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Nat'l. Guard invests millions on facilities at Quonset

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The Rhode Island National Guard this month is breaking ground on two major training facilities at Quonset, marking the latest in a series of modernization and expansion efforts over the last six years by the Air and Army National Guard.

In this new round of modernizations, the Army National Guard is replacing its World War II-era aviation facility, and the Air National Guard is building a new cyber-space focused training unit at Quonset. The combined federal investment totals \$43 million.

The continued presence and investment in the Air and Army National Guard facilities at Quonset, particularly in recent years, stimulates the state's economy by providing benefits for several local companies. The National Guard as one of the state's largest employers also is a continued source of federal funds for Rhode Island.

Both of the new projects are ideal fits for Quonset with its vast military history and new focus on technology driven job growth.

At 151,000 s/f the new Army aviation complex is double the size of the existing, dated facility. The new aviation complex will allow for the modernization and expansion of maintenance, flight operations, flight line services, administration, and both ground and aviation training. The Army National Guard uses the facility to administer annual aviation training program and to provide aircraft in direct support of all RI guard units. The Army Aviation complex is 100% federally funded and employs approximately 60 full time personnel and close to 300 personnel during training events. With approximately 800 flight training periods during the fiscal year, it disperses over \$250,000 additional federal dollars in pay and allowances for the conduct of flight training, aircraft maintenance activities, and aircraft support functions.

The complex will also include an administrative office area, flight operation areas, simulation training, an aircraft maintenance hangar, shop spaces, storage and supply areas and an associated mechanical/electrical building.

The Air National Guard new facility will house the 102nd Information Warfare Squadron that specializes in DoD network defense. It provides the Rhode Island National Guard with its first and only full-sized sensitive compartmented information facility allowing for full-spectrum top secret level work.

Senator Jack Reed, who was instrumental in obtaining the funding for the projects said, "Rhode Island plays a critical role in defending our nation. This funding will significantly improve Rhode Island's military facilities and help keep them modern and up-to-date. This federal investment is vitally important to the continued presence and growth of Rhode Island's military installations."

These latest expansions and modernizations at the Quonset facilities are the latest in a trend that began in 2002. The Air National Guard 143rd Airlift Wing has constructed or renovated new operations and maintenance facilities, including the construction of a state-of-the-art maintenance

hangar and a completely renovated operations facility. In 2006 the 143rd Airlift Wing added the consolidated aircraft maintenance facility and a new munitions storage building. Most recently in June 2007, construction began on a new security police and communications building, aerial port building and a new main gate complex. To date \$41 million in construction projects have been completed.

The modernization will continue with the next phase including the \$7 million replacement of the control tower at the Quonset Airport.

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