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## **Officials celebrate opening of intermodal train station**

November 10, 2010 - Rhode Island

After more than a decade of planning and perseverance, on October 27, federal, state and local officials joined to celebrate the official opening of the Warwick intermodal train station - now formally called Interlink - just yards away from T.F. Green Airport, giving Warwick the closest air-rail link in the country.

The project was the brainchild of former Warwick mayor, U.S. senator and newly elected governor Lincoln Chafee. His father, the late U.S. senator John Chafee, secured \$25 million in federal funds through the 1998 transportation bill.

The intermodal facility, paid for through a combination of federal, state, and private money, includes a six-level parking garage for car rental companies and 2,600 parking spaces - 1,800 for rental cars and 800 for rail commuters as well as a bus hub. A skywalk, or moving sidewalk, has been built over Post Rd., connecting the Jefferson Blvd. facility with the airport. Other improvements, including terminal end upgrades and new garage and fueling platforms and customer service operations, were part of the project as well.

A key component of the overall plan to provide Mass. Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) commuter train service between Warwick and Boston was finalized earlier this month, when state officials and representatives from the MBTA, Amtrak and Providence and Worcester Railroad Co. signed the agreement.

According to governor Carcieri's office, commuter rail service in R.I. will phase in later this fall when MBTA service from Boston is extended down from Providence to Warwick. Initial start-up trains are expected to stop at the T.F. Green station six times a day. When the Wickford Junction Train Station opens in late 2011, trains will continue down to North Kingstown and are expected to make 12 stops per day.

Not only does the facility provide a convenient travel option for commuters and travelers, it will help reduce traffic congestion and air pollution in our city. The Interlink has already led to millions of dollars' worth of private development in the station district, with additional projects in the planning and construction phases.

As we celebrate the completion of this project, our Department of Tourism, Culture and Development continues its aggressive marketing efforts to attract economic development here, with the Interlink enhancing and reinforcing the city's reputation as an affordable and convenient business and travel destination.

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick.