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Rhode Island to bring Quonset's 'site readiness' program statewide - by Chelsea Siefert

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Chelsea Siefert

Rhode Islanders know Quonset as a homegrown success story. With over 12,000 jobs at more than 200 companies, the Quonset Business Park is Rhode Island's leading engine of economic development and job creation. Our latest initiative, Rhode Island Ready, is designed to help replicate that success across the Ocean State.

Key to Quonset's growth has been our "site readiness" program that offers pre-permitted, pre-engineered sites to new businesses, positioning them to break ground within 90 days of signing a lease. In the past decade, the site readiness program has been crucial to generating over 3,500 jobs and \$664 million in private investment across 14 developed sites and 36 companies.

In the new year, RI Ready will prepare industrial sites throughout Rhode Island to support future job growth. Backed by \$40 million overwhelmingly approved by the voters in 2021, the initiative will create an inventory of properties ready for industrial development and new companies. Applications are now open at www.riready.org.

Project sites that meet the following criteria will be considered eligible:

- Sites that will allow for upgraded or improved infrastructure in support of an industrial use;
- Sites that will allow an existing industrial use or facility to expand significantly;
- Sites that are approximately 10 acres in size (or are capable of supporting an approximately 100,000 s/f building) and are;
- Zoned for industrial or off-shore wind support uses;
- Are within one mile of a roadway designated by the state to support industrial traffic.

Managed by the Quonset team, RI Ready will also provide an array of services for enrolled sites. These include technical assistance with engineering, permitting and other pre-approvals and activities necessary to prepare the site for development. Representatives of eligible projects, with approval from their host city or town, will work with Quonset staff to get their sites "RI Ready."

RI Ready's four-step "Pathway to Green" approach will walk enrolled applicants down the path to pre-permitting, including assistance with workforce development, expedited permit review and much more. Each application begins with the "Red" step, where projects are reviewed and evaluated for enrollment. The "Orange" step includes technical assistance, full-site engineering, permitting and cost estimates.

Next up is the "Yellow" step where capital investment may be available for appropriate sites, and RI Ready can assist with financing for on-site or off-site improvements. Once a site achieves "Green" status it will be pre-permitted, fully engineered and ready to go. That's it — four steps to help

businesses get shovels in the ground quickly.

The RI Ready program is designed to eliminate uncertainty and red tape from the development process, so the focus remains on moving business forward and creating jobs.

The Quonset team looks forward to working with land owners and communities across Rhode Island to prepare industrial sites to generate jobs and tax revenue that benefits everyone in the Ocean State.

We are “ready” to help applicants get on the pathway to success. Get started on your application at www.riready.org.

Chelsea Siefert is the director of planning and development at Quonset Development Corp. and program manager of Rhode Island Ready, North Kingstown, RI.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540