



# nerej

## **Congressional delegation helps with tenants' success**

January 11, 2013 - Rhode Island

As 2012 drew to a close, the Quonset Development Corp. (QDC) received more good news from the Rhode Island Congressional delegation that reflects their support and commitment to Quonset Business Park and the Port of Davisville over the years. The initiative will allow Quonset to continue the important role we play as job creators for Rhode Island, maintain our to our tenants' success, and reinforce our dedication to help nurture economic development in the state.

In December, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced the award of a \$6 million grant to be used by the QDC and Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to repair and make upgrades to the Zarbo Ave. bulkhead within the Quonset Business Park. The resources, which will be administered by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), were granted in response to the storm damage incurred by Hurricane Irene.

The Zarbo Ave. bulkhead, located near the old "carrier pier," helps to protect three marine trade industry businesses from waterfront storm surges. In fact, these are businesses that help with the recovery services needed when the state is confronted by a large storm, such as Irene. Built in 1941, the bulkhead has sustained significant damage over the past several decades as it stood in the way of numerous storms, including Irene. The bulkhead is now considered highly vulnerable, and often requires the existing companies around the bulkhead to relocate much of their equipment during major storms. When Irene arrived, the storm surge over-topped the bulkhead, causing flooding and portions of existing sediment to wash away.

As a result of this grant, a new bulkhead will be constructed 1 to 2-feet taller than the original so that it better protects existing and future businesses located along the waterfront industrial property. More importantly, the bulkhead project will protect 80 existing jobs, and allow for the creation of approximately 32 new jobs. We are also confident it will be the impetus for another \$4 million in additional private investment with the development of a desirable parcel of land along the bulkhead that is currently vacant.

The money targeted for the Zarbo Ave. Bulkhead demonstrates our Congressional delegation's consistent recognition of Quonset as a vital engine of economic development for Rhode Island. In the past two decades, they have directed some \$350 million in federal funding for upgrades of our railways, airport, roadways, and overall infrastructure. Senator Jack Reed, a long-time member of the Appropriations Committee, senator Sheldon Whitehouse, and congressmen James Langevin and David Cicilline have all been tireless in their support of Quonset.

The EDA grant is also indicative of our commitment to making key infrastructure improvements to help out tenants succeed and ensure the Park's longevity. Knowing that many of the companies and the jobs they provide were vulnerable to the bulkhead's condition, the QDC's planning manager, Katherine Trapani, took the initiative to respond to the EDA's request for applications. She keyed in on the extensive damage seen to the bulkhead over the years, engaged our local delegation and

Governor Chafee's office for their support, and worked with RIDOT to ensure a well delivered application that would appeal to the EDA.

Ensuring that we provide the best possible environment for our tenant businesses to grow is a key element of what we do at Quonset Business Park. As evidenced through the many infrastructure improvements we have made over the years, and through actions like our innovative site-readiness program, we can continue to bring more commerce and more jobs to the region. This most recent grant from the EDA makes the point, again, that our Congressional delegation shares that same confidence in the Quonset Business Park as an economic engine of growth for Rhode Island.

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