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## EDA's investment in Quonset Business Park is paying off

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Our recent success in turning Quonset Business Park into an engine of job creation would not have been possible without the commitment of the federal government and the leadership of our federal delegation. Specifically, we have been fortunate to receive a series of grants from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) - which over the years has identified our Park as a good place to make a sound investment with beneficial returns.

Consider the following projects - totaling some \$16.5 million - that have been funded by the EDA through the Department of Commerce:

- \* Pier I/Carrier Pier - repairs to existing infrastructure, totaling \$3.5 million
- \* Pier II - repairs to existing infrastructure, totaling \$1 million
- \* North Bulkhead - repairs to existing infrastructure, totaling \$645,000
- \* West Davisville Roads - new roads and utilities, totaling \$1 million
- \* Romano Vineyard Way Bridge - new road and utilities, totaling \$3.9 million
- \* Compass Circle Extension - new roads and utilities, totaling \$440,000
- \* Zarbo Avenue Bulkhead - repairs to existing infrastructure, totaling \$6 million.

These projects represent the kind of financial commitment by the EDA that demonstrates the confidence the federal government has in our ability to get results.

The projects fall into two categories. One is repairs to existing marine infrastructure, and the other is the construction of new roads and utilities to support land development. The completion of each project has made it more attractive to do business at Quonset Business Park.

For example, the construction of the Romano Vineyard Way Bridge has eliminated the dangerous "at grade" automobile crossing over the busy railroad tracks at Bailey Road and Davisville Road. The bridge makes the parcels south of Davisville Road more accessible and marketable to future tenants. Delays that visitors once encountered as trains filled with automobiles passed by are no more, and now there is an easy, safe and efficient passage to those areas of the park.

The construction of new roads and utilities within the Park has made numerous parcels available for development. Most recently the extension of Compass Circle has created access to 56 acres which is pre-permitted for a building up to 500,000 s/f.

The investments in infrastructure at Quonset have been bolstered by innovative planning by a team of talented professionals who are continuously looking for ways to improve the business climate for our existing tenants and for businesses looking to move here. There is no better example of that innovation than our "Site-Readiness" program, which creates a streamlined and expedited permitting process for the remaining 39 parcels available for development at Quonset. Under the program, these sites have all the necessary permits and are ready for immediate development within 90 days. The QDC partnered with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) to pre-permit each

parcel to meet environmental requirements. The QDC also worked with the Town of North Kingstown, and building and zoning experts to pre-engineer the parcels to anticipate likely uses for a variety of industries.

Most exciting about the consistent federal investment in Quonset on the part of the EDA is the growth these grants have helped nurture. The federal support has been followed by millions of dollars in private investment and thousands of new jobs. In fact, since 2007 we have seen Quonset Business Park grow by more than 3,000 new jobs. The Business Park is now home to more than 175 Rhode Island companies, who employ more than 9,100 individuals in both full and part-time positions. Meanwhile, the Port of Davisville at Quonset Business Park has become one of the largest auto-importers in North America.

We look forward to a continued partnership with the EDA, and we embrace the opportunities afforded to us through federal grants as we continue to enhance Quonset for our tenants, neighbors, and all Rhode Islanders. We recognize the ability we have to be a formidable engine of job growth for the Ocean State, and with the support of the EDA, other federal agencies, and our congressional delegation, we look forward to continuing to do just that.

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

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