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Celebration with governor McKee at the Port of Davisville - by Steven King

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Shown (from left) are: Greg Mancini, town council; Jeffrey Campbell, Siem Car Carriers; governor McKee; and Steven King, Quonset Development Corp.

Quonset Business Park has become the leading industrial park in the region in large part due to the support of federal, state and local government leaders. Recently, Rhode Island's governor Daniel McKee became the latest state leader to visit Quonset and see the bustling economic engine in action.

McKee visited to cut the ribbon on the recently completed new east berth at the Port of Davisville's Pier 2. The governor then toured construction at the Port's Pier 2 modernization project, which will allow Davisville to be a staging ground for future offshore wind projects. This will set the stage for employment at the port to grow beyond the nearly 1,700 people who work there today.

The Pier 2 modernization project was made possible through a \$50 million bond overwhelmingly approved by Rhode Island voters in 2016. Through the work of more than 24 companies and hundreds of people, the project included dredging the port to accommodate large ships and extending Pier 2 by 232 feet to the north, creating a third berth at the port for unloading cars and other cargo which McKee officially opened for business during his visit. The Quonset team expects this project to be fully completed early next year.

While touring the Port of Davisville, McKee witnessed the offloading of Volkswagens, Audis and Porsches arriving from Germany on the Siem Cicero car carrier ship. The Siem Cicero is the sister ship of the Siem Confucius which made its first U.S. port call at Davisville on June 29, 2020 and is powered by liquified natural gas (LNG). McKee presented Siem Car Carriers president Jeffrey Campbell with a plaque commemorating the company's first port call in the U.S.

Ships powered by LNG emit far less greenhouse gases than traditional car carrier ships. The Quonset team is pleased to be able to contribute to a reduction in adverse environmental impacts by welcoming the Confucius, the only LNG-powered car carrier in the world.

Quonset's Port of Davisville is one of the Top 10 auto importers in North America – importing about 300,000 autos from dozens of manufacturers – including Audi's, Porsches, Volkswagens, Hondas and Subarus, among others – every year. The cars are transported on massive ships 600 feet long and seven stories high.

McKee also toured long-time Quonset company North Atlantic Distribution (NORAD), which processes hundreds of thousands of automobiles annually before they are transported to dealerships as far west as Chicago and as far south as Washington, D.C. NORAD occupies multiple warehouses at the Port of Davisville where they add the final parts to vehicles including bumpers or entertainment systems.

Access to a world-class port facility like Davisville is just one of the reasons why Quonset is one of the leading business parks in the region, with over 12,200 people working at more than 200 companies. The Quonset team looks forward to working with McKee and our partners in government to maximize our natural advantage of being located on Narragansett Bay so we can help companies create even more jobs for hard working Rhode Islanders.

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