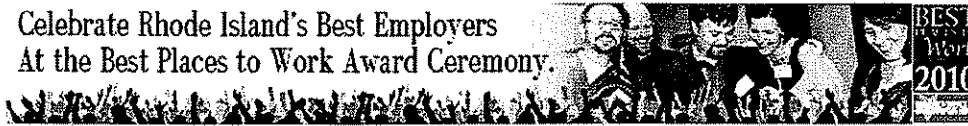


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From the May 31, 2010 edition
PBN EDITORIAL

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Two sides of one river tell different stories

One of the more antagonistic development battles in recent years has been the dustup over the Providence working waterfront – the one-mile stretch from the new Iway bridge to the Port of Providence.

On the one side is the city, espousing multiple uses for the land in an effort to generate desperately needed tax revenue. Developers, who believe that water equals opportunity, are supportive.

On the other side, are existing marine business, worried that new kinds of development will hamper their ability to operate.

These are genuinely important issues. But the evidence from East Providence is that it doesn't have to be a fight to the death. In a waterfront district that encompasses 300 acres, existing industrial landowners and developers have laid the groundwork for commercial and residential investment, and far from coming to blows, they couldn't be more complimentary of one another.

Despite two oil terminals that are being allowed to stay (the tank farms are away from the coast, connected by pipes), a \$41 million, 148-bed nursing home is set to be built later this year south of the Interstate 195 bridge over the Seekonk River. And further south, Chevron Corp. is cleaning up an old tank farm, preparing the land for a 600-unit residential development that cascades down the hillside. Another 40-acre parcel that was designed to be a port facility may well end up as a commercial development.

The result is a richer mix of development and the reclaiming of prime waterfront land, for the benefit of private and public interests. There's a lesson there for Providence. •



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