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## **Neon Marketplace, TF Green, and Woodspring Suites update - by Frank Picozzi**

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Frank Picozzi

Two gracefully curved stone walls at the newly-opened Neon Marketplace gas station and convenience store at the intersection of Post and Airport Rds. bear the legend “City Centre” – a sign of the revitalization that’s underway in and adjacent to more than 100 acres near Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport, and a symbol of the rapidly increasing momentum the city of Warwick has been seeing in new projects and significant investment from developers.

Neon Marketplace, which is owned and operated by the R.I.-based Procaccianti Companies, signifies a roughly \$9 million investment to transform a former, abandoned gas station site into an attractive, welcoming spot less than a stone’s throw from the airport and at the gateway of the development district known as City Centre Warwick. Breakfast sandwiches, lattes, gourmet pizzas and plant-based selections are just a few of the amenities – in addition to extensive landscaping and 16 competitively-priced gas, diesel, and electric charging stations – that are making the spot a go-to for travelers and locals alike.

A bit further down Post Rd. is the future site of the Woodsprings Suites, a 122-room, extended-stay hotel that will complement the city’s 16 wide range of lodging options. And there are exciting plans for the former Sheraton Hotel – mostly recently part of the Windham Company’s holdings, to be converted to an apartment building with at least 150 studio apartments and other proposed amenities. Another development being spearheaded by NorthPoint will see the construction of a warehouse on 46 acres near the airport – a site the landowner says was attractive due to its proximity to the airport as well as Rte. 37, which has connections to I-95 and 295.

Meanwhile, the Rhode Island Airport Corp. (RIAC) has been busy making a number of improvements and implementing new programs at Rhode Island T.F. Green International, which has been recently named one of the top three domestic airports in the Travel + Leisure 2021 World’s Best Awards readers’ survey. This honor is one of seven bestowed in just five years – the facility’s recognition includes being named in USA Today’s Ten Best Readers’ Choice awards list for “Best Small Airports” in 2020 and 2021 and as the 4th “best airport” in the nation in the Condé Nast Traveler Readers’ Choice Awards.

Recently, RIAC completed a \$24.8 million, federally-funded improvement project to its Runway 16/34, which accounts for roughly 20% of the facility’s arrivals and departures, and, in December, reopened the airport’s secondary runway to commercial traffic. Federal funds are also paying for enhancements and modernization of the terminal, including refurbishments of the restroom facilities, with an eye to ensuring travelers’ well being through HEPA filtration technology, new amenities, better guest flow and improved sanitary features. Federal funding in this fiscal year will also allow RIAC to move forward with other initiatives identified in its newly-adopted master plan.

Further, an initiative, dubbed the “Sunflower Program” now affords guests with unseen disabilities the option of obtaining, at no cost, a sunflower lanyard, pin, or bracelet to wear, alerting airline and terminal staff that they may need assistance with airport processes or procedures. RIAC’s also relocated its taxi pickup spot closer to the passenger arrival/baggage claim area to make it more

convenient for passengers and more affordable and competitive for local taxi companies.

As is evident by its continued recognition in travelers' choice awards, Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport has long been known for its affordability, accessibility, and ease of traveling into and out of the facility. The recent addition of new air service, including several daily flights to New York City, the resurgence of service to Minneapolis/St. Paul, direct flights to Nashville, Cancun, Ft. Lauderdale, Atlanta, and the debut of Breeze Airways, will only serve to escalate the airport's profile and increase travel to Warwick and the Ocean State. And that's good news for leisure and business travelers and local companies alike.

To learn more about Warwick, its fantastic municipal services, beautiful coastline, recreational facilities, diverse housing market, why it's becoming an even more attractive community in which to live and work, or how to make your move here a seamless one, call the Department of Economic Development at (401) 738-2014, or email [econ.dir@warwickri.com](mailto:econ.dir@warwickri.com).

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