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East Providence's 2008 accomplishments & highlights

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As the city has done in the past, it seems appropriate as a new year begins to review the prior year's accomplishments and highlights, especially in light of the dramatic changes we have seen in our local, regional and national economies in 2008. The city saw several major companies expanding operations in the city of East Providence in 2008. Aspen Aerogels, a manufacturer of high tech insulation materials, has completed its \$30 million renovation of a 145,000 s/f manufacturing facility on Dexter Rd. and became fully operational in 2008. The Aspen Aerogels facility brings dozens of high paying jobs to East Providence and recently was named the "Emerging Company of the Year" by the New England Clean Energy Council. The company held a ribbon cutting and grand opening in July, with senator Jack Reed and congressman Patrick Kennedy, key supporters of the project, attending.

In 2008, EFD Manufacturing consolidated its facilities at 40 Catamore Blvd., spending \$9 million in improvements to build a facility that suited their needs. The company was looking to consolidate several of its buildings located in East Providence and another Rhode Island community into a single building and needed a structure that was large enough to accommodate their combined operations. Luckily, a building well suited to this consolidation was available in the city, just around the corner from the company's existing facility. The company elected to stay in the city after considering a move to another state based on several positive factors that supported remaining in Rhode Island including the quality of the company's local labor force. EFD is now ready to gear up operations to full capacity at their new facility. On December 12th, the company held a grand opening ceremony to celebrate the official opening. The event was attended by numerous government officials, local business leaders and neighboring businesses.

Infrastructure improvements and funding to complete infrastructure improvements in support of economic development were also very active in 2008. The long anticipated first phase of Waterfront Dr. has been completed. The Warren Ave. connector, as this first segment of Waterfront Dr. is called, provides a critical link between Warren Ave. and the city's Southern Waterfront District. In addition, the Environmental Assessment for the I-195 Warren Ave./Taunton Ave. Interchange has been completed. The completion of interchange improvements is vital to the development of the city's waterfront as is the completion of the Dexter Rd. connector, the next phase of development of the Waterfront Dr. project. The Dexter Rd. project should begin construction in late 2009 or early 2010.

Developers and other parties who are interested in learning more about the economic development activities occurring in East Providence are encouraged to visit the city's website at www.eastprovidence.com or the city's Waterfront District website at www.eastprovidencewaterfront.com or contact the Department of Planning at (401) 435-7534.

James Moran is the economic planner for East Providence.

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