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## Quonset Business Park: 13,000 jobs and counting - Macfarlane, a recent hire at REGENT, is 13,000th employee - by Steven King

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Shown (from left) are: Billy Thalheimer, co-founder & CEO of REGENT; governor Dan McKee; Maddie Macfarlane, REGENT; Steven King, P.E., managing director of QDC; Liz Tanner, RI commerce secretary; senator Jack Reed; Robert Craven, RI state representative; senator Sheldon Whitehouse; and Gregg Amore, secretary of state-elect.

Quonset Business Park has been a model for job creation for many years. With the announcement of Quonset's 13,000th job we recently celebrated a key milestone that reflects our commitment to

creating and sustaining an environment that encourages economic growth across Rhode Island, and the region.

Gov. Dan McKee, U.S. senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse and local leaders celebrated the milestone at a new maritime business, REGENT Craft. REGENT builds high tech seaglidars – described by the company as “pioneering the future of sustainable maritime mobility, building a new category of electric vehicle that will transport commercial passengers.” Founded by MIT and Boeing engineers, REGENT manufactures seaglidars for aircraft operators, ferry companies, and government organizations.

We were also proud to recognize Maddie Macfarlane, a recent hire at REGENT, as Quonset Business Park’s “13,000th Employee.” A Navy veteran, Macfarlane attended the U.S. Naval Academy and received her commission as an officer in the U.S. Navy in 2014. In her current role she serves as REGENT’s executive assistant to the engineering organization, and has been directly involved in establishing their new headquarters at Quonset.

Macfarlane is just one of the 13,033 people who work in every sector of the economy at one of Quonset’s 228 companies. The Business Park also hosts one of every six manufacturing jobs in Rhode Island as well as the Port of Davisville, one of the top 10 auto importers in North America. On an annual basis Quonset generates \$4.27 billion in economic output for the state, \$1.28 billion in household income for Rhode Island families and \$128.8 million in tax revenue.

The continued investment in world-class infrastructure at Quonset has paid dividends, attracting new businesses to the state, creating new jobs and expanding the state’s role in the Blue Economy. This year, Quonset’s Pier 2 completed a \$83.1 million expansion and modernization that positions the Port of Davisville to continue its auto import success and prepare to support future wind energy projects. Meanwhile, a \$60 million investment by governor McKee and the General Assembly in the Port Master Plan will also help us expand our maritime capabilities.

The announcement of our 13,000th job is only a preview of even bigger things to come. At the same time, it is also a window into what is possible in Rhode Island, with a sound plan in place and focused, long-term leadership committed to making that plan a reality. With a strong foundation in place, Quonset looks forward to nurturing a platform that will allow Rhode Island companies, and Rhode Islanders themselves, to prosper for many years to come.

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

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