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The importance of infrastructure at Quonset - by Steven King

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Managing Director
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The release of President Biden's American Jobs Plan has brought the importance of infrastructure to a successful economy to the forefront of public awareness. At Quonset, world class infrastructure is our greatest strength and is the cornerstone of our success.

Today, over 12,200 people work here at more than 200 companies – and they all benefit from the Quonset Business Park's infrastructure. Companies have access to all four modes of transportation - highways, 14 miles of rail lines, the Port of Davisville, and the Quonset State Airport. They also benefit from our dedicated water supply, robust electric, gas, and telecom utilities, and an award-winning waste-water treatment facility.

Our industrial spaces have the capacity to support large, high-tech, operations like Electric Boat and Toray Plastics while the Commerce Park section accommodates some of the state's most successful companies like Ocean State Job Lot. Our state-of-the-art Flex Industrial Campus gives new and expanding companies room to grow in an affordable, move-in ready space, adaptable to the needs of their business. Quonset also offers modern, customizable, state-of-the-art office space for start-ups, small businesses and professional service companies in the Gateway Office Complex.

Nearly 7,000 new jobs have been created and private companies have invested \$1.4 billion in Quonset since 2005 in large part because of access to world-class infrastructure.

Quonset Development Corp. board chair and Rhode Island secretary of commerce Stefan Pryor recently underscored the importance of Rhode Island's maritime infrastructure in support of the ocean economy. According to secretary Pryor, the ideal places for Rhode Island to make infrastructure investments would include:

1. Port upgrades at Quonset, ProvPort, and a new port at East Providence for ocean enterprises;
2. Building a processing facility to support seafood and fisheries projects, like those already at

Quonset, and:

3. Investment in the development and testing of marine technology in collaboration with key institutions such as University of Rhode Island.

Secretary Pryor is right to focus on the future of Rhode Island's maritime economy. Rhode Island's geography gives us a chance to be a hub for the off-shore wind industry - a transformative, next generation opportunity. At Quonset's thriving Port of Davisville we've already started to prepare the infrastructure for these jobs, while maintaining our existing cargo traffic.

There's a lot more to be done here and across our state if we're going to take full advantage of the opportunity that wind power presents. The bottom line? Our experience at Quonset tells us that making maritime infrastructure a priority will pay enormous dividends for Rhode Islanders, now and in the future.

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