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Enfield Business Park Attracts New Developments with Statewide Support

By Evan Calbi

When the Danish toy maker LEGO Group moved from its longstanding manufacturing and warehouse facilities in Enfield, Connecticut, they left a world-class, five-building campus spread over 115-acres in the Hartford bedroom community of 46,000. Renamed Enfield Business Park, the available site has generated much interest, particularly from green businesses.

“The strongest interest has been from those in alternative energy lines of business,” says Raymond Warren, director of the town of Enfield’s Economic Development Department. “Often times with vacant industrial buildings similar in size to those at Enfield Business Park, there are environmental problems. That’s not the case with the LEGO facilities. The site is in excellent working order. That substantially reduces the risk that any company has, and improves the timing of it because there isn’t damage to the existing buildings.”

LEGO has been a presence in Enfield for 35 years, and their North American headquarters remains on site. After the company began a long-term plan to revitalize its brand in 2000, they moved most of their facilities overseas. They ended manufacturing at Enfield that year, and closed its distribution center in 2006.

The toy maker’s redistribution has left a world-class facility available in a prime New England location. The area along the Massachusetts-Connecticut border is commonly referred to as New England’s “Knowledge Corridor” due to its concentration of 27 colleges and universities with a combined total enrollment of 125,000 students.

“Eppendorf Manufacturing recently expanded their operations in Enfield,” says Warren. “They had the choice to go anywhere in the world, and they looked at a number of places in the U.S. to site their operation. They committed to Enfield because of its easy access to Boston and New York as well as a reasonable labor supply in the area.”

Enfield Business Park features easy access to Interstate 91 and Bradley International Airport in nearby Windsor Locks. In addition to its location, the facility offers a combination of assets that includes solid infrastructure, a low-cost operating environment, and the proximity of a strong labor pool.

“The site is one of the most cost-effective in the country, and certainly in the Northeast,” says Michael Hackman, founder and chief executive officer of Hackman Capital Partners, LLC, an investor in a joint venture that acquired the 115-acre campus.

Of the available facilities, the bulk is prime warehouse and distribution space. The distribution center features 48-foot ceilings, one of the highest clearances in the region, and 56 dock doors. The manufacturing facility features a 587,736-square-foot industrial property that can be easily subdivided to 56,000 square feet.

Last July, CODA Battery Systems, a joint venture between California-based Coda Automotive and Connecticut-based Yardney Technical Products, announced plans to produce ion batteries for electric cars at Enfield Business Park.

When in August President Barack Obama awarded \$2.4 billion in economic stimulus money to advance the electric automobile industry, CODA Battery Systems was not among the winners. Of the 48 projects that received funding, only one was based in Connecticut. The lack of federal stimulus dollars ultimately scuttled the plan, but the help the project received from Connecticut's congressional leadership and economic development team has positive implications for the future of the Enfield Business Park.

"It's a rough economy out there, but I'm aware of several different projects that have come to Enfield Business Park to lift up the hood, so to speak, and see if the property will work for them," says Warren.

"LEGO is still committed to the site, and it's in great condition because of their continued involvement," Hackman says. "With the state of Connecticut's willingness to get behind new developments in the area, particularly green businesses, there is incredible potential for the right project."

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Enfield Business Park (www.enfield-businesspark.com) is a joint venture among entities formed by Hackman Capital Partners (www.hackmancapital.com), Calare Properties (www.calare.com), and KBS Real Estate Investment Trust (www.kbsreit.com). Enfield Business Park has space available for lease at 300 Shaker Road and 555 Taylor Road in Enfield, CT. For leasing information, visit www.enfield-businesspark.com or call Cushman & Wakefield at (860) 249-0900.