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**Rhode Island is on the move - and there's no better example than Quonset - by gov. Dan McKee**

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Gov. Dan McKee

This year has already brought significant economic progress in for the state of Rhode Island, and nowhere is this more noticeable than at the Quonset Business Park.

In August, the Biden Administration approved the construction of a 704-megawatt wind farm off the coast of Rhode Island, and 400-megawatts will come to Rhode Island to power over 200,000 homes. The Revolution Wind project will support 1,200 local jobs during the construction phase and many more during operations and maintenance.

The Quonset Business Park will play a key role in the construction and maintenance of the Revolution Wind farm. Quonset is preparing the Port of Davisville to support the offshore wind industry with a \$234 million master plan, which includes a new industrial-scale pier, modernization of existing infrastructure, dockage space for crew transfer and support vessels, and improved access and laydown areas.

In addition to the Port expansion, Quonset continues to provide opportunities for Rhode Island businesses to grow and thrive. Construction continues at the Gateway Offices and Flex Industrial Campus, where Quonset companies are expanding, and new tenants are leasing flexible office and manufacturing space.

Quonset's existing companies continue to flourish, with over 700,000 s/f of new industrial space programmed in the coming years by Electric Boat, Green Development and Edesia Nutrition, among others. As business operations grow, the Quonset team is hard at work providing the world-class infrastructure that supports their continued success. The momentum at Quonset drives Rhode Island forward and is an indicator of all the other Rhode Island success stories that have occurred this year.

Forbes just ranked Rhode Island the second-most environmentally friendly state in the United States. Rhode Islanders – and the businesses that operate here – have always been committed to protecting our environment. Together, we will work to expand our blue economy, bolster our clean energy sector and remain a leader in environmental protection.

Our clean energy progress will be aided by \$2 million in recent federal funding to prepare our workforce for good-paying jobs in the renewable energy, transportation, IT and broadband fields.

We are also pleased to host this year's Go Global Awards, an annual international conference that brings hundreds of business and economic development leaders together to share best business practices and network. More than 300 global companies are planning to participate in this year's event, as we showcase and celebrate businesses that are driving the global economy forward.

Since the pandemic, our state has made more resources available to small businesses than ever before. Technical assistance is available to small business owners in the form of legal service, accounting, marketing, website development, and more. Financing is available to support minority

and woman owned businesses to address historic and current inequities in business ownership.

Small businesses are the backbone of Rhode Island's economy, and we will continue to support their success.

Homeownership is one of the best ways to create generational wealth, and we want to make purchasing a home possible for more Rhode Islanders. That's why we provided more than \$10.4 million in federal pandemic relief funds for down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers.

Rhode Island's future is in the hands of our young people, and our students deserve the best possible education. Our new, out-of-school learning initiative, Learn365RI, is designed to shift learning from the traditional 180 school days to 365 days of learning a year by supporting partnerships between municipalities and community-based organizations to expand high-quality, extended learning experiences. State funding is available to organizations with the long-term goals of improving student learning outcomes.

It's clear that good things are happening in Rhode Island. We're looking forward to building on that momentum to lift wages and create a place where businesses – and families – can succeed and thrive.

Dan McKee is the governor of Rhode Island, Providence, R.I.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540