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Quonset Site Readiness program helps create jobs

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With one indoor sports facility booming in North Smithfield and the pent up demand for another bursting at the seams in southern Rhode Island, it was as if the "Site Readiness" program instituted by the Quonset Development Corp. was tailor-made for Wide World of Indoor Sports.

We are proud to be the first company to take advantage of the QDC's innovative program, which streamlines and expedites permitting in order to provide pad-ready sites within the business park. Steven King, the QDC's managing director and all of his staff, have done everything they can to create a business friendly atmosphere at Quonset. We can attest to the remarkable opportunity that the "Site Readiness" program extends to the business community.

The state Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) worked with QDC to ensure that permits were already in place so that we could begin construction right away. In a climate where time is money, the speed with which the program allowed us to proceed represented a critically important cost-saving piece of the development process. And here's the good news - there are still 35 parcels pre-permitted and ready to go at Quonset right now.

Construction of the facility was the result of partnership between our company, QDC, DEM, the Rhode Island District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration, Bank Newport, and the Ocean State Business Development Authority. Our financial partners - the SBA, Bank Newport, and OSBDA - could not have been more professional. Their willingness to supply investment capital made this project a reality.

From an economic development perspective, Wide World of Sports at Quonset Business Park represents the proverbial win-win situation. Indeed, we could not be more excited to call Quonset Business Park - a true engine of the state's economy - home. 2,700 new jobs have been created there since 2005. We are thrilled to contribute to the job growth at the park and will do so immediately, by hiring approximately 85 full and part-time employees to run the facility.

The goal of Wide World of Indoor Sports is to provide a state-of-the-art athletic training facility for all ages and abilities. With our four, non-boarded fields over 76,000 s/f, we are able to do just that here in North Kingstown. Easily accessible from the highway, the complex showcases top-of-the-line turf within a climate-controlled building. We expect to draw thousands of Rhode Islanders to the area throughout the year.

Since opening our North Smithfield location in 2009, the demand that we anticipated has become a reality. People of all ages in northern Rhode Island have been flocking to the original Wide World of Indoor Sports facility. Now, those in the Ocean State's central and southern communities will have the same opportunity.

Seeing consistent population growth in southern Rhode Island, we identified a demand for a facility like ours. Across the region, youth soccer and lacrosse programs continue to grow. Adults too, are

finding that indoor sports leagues are the ideal way to quench their thirst for competition, and provide an outlet for remaining active year round. Among the most rewarding aspects of opening these athletic facilities is to see the wide range of individuals who want to get out and get healthy. From young children honing their soccer, lacrosse, and softball skills to adults who continue to be active in soccer, flag football, field hockey, wiffleball and volleyball games - it is simply amazing to realize the importance people place on regular exercise.

Our new facility has indeed been a team effort, with everyone at the QDC and our financial partners. It has long been our mission to put people first and opening this Quonset facility will allow us to reach even more of them. We take great pride in both of our facilities and in providing people of all ages and abilities a first-class sports experience.

Dan Fawcett is the co-owner of the Wide World of Indoor Sports (WWIS), North Smithfield and North Kingstown, R.I.

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