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Greencore opening exhibits fast pace for development

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Greencore USA will begin operations at its new facility at Quonset Business Park this month, putting 400 new people to work at the Quonset Business Park, and in Rhode Island. The opening is significant for several reasons. First, it was just a year ago this March when Greencore's lease was approved by Quonset's Board of Directors. To go from that approval to the opening of a 107,000 s/f facility in a matter of 12 months is yet another indication of how important Quonset's Site Readiness program can be for companies looking to grow in Rhode Island.

Greencore's Quonset facility will be the company's northeast hub, producing approximately six million food items per week and supplying more than 20 states. The state-of-the-art facility uses the latest technology and will introduce approximately 400 new jobs to Rhode Islanders, from entry-level food production and delivery to quality control and management. 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.

"We need to move at the speed businesses want; we need to meet business demands and continue to offer open dialogue and collaboration with government," Governor Raimondo said at a recent unveiling event at the new site.

Greencore's experience - and Gov.Raimondo's vision - is exactly what Quonset's Site Readiness program was designed to realize. Working in collaboration with various state agencies, including the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), 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. As a result, companies - like Greencore and others - can get shovels in the ground within 90 days of signing their lease.

Greencore USA's CEO, Liam McClennon, appeared on WPRI's Executive Suite program last May, and told WPRI's Ted Nesi that the program was a key differentiator when looking for a new home: "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."

During the same show, McClennon also discussed other important factors that played into Greencore's decision, including Quonset's incentives for longer term leases and the incentive to create jobs and boost payrolls.

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."

Fast forward to today - McClennon must be pleased with the results.

"This is the first new factory build for Greencore in almost 25 years, and we are committed to developing one of the best sandwich manufacturing plants in the world here in Rhode Island." McClennon said at their unveiling event. "This is an important investment as part of our ongoing expansion of the business to avail of opportunities in key markets. We are investing over \$40 million to develop a state of the art complex. It will employ upwards of 400 staff and marks a key milestone in our strategy to grow Greencore's business in the U.S."

We appreciate Greencore's decision to join the nearly 200 companies and more than 10,000 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.

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