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My priority as mayor is to build pride in our community - by Frank Picozzi

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Mayor
Frank Picozzi

The past month since I was sworn in as Warwick's mayor has been a whirlwind of meetings, events, and getting out into the community to hear the concerns and ideas of those who live and work here. I am honored to have been elected to serve the city I grew up in, the city where my wife and I raised our family, and the city where I'm taking delight in watching the third generation of Picozzi children grow and flourish. I'm not a politician, but someone from the construction trades whose priority now as mayor is to build pride in our community. We'll be doing that by eliminating blight, improving our parks and recreational facilities, and providing an open, transparent administration so that residents and our business community truly feel they have a voice and a seat at the table.

Warwick has a lot to offer – 39 miles of beautiful shoreline, hardworking employees, non-profit agencies who do terrific work for the most vulnerable among us, and people with tremendous heart who come together in times of trouble to support one another. We also have a diverse business base and plenty of opportunities for companies to succeed, and, in just a few weeks, I've seen very positive examples of economic growth, job creation and renewed interest in Warwick as we work to make the city more business friendly.

My first official event as mayor, in fact, was the ribbon cutting for Five Guys Burger & Fries' second Warwick restaurant. Customers have been flocking to Airport Rd. to enjoy their freshly-made burgers, fries, and milkshakes. We wish them tremendous success in their new location.

I'm also very excited about a proposed e-commerce warehouse/distribution center near T.F. Green Airport, which is slated to come for planning board master plan review later this month. The approximately 500,000 s/f facility, to be sited on 46 acres, would include 116 loading bays, parking for more than 400 vehicles, and 124 trailer stalls. Two of the selling points, the developer says, is Warwick's role as host to the airport and proximity to I-95 and I-295. Also in development are plans for the demolition of a long-shuttered gas station to make way for construction of a new, 8,000 s/f station and convenience store at the intersection of Post and Airport Rds. When complete, this

project will have transformed a blighted parcel into one with an attractive building and new landscaping conveniently located near the airport.

There's also great news for City Centre Warwick, the 100-acre, transit-oriented development surrounding T.F. Green Airport and the InterLink intermodal commuter rail station. City Center Warwick's master plan envisions a mixed use of commercial and residential development in a vibrant, "live/work/play" environment that takes advantage of our proximity to air, rail, highway, and public transportation. Master plan approval has been granted for up to 70 condominiums and apartments on Kilvert St., which is in the heart of the development district, and likely to attract those looking for an affordable housing option within walking distance of the commuter rail. I'm looking forward to welcoming new residents to Warwick when construction is complete.

Elsewhere in the city, construction of a bank, fast food restaurant and additional retail space on the new Dave's Marketplace property will soon be underway, and there will be the arrival of a new coffee shop and other commercial ventures that we're hoping to be able to announce shortly.

Warwick has any number of development and investment opportunities. I invite you to explore all that our community can offer you, your employees, and clients.

Frank Picozzi is the mayor of the city of Warwick, RI.

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