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Dedicated highway access benefits for Quonset businesses

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An efficient transportation system is vital to the economic prosperity at the Quonset Business Park. With the opening of the newly completed Rte. 403 on October 22, we are realizing the vision of providing dedicated highway infrastructure to support and enhance the park.

The \$130 million project began in 2000, and included construction of a new interchange at Post Rd. as well as a new highway interchange at Rte. 4. The opening of the new Rte. 403 provides the business park with the amenity of quick and direct highway access to Rte. 4, which leads to I-95.

The new highway complements the Park's other transportation infrastructure including port facilities, an airport and a freight rail line, which the Rhode Island Department of Transportation augmented with the 2006 completion of the \$225 million Freight Rail Improvement Project (FRIP).

Prior to leading a symbolic parade of 10 trucks down the new highway into the business park, governor Carcieri described the project as "a key part of the economic infrastructure of our state," which "...demonstrates Rhode Island's commitment to becoming a better place to do business."

The convoy of trucks from businesses in the park, including Ocean State Job Lot, Toray, NORAD, Virginia Transportation, Emac Transport and Ocean State Oil, rolled across the newly completed highway. For many of the businesses the efficiencies created by the direct access translate to savings both in time and money. Bob Miller, general manager from Emac Transport pointed out that the new road will mean his drivers can avoid local traffic and also save on fuel costs.

Quonset is about good sites for good jobs, and the creation of accessible infrastructure is paying off. The business park is already home to 168 companies employing 8,574 individuals in a mix of office and R&D, light and general manufacturing, warehouse and distribution, marine construction, and importing. Since 2004 we've had \$156 million in private investment with another \$155 million in the pipeline. When the park is full we anticipate it will be home to 15,000 jobs.

"The new Rte. 403 and the FRIP project afford the Quonset Business Park with transportation solutions that not only will help the Park's businesses to flourish, but help alleviate traffic on local roads and potentially limit truck traffic on Rhode Island highways through greater use of rail," RIDOT director Michael Lewis said.

Final construction on the highway and associated ramps is continuing to bring the project to full completion.

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

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