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Growth at Quonset should be replicated across Rhode Island

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The Quonset Business Park is a remarkable example of what is possible when public and private sector leaders work together to create jobs and spur economic development. I recently had the opportunity to tour the many businesses and visit with the people working at the park, and the figures tell a compelling story. While Rhode Island's economic indicators continue to show room for improvement, the Quonset Business Park has grown to encompass nearly 200 companies and more than 10,000 employees. This remarkable growth at Quonset Business Park needs to be replicated across our state.

In order for that to happen on a larger scale, state government needs to be seen as a partner, not an obstacle to progress. Rhode Islanders need to feel confident that their government is working for them and working well. Those principles also ring true at Quonset, where the Quonset Development Corp. has worked to provide a predictable and transparent climate for the businesses looking to grow there. Through their uniform development guidelines, site-readiness program, and universal leasing incentives, they are showing how the public and private sector can work together to spur economic development.

As your secretary of state, I too want to engage and empower all Rhode Islanders by making government more accessible and transparent, encouraging civic pride, ensuring that elections are fair, fast and accurate, and enhancing commerce.

That's why I am working to improve the way businesses interact with government and working to clarify and strengthen the state's lobbying statutes to ensure transparency.

Whether you are a new entrepreneur or an established business, the Rhode Island Department of State can help you by providing information that is efficient, strategic and relevant to your needs. This begins with our Business Services Division, where all Rhode Island businesses are registered. The Business Services Division is responsible for business and uniform commercial code filings, trademark and service mark registrations, the notary public registry, the issuance of certifications and authentications for business documents filed with our office and the First Stop Business Information Center - which provides guidance to first-time business owners. As the official repository for business and commercial records, we maintain the records of over 65,000 registered corporate entities, 140,000 commercial liens, 4,000 trademark/service mark registrations and 21,000 notaries public commissions.

One way we currently help entrepreneurs and small businesses is through our First Stop Business Center, which is designed to help you navigate government. It provides in-person, phone-based and online support and will gladly create a personalized business information package to help your business get up and running. These packages include a custom-tailored checklist of government regulations and agencies that impact your specific business, all applicable government forms and applications along with instructions for completing them, and referrals to business development

organizations that offer specialized support and expertise in your field.

There's also a helpful online app on our website (sos.ri.gov) called QuickStart, which is available 24 hours a day and can guide you through the process by simply completing an online survey. I encourage you to visit our website as we continue to expand and improve the services we offer through the First Stop Business Center.

Whether you are a new entrepreneur or an established small business, the Department of State's Business Services Division is here to help. You can reach us by calling (401) 222-3040, emailing us at corporations@sos.ri.gov or visiting our office at 148 West River St. Please feel free to contact me directly with any thoughts or suggestions at secretarygorbea@sos.ri.gov or visit our website at sos.ri.gov.

Quonset Business Park is a leading driver of Rhode Island's economy. My office is committed to ensuring that the businesses there, and throughout Rhode Island, have the tools they need to succeed. We need more job growth in this state and the only way to see that happen is to ensure that companies can develop, grow, and stay here through a predictable and transparent environment. They've done it at Quonset - and I'm committed to continuing to do that in my office, as well.

Nellie Gorbea is the secretary of state for Rhode Island.

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