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## **Quonset is a good neighbor: Jobs, open space and millions in tax relief - by Steven J. King**

June 14, 2024 - Rhode Island



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Quonset Business Park is New England's premier business park, one of the largest in the Northeast and recognized as being among the top 10 in the nation. Home to 239 companies, over 14,000 people work at Quonset in a variety of industries earning \$1.7 billion in annual household income for Rhode Island families. Managed by the Quonset Development Corp. (QDC), the business park stretches across more than 3,200 acres in North Kingstown, and is committed to being a good neighbor.

That commitment begins with the financial benefits Quonset provides the host community of North Kingstown. Last month, the town approved a \$136 million annual budget - approximately \$10 million of which came from Quonset via taxes and payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT). Quonset also hosts a town fire station and the town DPW garage while the administrative offices for town schools are in the Gateway Office complex. Meanwhile, the town's transfer station is on property formerly controlled by Quonset, and the park's water system provides the town with a backup supply, if necessary.

Many North Kingstown residents join their fellow Rhode Islanders in enjoying the amenities at Quonset. Hundreds of acres at Quonset are dedicated to recreation, preserving our rich history and protected open space. Four public beaches with free parking allow town residents to experience the beauty of Narragansett Bay – Blue Beach, Compass Rose Beach, Spink's Neck Beach and Calf Pasture Point each offering a unique natural habitat and stunning views of Narragansett Bay.

Quonset also hosts the town-owned and operated North Kingstown Golf Course, one of the best 18-hole public courses in the state. The business park offers two connected bike paths: the 2.3-mile-long Quonset bike path and the 1.25-mile-long North Kingstown bike path. These paths take riders from Post Rd. all the way to the serene Calf Pasture Point nature area. Several years ago, the QDC donated four public multi-use athletic fields on 22 acres to the town for use by North Kingstown's youth leagues.

The Seabee Museum and Memorial Park features Quonset's history as a formal naval base and home of the Fighting Seabees.

In addition to offering public recreation areas, Quonset goes to great lengths to mitigate impacts on the surrounding community. We enforce measures (no trucks, no lights, no noise, no emissions) for entire sections of the business park to provide a buffer between the surrounding neighborhoods. Quonset has also planted hundreds of trees and shrubs on top of a 10-ft. earthen berm to create additional buffering and green space for our next-door neighbors.

Quonset is the region's leading engine for economic development and job growth, but we remain committed to being a valued member of the community and a good neighbor in North Kingstown.

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