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Greencore CEO: Quonset just kept coming out on top

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Governor Lincoln Chafee and the Quonset Development Corporation (QDC) announced in March that its board of directors approved a 50-year lease with Greencore USA to become a new tenant at Quonset Business Park.

As part of the agreement, the convenience food manufacturer will build a 107,000 s/f facility onsite, bringing close to 400 new employees to the Business Park. The new facility can also be expanded another 40,000 s/f, positioning Greencore to employ more than 600 people at Quonset at full build-out.

Greencore USA's CEO, Liam McClennon, recently appeared on WPRI's Executive Suite program to discuss his company's arrival at Quonset more in depth. McClennon told WPRI's Ted Nesi that Greencore completed a very disciplined search when considering where to build its new \$40 million facility, including hiring a professional site selection consultant. At the end of the day, however, the decision to come to Quonset was "an easy choice."

"Quonset just kept coming out on top - whatever way you looked at it, whatever way you cut and diced the data, Quonset was just the right place," McClennon told Nesi.

Why? McClennon noted a variety of factors that played into Greencore's decision.

For example, Quonset's Site-Readiness program: "Having a shovel-ready site, and not having to worry too much about getting permits or more designs and committees - it was one of those big parts of the Quonset choice," McClennon said. "[As to] when and how quickly we could start - Quonset has always been a front runner - and nobody else really came close. Everyone else had a very long lead time to be ready to do construction," he added.

Location was also a major factor for the company coming to Rhode Island. "As we looked at the varying outbound/inbound logistics and capabilities; where vendors were; where there was a workforce; and that the site was here in Quonset, it was really easy," said McClennon.

McClennon discussed other important factors that played into Greencore's decision, including Quonset's incentives for longer term leases and the job creation/payroll incentive.

Greencore's experience in choosing to come to Rhode Island should also be noted. McClennon said, "It definitely felt like one of the more easy places to work, and we work in several states in the U.S., so we have some good context for Rhode Island in and amongst its kind of peer group of other states looking to encourage inward investment."

Perhaps most importantly, Greencore's CEO had this to say about the status of the new facility at Quonset, "It's already started and it's a pleasure to see that what the guys [the QDC] told us would happen - has happened and we're moving at pace."

We appreciate Greencore's decision to join the more than 175 companies and 9,500 workers at Quonset Business Park, and we look forward to showing them and others what a great place Quonset is to grow a business.

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

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