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Rhode Island Ready program is off to a strong start - by Chelsea Siefert

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Chelsea Siefert

The Rhode Island Ready (RI Ready) program is off to a strong start, which is good news for the state's economy. The first four Rhode Island industrial sites were approved for enrollment in the program by the Quonset Development Corp.'s (QDC) board of directors at a recent meeting. Now, with the support of their host city or town, representatives of these sites will work with RI Ready program staff at Quonset to become "RI Ready".

Rhode Island Ready is a statewide industrial site readiness initiative backed by \$40 million overwhelmingly approved in 2021 by voters. The initiative will create an inventory of pre-permitted properties ready for industrial development, leading to job creation statewide. Enrolled sites will be provided technical assistance with engineering, permitting and other approvals along with support that will prepare sites for development activity.

RI Ready is based on Quonset's successful "Site Readiness" program which provides pre-permitted, pre-engineered sites to new or expanding businesses at Quonset which are shovel ready within 90 days of signing a lease. In the past decade, the program has led to the creation of over 3,500 jobs and \$664 million in private investment across 14 developed sites and 36 companies.

The first four sites approved for RI Ready include:

- 1307 Hartford Ave. in Johnston;
- 0 Comstock Pkwy. in Cranston;
- 40 Keyes Way in West Warwick, and;
- 550 Romano Vineyard Way at the Quonset Business Park in North Kingstown.

In the next phase, RI Ready staff will work with private business owners and municipalities to activate sites for economic development, bringing new jobs and tax revenue to Rhode Island. They'll do this not just by expediting the permit and approval process for industrial sites, but by taking the uncertainty out of the development process, eliminating red tape and guaranteeing efficiency with unified development regulations.

State leaders were enthusiastic about the announcement of the first four approved industrial sites.

"It is exciting to see approval for the first four sites in this program," said governor Dan McKee. "The RI Ready initiative is building momentum, and in the very near future, we will see new or expanded businesses at those sites. I want to thank the municipal leaders in Johnston, West Warwick, Cranston and North Kingstown for supporting these project sites and making a crucial investment in their city or town - and the entire state. I look forward to following the progress as these properties become ready for industrial development and job creation."

Commerce secretary Stefan Pryor, who chairs the QDC board, said “We are pleased to enroll this initial group of properties in the RI Ready program. This is the first step in preparing up to 45 acres of industrial land for private investment -- and, if owners’ plans advance, for future development.”

RI Ready expects more new applicants to be reviewed for enrollment at Quonset’s May board meeting.

To learn more about RI Ready, please go to our website 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