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Infrastructure the key to our recent success

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The internet can move information anywhere at the speed of light, but another network is responsible for transporting everything from the food we eat to the cars we drive to the clothes we wear. That's the global logistics network, and we at Quonset have long believed that our success as a driver of regional job growth has rested on how well we establish ourselves as a key node on it. We remain focused on providing the services and attracting the kinds of businesses that will help us achieve this goal.

Recently we took a big step forward when we won a \$22.3 million TIGER grant through the U.S. Department of Transportation. This was the result of the effort and foresight of U.S. senator Jack Reed and the entire R.I. federal delegation to make Quonset a leader in renewable energy manufacturing and a participant in the new U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) Marine Highway Northeast Corridor. Now we are in the process of implementing the TIGER grant and adding major infrastructure assets to those already here.

The first project under construction is rail improvements in the port area. Quonset is already home to robust rail traffic, especially through the auto import business located here, but this work will allow for more kinds of activity. The port rail work is creating a spur to an existing warehouse facility and improving access to on-dock rail as well as to the existing spur servicing the Seafreeze, Ltd. fish processing and export business.

In the pre-construction phase is one of the centerpieces of the TIGER work, a new port crane. The mobile harbor crane will bring a new dimension to Quonset's capabilities at the Port of Davisville. Already a leader in roll on/roll off (RoRo) activity, Quonset will be poised to manage staging activities for off shore wind construction and to handle cargo for short sea shipping activity as well as other break bulk cargoes. The project remains on track for completion in 2012.

Other TIGER projects are in the engineering and permitting phases. Pier 2, which will provide the platform for the heavy lift port crane, will be thoroughly reinforced. Beams will be added to the pier for strengthening and a base for the crane will be built. Engineering is complete on the Pier 2 work and a R.I. Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) assent has been obtained. We will be soliciting bids for the work in the next few weeks and plan on performing the construction in the coming months.

Pier 1 (South Pier) is slated for important upgrades and now has CRMC permits in hand. Work will soon be underway there to repair lighting, make structural concrete repairs and upgrade fenders. Projects for Terminals 4 and 5 have nearly completed the engineering phase and now under CRMC review. Five engineering firms from R.I. have been busy with Quonset TIGER activity. They are the Maguire Group, GZA and Garofalo & Associates, all of Providence, GRA Engineering of Pawtucket and Paul Aldinger & Associates of East Providence.

In addition to the TIGER grant activity, other federal funds made available by Senator Reed and the

R.I. federal delegation via the Economic Development Administration (EDA) are improving Quonset's infrastructure assets. A new overpass lifting Romano Vineyard Way over Davisville Rd. and the parallel rail line will allow rail and truck freight to move unimpeded to major arterials. \$3.88 million in EDA funding is supplemented by just under \$1 million from the Quonset Development Corp.

With the work made possible through the TIGER grant and other federal investments, Quonset will be home to even more jobs - an estimated 500 to 800 in addition to the 8,800 already based at the park. But more importantly, the infrastructure we're building will broaden the services offered here, making Quonset a creator of more private sector jobs at the park and throughout the region. If your business can gain an advantage by being closely connected to the global logistics network - that other world wide web - we're waiting to talk to you.

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

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