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Dickinson Development and D.W. White Const. complete 97,000 s/f Market Basket

October 21, 2010 - Retail

Thousands of people turned out for the grand opening of the new Market Basket supermarket on October 6th.

New Bedford mayor Scott Lang told attendees he viewed the opening as "a catalyst to boost business in the entire city." The project brought over 200 construction jobs to the city. The market hired about 700 full and part-timers, 80% of whom live in New Bedford. Lang was joined at the dedication ceremony by many local and regional elected officials and executives from agencies and firms involved in the project that took more than five years to complete.

Officials credited Mark Dickinson, president of Dickinson Development and Mark White, president of D.W. White Construction, for their decision to assemble and purchase the 6-parcel, 14-acre site that for a century had been home to the Fairhaven Mills.

The 97,000 s/f supermarket is the anchor tenant for what Dickinson plans as a mixed-use plaza adjacent to the Acushnet River. Phase II includes a 2.25-acre outparcel/pad site. The dedication ceremony also included the naming of the adjacent roadway, now called Veterans' Memorial Way. The project also includes state-funded reconfiguration of new ramps from I-195; a safer signalized intersection; and reconstruction of adjacent streets.

Dickinson recalled when he and development partner Mark White, and New Bedford Economic Development Council executive director Matthew Morrissey toured the abandoned, rubble-strewn brownfield site in 2007. "We replaced an ugly, non-productive asset with a thriving business," he said. "It's close enough to the neighborhood for employees and shoppers who don't have cars to walk and it opens up new access to the river. It's also a new revenue stream for the city."

Throughout the planning process, Dickinson and White insisted that the new development incorporate the architecture and materials reminiscent of New Bedford's history. The market building replicates the old mill's appearance. The exterior's red brick, granite, masonry and glass recall the old mill style. Granite 'seat walls' along property lines are made of granite removed from the Fairhaven Mill building.

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