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Pier 2 upgrade positions Quonset, Ocean State to be wind energy hub - by Steven King

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Steven King

The future for wind energy in Rhode Island is bright. Recently, the Quonset Development Corp. (QDC) — joined by governor Dan McKee, lieutenant governor Sabina Matos and state and local officials — helped secure that future when they cut the ribbon on the modernized Pier 2 at the Port

of Davisville. The new pier positions Quonset to become a hub for the offshore wind industry while creating opportunity for more shipping, jobs and revenue for Rhode Island.

Shown (from left) are: Lieutenant governor Sabina Matos, governor Dan McKee, QDC managing director Steven King, state rep Robert Craven, North Kingstown town council president Gregory Mancini, state rep. Julie Casimiro, and North Kingstown town councilor Kimberly Page.

The \$83 million Pier 2 expansion came in \$7 million under budget and will extend the pier's life by 50 years. Davisville is Rhode Island's only public port, consistently ranking as one of the top 10 auto importers in North America, supporting nearly 1,700 jobs and hundreds of ship calls annually.

The port is hosted by Quonset Business Park (QBP), a major driver of the state's economy and home to over 200 companies employing more than 12,000 people. Nearly \$3 billion in private investment has been made at Quonset, which generates \$1.3 billion in income annually for Rhode Island families, as well as \$136 million in state and local taxes. Today, one of every six manufacturing jobs in Rhode Island is at Quonset.

Improvements at Davisville included extending Pier 2 by 232 feet, creating a third berth and dredging to accommodate larger ships. The expansion will allow the port to maintain its auto import success while preparing for future wind energy projects.

Governor McKee was dockside to celebrate an important day for the Ocean State. "I'm proud to cut the ribbon at Pier 2," the governor said. "I'm looking forward to seeing the new \$60 million investment my administration secured in this year's budget to ensure Quonset continues to be an economic driver for the state, positioning us to continue leading the nation in the race for offshore wind."

Quonset's success is a team effort made possible by the Rhode Island Congressional delegation, governor Dan McKee, lieutenant governor Sabina Matos and the General Assembly who have supported and invested in Quonset's success over the years. Local partners were also on hand to celebrate, including state reps. Julie Casimiro and Robert Craven, North Kingstown town council president Gregory Mancini and councilor Kimberly Page.

The recent expansion of Pier 2 will sustain Rhode Island's maritime economy for decades to come, positioning the Port of Davisville — and our state — as a leader in the growing "blue economy" and offshore wind industry throughout the Northeast.

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