



## RI Governor, Prov. Mayor attend ground breaking for new hotel



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PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — The lot's been a vacant plot of grass for years. Soon, the triangle of land between One Union Station, a downtown post office, and Memorial Boulevard and the Providence River will be home to a new hotel, and an economic boost.

City and Rhode Island state leaders, including Gov. Gina Raimondo, Mayor Jorge Elorza and real estate developer Joe Paolino headed to break ground Thursday morning at what will soon become 5 Exchange Street, a six-story, 120-room "Homewood Suites by Hilton" extended stay hotel.

Some construction has already been going on for the \$30 million project, but the celebratory shovels went in the ground for the cameras nevertheless. The Homewood Suites will be the first extended stay hotel in Providence.

Both the city and the state are providing tax incentives. The city of Providence will give the hotel's tax bills a discount, progressively increasing them over several years until they're at one hundred percent. The state is pledging to hand collected hotel tax back to developer Paolino while keeping other taxes and benefiting from the economic activity associated with hotel guests.

"The hotel is a complement to economic centerpieces like tech and biotech," said Gov. Raimondo. "I want to create jobs at every level of this economy. This project right here is going to put hundreds of people to work right away with hardhats — good, middle-class jobs, building this hotel. Then, it's going to employ people in the hotel. But right down the road, where we've attracted General Electric, Johnson and Johnson and other companies, they are all business travelers. They need a place to stay. So it all goes together."

The project is forecast to bring 120 construction jobs and employ 60 people once the hotel is completed, which is expected late in 2018.

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