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Leveraging stimulus funds to support energy/port initiatives

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The Quonset Development Corp. (QDC) is poised to take full advantage of federal stimulus money to fund projects that will continue to position the Business Park to create jobs and support a growing economy in the area. Already we have been awarded one stimulus grant worth nearly \$4 million and have applied for another \$45 million to support transportation, energy and port projects.

QDC's \$45 million proposal for the Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant is ideally suited for federal stimulus funds; not only would it create between 500-800 new jobs, it supports Quonset's initiatives in two key national priority areas: developing alternative energy sources and alleviating highway congestion.

QDC's grant application; called TIGER-QWEST - an acronym for Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) and Quonset Wind Energy and Surface Transportation (QWEST) - includes infrastructure improvements to roads, rail, piers and terminals in the Business Park.

Proposed improvements to the Port of Davisville and its terminals would serve dual purposes supporting Quonset's role as a hub for the emerging wind energy industry and positioning the port to participate in the new U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) Marine Highway Northeast Corridor-with short sea shipping alleviating the need to move goods via highways.

With Deepwater Wind on track to create a regional off-shore wind farm, manufacturing, staging and launching facility at the Business Park, Quonset is already moving to become an epicenter in the developing wind energy industry. Given our prime location, we are in a unique position to leverage federal funding toward cleaner energy initiatives.

Specifically, the TIGER-QWEST grant application includes funding for a mobile harbor crane which would be used to load and off-load windmill components as well as containerized cargo at the Port of Davisville. The crane is critical to our efforts to service container barges for short sea shipping along MARAD's Northeast Corridor Marine Highway. The TIGER-QWEST application also includes construction of crane platforms with load bearing capacity to support the crane and load pick up along the bulkhead and Pier 2.

TIGER-QWEST would also fund improvements to the Business Park's existing Port terminals and fund construction of an additional terminal. The terminal improvement projects call for storm drainage improvements and paving of 21 acres within Terminals 4 and 5 so they are suitable for loading and unloading of windmill components. A new terminal would also be constructed on a 54 acre parcel in the North Davisville District of the Park. There are height restrictions on the parcel from the airport approach zone so it would be an ideal location for open storage of windmill components, containers and automobiles. In order to be used as a terminal, the site requires

clearing, storm drains, and paving with fencing as needed.

In addition to the above projects, the TIGER-QWEST proposal requests funding for road reinforcement and widening to equip them to serve as haul roads for windmill components 80 feet wide and weighing up to 220 tons.

A series of smaller projects are also included in the TIGER-QWEST proposal, all designed to provide passenger transportation alternatives. They include road reconstruction (with 6' bicycle safe shoulders) and support for transit.

QDC was recently awarded some federal stimulus money in the form of a \$3.88 million Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant to be used for roadway and bridge work to connect the Gateway and Commerce Park districts of the Business Park. The Commerce Park Connector project will improve access to 156 acres of developable land; improve rail track safety and traffic efficiency. This priority project is expected to create additional jobs and private investment in the area. The grant is supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

The Quonset Development Corporation continues to be successful in attracting new tenants to the Business Park and building our employment base. Our unique transportation infrastructure - rail, road, airport and seaport- continues to be a draw. Further enhancing these assets is critical to our future success. We are at the forefront of the wind energy enterprise, and additional transportation improvements will further encourage expanded employment opportunities and overall economic progress. We are committed to using Federal Stimulus funds efficiently and productively to put people to work in sustainable industries and to continue fulfilling the Quonset Business Park's potential as a regional economic resource.

Steve King, PE, is the managing director of the Quonset Development Corp., North Kingstown.