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Quonset leading the way in renewable energy - by Steven King

April 14, 2017 - Rhode Island

Steven King, Quonset Development Corp.

Governor Gina Raimondo came to Quonset last month to announce a strategic goal of increasing Rhode Island's clean energy production to 1000 MW by 2020. In 2016, the baseline year for this goal, the state had approximately 100 megawatts of clean energy. In the past two years, Rhode Island has become the first and only state with an off-shore wind farm.

At Quonset Development Corporation, we're committed to growing our already robust renewable energy portfolio and investing in long-term sustainability.

Here's our record:

- Quonset's Port of Davisville was a key contributor to the off-shore wind farm project and we look forward to a continued relationship with Deepwater Wind;
- We're in the process of having a new 200,000 s/f rooftop solar array constructed to supply the energy for all of our public utility services;
- The West Davisville section of the park is already home to one of the most powerful solar rooftop array in New England, and;
- We've also implemented basic energy efficiency measures like converting all of our lighting throughout the park to LED bulbs. This may seem like a small undertaking, but the project included updating the lighting throughout the entire Port of Davisville, the QDC headquarters, and all maintenance and storage facilities.

Once complete, our various green energy projects will produce approximately two million kilowatt hours (kWh) of energy, enough energy to meet the full needs of the QDC.

Many of Quonset's tenants are promoting sustainable energy development as well. One example is Toray Plastics, one of Quonset's oldest tenants. Toray has been using renewable energy from its own 1,650-panel solar array to offset the firm's energy costs. Toray also decreases its electricity demand through a co-generation facility that produces both electricity and heat using natural gas. The co-gen system cuts down carbon dioxide emissions by 12,500 tons annually.

We support Gov. Raimondo's initiative and are pleased to be able to contribute towards attaining her ambitious goal. We agree with the governor that every step we take toward a clean energy future is a step toward a stronger, more sustainable environment and economy. Renewable energy makes excellent business sense – it's saving us money, it's reliable, and it's helping us reduce our carbon footprint. Our commitment to expand our clean energy portfolio is also creating jobs and protecting the beauty of our state for future generations.

These renewable energy initiatives are just part of the momentum here at Quonset. The Business Park is now home to more than 200 companies and nearly 11,000 jobs. That number will be growing soon as Finlays, a global leader in teas and extracts, recently broke ground on a new facility within

the park. This facility is being constructed with many renewable/sustainable features. The Finlays global research and development center will create 70 new jobs. With 3,200 acres of land available for development, Quonset Business Park is well-positioned to continue in its role as Rhode Island's leading engine of job creation and economic growth and to be a leader in the governor's clean energy initiative, as well.

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

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