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## **R. D. Scinto, Inc. breaks ground for Victorinox Swiss Army's 166,000 s/f headquarters in Monroe**

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In 2006, after over 14 years at their leased headquarters in a corporate park in Shelton, Victorinox Swiss Army, Inc. broke ground on a North American headquarters of its very own. Located on 26 sprawling acres in Monroe, the facility is breathtakingly modern while still maintaining an air of its traditional European heritage, much like the products that have bared the company's name for almost 125 years.

After 15 months of construction, the 166,000 s/f headquarters opened to much fanfare among employees, local residents, and public officials alike. It also marked a major milestone for the company; it was the first time that the North American headquarters was in the same location as the company's distribution center, not only creating a greater ease of doing business but also finally allowing the headquarters and distribution center staff to truly exist as a cohesive team.

"We chose a property that was within a 10-mile radius to our prior space for a reason," said Rick Taggart, president of Victorinox Swiss Army, Inc., who purchased the land from the Monroe-based Kimball Group and worked with R.D. Scinto, Inc. to develop the land. "When larger companies move, many times they are less than mindful of the potential impact on employees, so it was of utmost importance to us that we took that into consideration and made this move as seamless as possible for everyone," he said. The town of Monroe provided incentives to bring the company to town, and the State of Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development created a tax abatement program that encouraged Victorinox Swiss Army to stay in the area. "Connecticut has been Victorinox Swiss Army's North American home for decades, and it was important to us, as well as the Elsener family, our company's owners, to keep it that way," Taggart said. The Elsener family is based in Switzerland and owns and operates Victorinox Swiss Army's parent company, Victorinox AG.

The building itself was created with the some of today's most cutting-edge technology and design in its offices and distribution center, from high-tech picking and packing systems to simple architectural details that are not only beautiful but also serve distinct purposes. "Our architect placed low-walled cubicles near the windows, and the offices in the building's interior, as to let in as much natural light as possible," Taggart said. To this point, the building was engineered to embrace several "green" initiatives that put the building on the forefront of environmentally conscious development. Stamford-based Perkins Eastman, the architecture firm that worked with Victorinox Swiss Army's owners and executives from concept to completion on the project, recognized the company's desire to embrace the "green" initiative and wove several environmentally conscious features into the building's design. The environmentally sensitive considerations begin with the building's orientation, with the most windowed portions of the building facing north/south, minimizing solar heat gain. The building's roof consists mostly of a white reflective material as opposed to traditional black covering,

reducing heat gain in the building and in turn reducing the need for as much cooling, thus saving energy. Lighting in most areas of the building consists of low-energy T-5 fluorescent bulbs that are linked to motion sensors, significantly reducing energy usage. Even most of the furniture and interior finishes are environmentally sensitive, much of it being LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certified, meaning it meets strict environmental standards. Much of the material used in the building's décor also subscribes to the "cradle to cradle" initiative, in which the products are created from recycled materials and can themselves be recycled at the end of their life cycle.

"This building is a reflection on our past, present, and most importantly, our future," Taggart said. "It signifies 125 years of ingenuity, precision, and an overall commitment to excellence. It's the perfect symbol for everything we stand for as an organization, and we couldn't be prouder to call it home."

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