



CELEBRATING  
55 YEARS

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## **Celebrating 10,000 jobs at Quonset Business Park**

December 12, 2014 - Rhode Island

Rhode Island celebrated good news this week with the announcement that more than 10,000 people now work at the Quonset Business Park, and at its Port of Davisville.

We joined with Governor Lincoln Chafee, Governor-Elect Gina Raimondo, U.S. Senator Jack Reed, U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, U.S. Representatives Jim Langevin and David Cicilline and others at the Business Park on December 8th to celebrate this achievement. As Governor Chafee said at the event, "[The] announcement is proof that if we invest in our assets, modernize our infrastructure, and provide an attractive environment where businesses can grow - we can create more jobs and strengthen our economy."

We could not agree more. Quonset is now home to almost 200 companies, employing more than 10,000 people in every sector of the economy. Since 2005, when the QDC was established, the Business Park has added more than 4,000 new jobs. Quonset is also home to the Port of Davisville, one of the Top Ten auto importing sites in North America.

The celebration of 10,000 jobs was held at AmWINS Group Benefits, a wholesale health insurance broker, which moved to the Business Park in August 2013. The company develops, distributes and administers benefit programs to businesses of all sizes across a wide range of industries. Since arriving at Quonset, they have grown from 100 to 125 employees. Today, the healthcare industry accounts for almost one fifth of the workforce in Rhode Island.

Justin Jay of Warwick, R.I., who was recently hired by AmWINS, was recognized at the event as the "10,000th Employee" at Quonset Business Park. He received a special plaque and proclamation from the governor's office to mark his unique role in Quonset's success.

How has this milestone been achieved? It's been a joint effort. Since 1974 the federal government has invested \$460.3 million at the Business Park, while \$206.1 million has been invested by the state. Meanwhile, the private sector has more than doubled those figures, investing nearly \$2 billion to help their companies grow.

The QDC works diligently to support the park's tenant companies as they strive for success. For example, there are two lease incentives offered to all new land lease tenants of the park. One incentive provides companies with a discount based on the length of their lease, while the other incentive is based on wages paid to employees. Together, these two programs help create a more business-friendly environment with transparency, fairness, and predictability. These programs are available to all new tenant leases, from the largest company to the smallest.

Another innovative tool to attract new business to the park is the QDC's Site-Readiness program. As part of the program, the QDC has completed all the engineering that a developer would conduct through their "due diligence" to get a project underway. Further, the QDC has secured all required

baseline permits from state agencies.

The general assembly has also played a key role at Quonset. This past year, Rep. Bob Craven and Sen. Roger Picard successfully sponsored legislation ensuring that a \$6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) could be executed to complete some necessary repairs in the business park.

In 2012, the Legislative Port Commission, chaired by Sen. William Walaska and Rep. Deborah Ruggiero supported \$7.5 million in revenue bonds for a crucial dredging project at the Port of Davisville. The project required no taxpayer funding - the bond debt is being financed entirely by the Quonset Development Corporation (QDC) from operating funds and increased port revenues.

The growth at Quonset has not happened overnight. However, with smart, thoughtful planning and a team effort from all levels of government the Business Park has become a major engine of economic growth for and job creation for Rhode Island. Quonset Business Park is a real success story, and we should all be encouraged by that success. The close to 200 companies growing there and the more than 10,000 people working there are helping to move Rhode Island forward.

Rep. Nicholas Mattiello is speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives and Senator Teresa Paiva Weed is president of the Rhode Island Senate.

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