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Quonset's Site-Readiness program major draw for Edesia

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Governor Lincoln Chafee and the Quonset Development Corporation (QDC) announced in June that its board of directors approved a 25-year lease to make Edesia a new tenant at Quonset Business Park. A ready-to-use food aid producer and non-profit organization, the company plans to build a new facility as large as 85,000 s/f for 75 to 100 employees. The new facility could also be expanded an additional 25,000 s/f in the future.

"This is great news for Rhode Island and great news for Edesia. Quonset continues to show how investing in our state assets can help companies grow, create more jobs and propel our economy in the right direction," governor Chafee said. "Edesia's mission to end childhood malnutrition is vitally important, and it's an organization that Rhode Island is committed to helping grow."

Under the terms of the proposed agreement, Edesia will construct a new facility on a 10-acre parcel that is part of Quonset's Site-Readiness program. The QDC has completed all the permitting and engineering that a developer would have to conduct as part of "due diligence" to get a project under way.

Navyn Salem, Edesia's executive director said Quonset's Site-Readiness program was a key factor in the company's decision to move there.

"The faster we build, the more quickly we can meet the growing demands of our humanitarian partners, such as UNICEF, the World Food Programme, and USAID/USDA," Salem said. "In our new facility, not only will we reach two million malnourished children each year, we will also focus on the innovation of new products that reach more vulnerable people abroad and right here in Rhode Island."

The success of Quonset's Site Readiness program is due in part to the collaboration with various state agencies. These include the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), which were instrumental in securing all the baseline permits that a new business would need to develop the parcel. As a result, Edesia expects to break ground on their facility within 90 days of signing the approved lease.

As the Providence Journal noted in a recent editorial, "The expansion of Edesia Global Nutrition Solutions is the latest chapter in a Rhode Island success story...The company's expansion at Quonset will help more children in countries affected by wars, famines and natural disasters. It also shows that Rhode Island, when the right assets are put together, can be a good home for companies that do business here and around the world."

Quonset Business Park is now home to more than 175 companies, employing approximately 9,500 people in full-time and part-time jobs across several industries. The Port of Davisville at Quonset is also one of the top ten auto-importers in North America.

Edesia's plans followed the announcement this spring that Greencore USA, a convenience food manufacturer, plans to build a 107,000 s/f facility at Quonset, which would house more than 390

employees. In December, a new 25-year lease at Quonset for Electric Boat was approved by the QDC's board of directors. The submarine maker is expected to add 600,000 s/f to their existing facilities and up to 3,000 more jobs over the next 10 years for the construction of Ohio class replacement submarines.

We are pleased to have Edesia join our growing list of tenants at the 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.

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