porsche Cars North America chose the Ocean State after surveying the port competition in the Northeastern United States. The company has moved its regional import operations to the Port of Davisville at Quonset from the Port of Baltimore.

"The Port of Davisville represents one of the country's top facilities," said Justin Newell, Porsche Cars North America's manager of vehicle logistics. "From an efficiency standpoint, it is perhaps one of the best roll-on-roll-off ports in the industry, and it exclusively handles automobile shipments."

The first shipment arrived mid-September. Eventually, North Atlantic Distribution, Inc. (NORAD), the auto distributor at the Port of Davisville, will process and distribute approximately 11,000 Porsches per year.

That announcement comes on the heels of another big announcement at NORAD that Quonset made an agreement with Ford Motor Company and Norfolk & Southern Railroad to process between 25,000 and 75,000 Fords through Davisville each year.

As many as 75,000 Ford vehicles could eventually be distributed from Quonset annually, adding to the current automakers who distribute through Quonset. Those include Volkswagen/Audi of North America, Subaru of New England and Bentley Motorcars. NORAD has also processed vehicles for Chrysler, Saab, Nissan, Peugeot, Fiat and Maserati.

HOTEL UNDERWAY

The regular progress at the new TownePlace Suites by Marriott across Gate Road has visitors to the Shops at Quonset Point impressed. The \$7.5 million project is the latest in New Boston Fund's development of the Gateway.

Anybody who passes by to visit the Lowe's or Kohl's, or to do a grocery run at Dave's Marketplace couldn't miss the impressive new advances to the environmentally friendly hotel.

Within the next few weeks, all of the exterior framing is expected to be completed and the roof is soon to be installed. After some exterior masonry work is finalized, the whole building should be weather tight by Halloween.

Builders are also implementing the "green" construction practices and attributes that will lead to LEED certification of the hotel. Deep wells have been drilled, piped and grouted for the hotel's geothermal water system. All abandoned concrete unearthed during excavation has been hauled off to be crushed and reused for structural fill. And a water collection system has been installed for landscaping maintenance, among other practices.

HUNT RIVER WATERSHED NEWS

The Hunt River watershed includes parts of seven Rhode Island communities: Exeter, North Kingstown, East Greenwich, West Greenwich, Coventry, West Warwick, and Warwick. But in the 1990s, the Hunt River and two of its tributaries, Fry Brook and Scrabbletown Brook, were identified by the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) as being impaired by bacteria. The Friends of the Hunt River Watershed was formed to work with DEM to help steward the watershed back to health.

I was honored to be recognized at the recent Friends of the Hunt River Watershed annual meeting. For the past four years, the Quonset Development Corporation has financed water testing -- a crucial component of the Friends' mission. The QDC's work with the Friends is one of many important initiatives in the effort to ensure that sustainability remains a critical piece of the community's growth plans.

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Quonset's mission to continue regular updates with our customers, clients and the general public is played out through articles like this, and a vibrant online presence through an e-newsletter and a website that stays fresh.

We are also on Facebook, with frequently updated posts that showcase photos, news and other interesting tidbits about what's going on. It's a place to hear from others and to show interested parties what we're up to. Come visit our page and be our friend.

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