

“This New Building is Really About Our Commitment to Innovation”

Groundbreaking ceremony remarks by John McKenzie
President, Winsupply Inc. and Support Services Group
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Delivered on the future site of
The Richard W. Schwartz Center for Innovation
Moraine, Ohio

Good morning, everyone.

Thank you all for being here today, and welcome to our celebration.

I'm John McKenzie, and I'm the president of Winsupply Inc. and our Support Services Group.

Thank you to State Representative Niraj Antani, Moraine Mayor Elaine Allison, Moraine City Manager Mike Davis and Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce President Chris Kershner for taking time out of your busy schedules to join us.

Today is indeed a celebration – an exciting day in the history of Winsupply.

Because it's the day we officially break ground on a brand-new facility: The Richard W. Schwartz Center for Innovation.

As you know, Winsupply is in the business of construction wholesaling.

Every day, we supply thousands of different products – everything from faucets to furnaces, pipes to pumps, and lighting to landscape irrigation – which we sell to contractors and installers across the country.

Some call us “A 4 Billion Dollar Wholesaler.”

But we’re not.

Instead, we’re a collection of about 600 independent wholesaling locations in 45 states across the U.S.

We’re a collection of 600 separate companies – each one run by a local entrepreneur – that altogether produced nearly 4 billion dollars in revenues last year.

The simple truth is that Winsupply exists for one reason: to build entrepreneurs.

We just happen to be doing it in wholesale distribution.

And we’re doing it right here from our Support Services Campus in Moraine.

Currently, our campus consists of three buildings directly behind me:

- At 3110 Kettering Boulevard ...
- At 3176 Kettering Boulevard, where Wilcon Construction is located ...
- And at 3131 South Dixie Drive.

Each day, 275 people from the Dayton region come to work at our campus to innovate and help the local companies succeed.

Our Support Services team does it by delivering high-quality, low-cost, back-office services that the local companies need every day: things like payroll and accounting, marketing and training, sourcing and logistics, and e-commerce and IT.

Because of the help we provide here in Moraine, the local companies have a lot more time to make sales and serve their customers.

The Richard W. Schwartz Center for Innovation will expand our Support Services Campus from three buildings to four.

But this new building is not about more space.

It's really about our commitment to innovation.

For the first time in our 64-year history, we will finally have a dedicated facility that gives people from our Support Services team the chance to work side-by-side with one of the local companies: Winsupply of Dayton.

Jeff Williams is the local owner of Winsupply of Dayton, a plumbing supply house located 4 miles away near downtown Dayton.

Once our new facility is built, Winsupply of Dayton will move its entire operation inside our new Center for Innovation.

On that day, Jeff and his team will continue to serve their residential and commercial plumbing customers – but they'll do it with a full-service counter, much larger offices, more warehouse space and outdoor storage.

In addition to that, Jeff's company will also become Winsupply's primary location for training new employees and testing new innovations that help ALL local companies.

For the first time, our Support Services team will get to do daily research and development – inside a local company – and then get feedback on the fly from Jeff and his employees as they serve customers every day.

That means our Support Services team will be able to experiment and test ... to fail ... and to experiment again before rolling out new processes, new software and new services that benefit every local company nationwide.

I'm talking about innovations like self-serve lockers that give customers 24/7 access to products they need – like water heaters. And more digital commerce solutions that make it easier for customers to do business with our local companies any time of the day or night.

Winsupply is no stranger to innovation.

That's due in large part to our chairman, Rick Schwartz.

In 1972, Rick was hired here to innovate. And he did – by automating business systems so every local company could become more efficient.

Rick has never stopped innovating.

Early in his career, he helped establish the Support Services team. He advocated for internal IT services. And he helped pioneer two systems we developed in-house: our ERP called WISE, which manages customer orders and inventory, and our software for accounting and finance.

He even oversaw the launch of our regional distribution centers, including our first in 1985 over on Dryden Road here in Moraine.

In 1998, Rick became president and CEO of Winsupply. And under his leadership, sales at Winsupply tripled.

You may not know it, but earlier this year, Rick wrote a book on Winsupply.

It talks about what we call The Spirit of Opportunity: the chance to risk your own money, run a wholesaling location and chase the American Dream, with help from Winsupply.

Most books have a dedication page, and Rick's is no different.

He chose to dedicate his book to “all Winsupply entrepreneurs and the support services team of innovators who help them earn their own success.”

Rick, that support services team of innovators you recognized in your book will certainly be inspired to achieve even more inside this brand-new facility.

That is why we are naming it The Richard W. Schwartz Center for Innovation – a fitting way to honor and celebrate your legacy at Winsupply.

Everyone, won't you please help me welcome Mr. Rick Schwartz. ■