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Quonset proposed site for new wind farm mfg. facility

October 09, 2008 - Rhode Island

Governor Donald Carcieri last month announced that Deepwater Wind was chosen as the successful developer to construct a wind energy project off the shores of Rhode Island. The project is expected to provide 1.3 million megawatt hours per year of renewable energy - 15% of all electricity used in the state. The announcement follows the issuance of a formal RFP in April, seeking bids from private companies to construct and operate an off-shore wind farm. While the ideal location for the wind farm is yet to be determined, it is expected that the Quonset Business Park will have a large role to play as the site of the regional manufacturing facility and headquarters for Deepwater Wind.

As part of the project, Deepwater Wind has pledged a significant private investment in Rhode Island of approximately \$1.5 billion including the construction of the regional manufacturing facility at Quonset. The news release from the governor's office estimates the investment will create up to 800 direct jobs, with annual wages of \$60 million. The Quonset facility is expected to manufacture support structures upon which the turbine and its tower are based.

Governor Carcieri told those gathered at the announcement, "This is much more than an energy project. This is about creating a new industry in Rhode Island; an industry that puts Rhode Island at the epicenter of the emerging alternative energy market. Deepwater Wind will help bring new economic activity, jobs and opportunity to Rhode Island. From construction through operation, Deepwater Wind projects will provide high-quality, green collar jobs. Further, Deepwater Wind's jacket foundations are the ideal cost-effective solution for the deeper waters in our region."

Deepwater Wind CEO Chris Brown said, "Our vision is to develop multiple utility-scale wind farms in deep water in the northeast. Quonset will be the base of those manufacturing operations."

With the governor's selection of Deepwater Wind, the Quonset Development Corp. (QDC) will now begin to negotiate with the company for space in the business park. Our transparent process includes protocols for development as well as technical and design review phases to ensure all new business park residents support QDC's mission of continuing to create great platforms for new or expanding businesses and good jobs.

The state and Deepwater Wind are also now entering a 90-day period to negotiate a formal development agreement, which according to the governor's office will include the establishment of a manufacturing headquarters in the state and the reimbursement of the cost of the Special Area Management Plan to the Renewable Energy Fund. In addition, the agreement will outline the preferred developer status for Deepwater Wind in the permitting process.

The project has clear potential for the business park's future. QDC board chair and executive director of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corp., Saul Kaplan says he expects this initiative to not only strengthen the economy by creating jobs at Quonset, but also establish the state

as an early leader in off shore wind energy production.

QDC has already had some preliminary discussions with Deepwater and we look forward to moving into the next phase of identifying possible parcels and negotiating with the company for the location of its regional headquarters and manufacturing and assembly facility.

Steven King, P.E. is the managing director of the Quonset Development Corp., North Kingstown.

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