

Innovative Manufacturing... and Meds

Innovation Village @ Rockingham (IV@R), anchored by SRI International, is a magnet for professionals focusing on the research, testing, processing and distribution of products and services in the life sciences business sector. With universities and biomedical manufacturers nearby, the Village offers abundant opportunities for collaboration and discovery.

Raúl Díaz is a re-inventor. At Merck's Elkton facility, he is overseeing the startup of three new products, as well as expanding the company's current manufacturing operations, while re-inventing the way the plant site operates.

"Merck is investing \$100 million here to realize the production of therapeutic proteins. Therapeutic proteins leverage genomics information to target diseases," Díaz explains. "We're also working on follow-on biologics. These are biologic drugs with an already established and proven safety and efficacy record. We aim to increase availability of these life-saving treatments to populations who currently do not have access to them."

The company has also completed a new multi-story \$115 million building that houses the production of Primaxin®, a well-established broad-spectrum antibacterial drug. Elkton supplies Primaxin® for the global market. In addition, the site is expanding to step up its production of vaccine components. Merck is one of five vaccine manufacturers in the world.

Why create new ventures and expand at Merck's Elkton plant? Díaz credits the business-friendly climate and the "go do it, make it happen" attitude.

"People here have a commitment to their work and a history of productivity. They are driven to make things better," Díaz explains. "With the entrepreneurial spirit of its employees, this facility can deal with adventurous products, while maintaining the highest level of quality and integrity, and, in doing so, we are contributing to Merck's mission of helping the world be well."

Merck, SRI and other companies in and around IV@R are focused on developing new therapies, preventing disease and promoting health and well-being throughout the world. Their presence is creating a biotech hub to advance medical and life sciences.

IV@R is infused with a strong community spirit and "can-do" optimism that helps great ideas move to reality. The Village is a 365-acre Class A research and technology center being developed in three phases, allowing for the establishment of new facilities or campuses customized for each company's specific needs.



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