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## **Port of Davisville makes Quonset ideal choice for companies - by Steven King**

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Quonset Business Park is not only Rhode Island's leading engine of economic development and job growth, but it also hosts the state's only public port, the Port of Davisville. A top ten auto importer in North America and gateway to markets throughout Southern New England, the Port has seen unprecedented growth in recent months.

Davisville had a record-breaking month for auto imports in August. The Port received a total of 35,000 vehicles, breaking the previous record from November of 2017 by more than 30%. Throughout the past 20 years, the Port has seen unprecedented growth of over 547%. Davisville now handles six times the volume of auto imports than what was received in 1996.

The Port is positioned for further success with ongoing improvements to Pier 2, the "workhouse" of the port. These renovations will be instrumental in increasing the port's capacity. Announced in 2016 by Governor Gina Raimondo and overwhelmingly approved by voters, pier improvements include the construction of new steel sheets along the north, south and east faces of the pier and dredging the port to accommodate large ships. These renovations will add a third berthing space at the Port for unloading cars and other cargo.

Our Port director, Bob Blackburn, has been instrumental in keeping Port operations efficient during the critical Pier 2 construction. Bob and his team have been working hard to ensure that we maintain business continuity during the ongoing construction period, as we must be able to discharge vessels on the East face of the pier before we can repair the south berth. We are actively communicating with all tenants to ensure that we continue to meet their shipping needs during this period. August's record volume is a testament to Blackburn and his team.

Thanks in part to the longtime advocacy of U.S. senator Jack Reed, the Port of Davisville was selected by the U.S. Department of Transportation earlier this year to become a stop on the new Maritime Highway initiative. The Port will join the ports at Brooklyn, N.Y. and Newark, N.J. on the highway. Thanks to a Maritime Administration (MARAD) grant of over \$850,000, the Port is positioned for increased barge services. The benefits for tenants are twofold: this initiative will

significantly decrease car traffic in and out of the business park, while providing tenants with the opportunity to easily access large markets throughout the East Coast, particularly in New York and New Jersey.

Quonset is currently home to over 200 companies that provide nearly 12,000 jobs. The Port of Davisville is just one of the many reasons Quonset Business Park is an ideal location for companies looking to expand their business. With the improvements at Pier 2, we look forward to expanding our offerings even further to help tenants succeed for years to come.

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