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Manufacturing thrives at Quonset Business Park

June 13, 2013 - Rhode Island

Quonset Business Park is now home to more than 175 companies with 9,100 employees in both full-time and part-time jobs across a variety of industries. As part of the Quonset master plan, we have a diverse scope of industries throughout the park, a strategy which helped protect us from job-loss during the recent recession.

Manufacturing is one sector of the economy with a significant presence at Quonset. In fact, we estimate that close to 44% of the workforce at the park is in manufacturing. Based on the initial findings of a recent survey of manufacturers in Rhode Island, that will likely mean more jobs for the state, and continued growth at the business park.

The Rhode Island Manufacturing Renaissance Project is in the midst of a comprehensive survey of the top 1,000 manufacturing companies in the state. Their goal is to identify and define the capabilities of manufacturing companies throughout Rhode Island. The initial findings of the survey offer some positive news as more than 80% of respondents plan to add employees in the next three years, with more than 85% of those looking for entry level production or machine operator employees.

The Rhode Island Manufacturing Renaissance Project is a joint effort between the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association, Bryant University's John H. Chafee Center for International Business, the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, and the Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Services.

Quonset Business Park manufacturers taking part in the survey, include: American Mussel Harvesters Inc.; Banneker Industries, Inc.; Bel Air Finishing Supply Corp.; Hayward/Goldline; Senesco Marine Inc.; Structural Stone, LLC., and Ultra Scientific. As the project continues over the next 12 months, more Quonset manufacturing tenants are sure to join that group.

That the survey shows some positive signals from the manufacturing sector comes as no surprise to us here at Quonset. The fact that we have added 3,000 new jobs here at Quonset since 2006 is due in large part because of the strong presence of manufacturing companies at the Park. And we believe that our investments in infrastructure, including new roadways, an award winning waste water treatment system, and innovative initiatives such as our "site-readiness" program, are paying huge dividends for the businesses that call Quonset Business Park their home.

The Rhode Island Manufacturing Renaissance Project released the initial findings of the survey, along with a comprehensive analysis and recommendations for manufacturing expansion and job growth in the state, in advance of World Trade Day. The group's report points to a new landscape for American manufacturers, one that has seen a shift from mass production systems to an emphasis on flexible production capabilities and innovation and ideas. It suggests that "workers must be flexible, dynamic, and able to adapt to new market demands, many of which are technology-based." The summary further emphasizes the need for the state to improve the business

climate for existing manufacturers to encourage them to grow and expand here.

This approach plays to our strength at Quonset, where investments in infrastructure and the support of local, state, and federal agencies has allowed us to build a Business Park that meets the demands of a modernized manufacturing industry. Not only can we provide access to multi-modes of transportation, but we offer modernized utilities, retail options, recreation facilities and acres of open space.

Quonset Development Corporation is also dedicated to improving the business climate by helping our tenants and potential tenants overcome regulatory challenges that might hinder growth. The public access plan we coordinated with the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), the "Quonset-Zone" partnership we have with North Kingtown, and the pre-permitting program we developed with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and CRMC are all key examples of this commitment.

Quonset has emerged as a coveted destination for many manufacturing businesses and the people who run them. And we are encouraged by the findings of this latest survey of manufacturers and what it could mean for Rhode Island's future. We expect our existing manufacturers to lead the way in growing the state's economy, and more businesses like them to discover that Quonset is an ideal place to call home.

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