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2019: A year to remember for Quonset Business Park - by Steven King

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The Quonset Development Corp. (QDC) was created 15 years ago to create jobs, stimulate private sector investment and create additional tax base at Quonset Business Park. Since then, the Park has seen remarkable growth, and became Rhode Island's leading engine of economic development and job creation with more than 12,000 people working at over 200 companies.

The Business Park has continued to grow because the Quonset team remains focused on evolving to meet the needs of modern businesses. 2019 was a big year at the Park, here are some of the accomplishments and highlights:

A perfect place to start is the team who is focused each day on making Quonset Business Park the best possible home for our companies. We welcomed two new team members in 2019 – Chelsea Siefert, our new director of planning and Norine Lux who was promoted to director of finance. In 2019 Chelsea hit the ground running and picked up where her predecessor Katherine Trapani left off. Chelsea has been instrumental in helping to manage our active pipeline of prospective companies, including innovative businesses that will occupy our second flex industrial building, and preparing to fill the third even as construction has just begun.

Norine's accounting expertise and leadership were key to QDC's effective management of \$40 million of capital improvements at the park. This included grant funded projects and bond initiatives like Pier 2's ongoing renovation and extension, as well as upgrades to roads and utilities, and regular park maintenance.

Other members of the QDC team made great strides in 2019 as well. Edward Spinard, Jr., P.E., Quonset's director of development services was honored by the Rhode Island Society of Professional Engineers as Rhode Island's 2019 "Engineer of the Year." Edward's career long expertise in engineering and construction management has been critical to QDC's continued progress on the development front.

Quonset's Water Department was also awarded R.I.'s Best Tasting Drinking Water for the fourth time in the past five years, a testament to Water Department superintendent Jimmy Folco Jr. and his team.

These awards exemplify the great team that we have in place across the board.

Quonset welcomed four new companies in 2019, Infinity Fresh Kitchen, Goods iQ, Pyramid Case Company and Subsolve, USA. In all, these new companies added 650 jobs.

Other key statistics from 2019 include a huge new record of 338,447 automobiles imported by ship, rail or truck, increasing the previous record of 280,387 in 2018. Additionally, Quonset saw 185,083 s/f of new construction, \$259.5 million in private investment and 41,769 s/f of new building space leased throughout the park.

The Bryant University Economic Impact report released last year confirmed Quonset's role in the region's economy. The Business Park generates \$4.3 billion in economic output, \$1.3 billion in household income and \$128.8 million in tax revenue. The park also hosts one of every six manufacturing jobs in R.I., with 975 manufacturing jobs added in the past year. These statistics show that Quonset continues to foster an environment for business growth, job creation and private sector investment

We owe much of our continued success to the leadership of our partners in local, state and Federal government. Leaders such as governor Gina Raimondo, Commerce secretary and QDC board chair Stefan Pryor, House speaker Nicholas Mattiello, Senate president Dominick Ruggerio, and Rhode Island's Federal delegation played essential roles in Quonset's growth. On the local level, North Kingstown town council president Greg Mancini and North Kingstown town manager Ralph Mollis have also played important roles in making Quonset the leading business park in the region. Since 1980, the \$700 million investment of public funds through grants and state bond initiatives has spurred over \$2 billion in private investment at the park.

To better serve the people who work here, we partnered with RIPTA to launch the Quonset Express, a bus service that brings workers directly from Providence to five different stops throughout the park, on a schedule aligned with company's shifts. Despite slow growth initially, Quonset Express is gaining steam – RIPTA CEO Scott Avedisian was recently quoted as being excited about steady growth of the new service.

Also, looking toward the future of transportation, Quonset was a test site for the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and May Mobility's pilot of autonomous, fully electric vehicles. Our predictable traffic was an ideal test location for the vehicles to gather critical data before being put out on the roads. Today, these electric vehicles offer free rides along a 5.3-mile route in downtown Providence, with stops between Providence Train Station and Olneyville Sq.

Continuing our commitment to being a good neighbor, we made significant investments in open

space and landscaping for our North Kingstown neighbors. In 2019 we completed the new North Kingstown athletic fields, the 22-acre fields complex was funded by an initial QDC investment of \$200,000 and an \$800,000 R.I. Department of Environmental Management grant. The North Kingstown youth lacrosse league was thrilled to have sole use of these fields for over 250 youth in their 2019 spring season program. We also built a new 10 foot berm along our bike path, complete with evergreen trees and plantings. We take our responsibility to be a good neighbor seriously and these additions to the park will be enjoyed by North Kingstown residents for generations to come.

What a year it has been! While it is great to reminisce on the successes of 2019, Quonset is looking to the future at even bigger things in 2020. We look forward to continuing to grow the leading business park in the region, creating more jobs for Rhode Islanders and economic prosperity in our great state.

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