

July 30, 2019



## **JETRO Select USA Spin-off mission**

Following the Select USA Summit, JETRO hosted a investment mission from June 12-14th 2019, in conjunction with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP). The delegation included 16 people from 14 companies, seeking to explore potential business opportunities within the state.

Virginia is home to a diverse array of industries spanning from sectors such as manufacturing, information technology and financial services. Among foreign companies, Japanese businesses have had a large presence in the state, equivalent to nearly 80 companies operating in Virginia. This investment mission was largely focused on these businesses that have made a positive contribution to the state's economy.



*Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Brian Ball greeting the Japanese Delegation at a Dinner Reception*

The delegation first visited Raging Wire Data Center, a subsidiary of NTT Communications, one of the world's largest providers of telecommunication services. The facility is situated in the heart of Loudoun County, home to the largest and highest concentration of data center hubs in the world. With more than 70% of global internet traffic passing through the digital infrastructure, it proves to be one of the fastest-growing areas within the state. Raging Wire proves to be a critical power infrastructure supplier in this area. With its patented power delivery system built upon two separate power paths, it enables 100% availability of power supply, even during maintenance periods and a utility outage.

The next stop was San-J International, Inc., a renowned manufacturer of Tamari soy sauce. During the company overview presentation, Takashi Sato, President of San-J, said, "The City of Richmond is one of the most densely populated areas on the Eastern Coast, making it a prime location to reach our customers. The strategic site also gives us easy access to export our product to the European market. Additionally, the local climate and proximity to the Appalachian Mountains gives us access to purified water, ideal for brewing premium quality soy sauce."

The delegation also visited several other manufacturing companies including MGC Advanced Polymers (MAP), Usui International Corporation and Canon Virginia. MAP is mainly focused on producing MX nylon, a polymer which preserves long-lasting quality of bottled beverages. Its unique gas-barrier functionality protects the liquid against oxygen and carbon dioxide. The company pioneers this sophisticated technology and currently retains 100% of the world's market share.



*San-J International, Inc.,*

President of MAP, Ryoji Otaki, also reflected on the City of Richmond's valuable assets in terms of its proximity to customers and the advantage of having access to the Port of Virginia.

The group then took a factory tour of Usui International, a leading diesel fuel tube manufacturer supplying diesel fuel tubes for the automotive industry. As the primary supplier for automotive giants such as Toyota and Honda, the company retains roughly 90% of the market share in North America.

Finally, the delegation visited Canon Virginia, the global manufacturer of toner cartridges. Establishing its operational base in Virginia over thirty years ago, the company currently employs 1,700 people, the largest out of any Japanese company in the state. With the high concentration of innovative tech companies in the US, Canon places significant value on obtaining patents. According to the latest ranking of preliminary patent results issued by the IFI Claims Patent Services, the company ranked third for the number of U.S. patents granted in 2018, becoming the only company in the world to have ranked in the top five for thirty-three years. During the investment mission, state and local government officials also presented on the various investment opportunities in Virginia.



*President Toru Nishizawa of Canon Virginia, Inc.*

Vince Barnett, who serves as Vice President of Business Investment stated, "Virginia is strategically located in the mid-Atlantic region of the east coast, which means its central location gives you access to 47% of the US population within a one-day drive and 75% of the population within a two-day drive." He also added that one of the many reasons why Amazon selected Virginia as the location for its new headquarters (HQ2) is because the state provides access to the highest concentration of tech talent in the country and is also conveniently situated adjacent to Washington DC, allowing for quick access to a strong transportation infrastructure.

Vice President of Global Investment at the Greater Richmond Partnership, Olga Molnar, presented on the region's dynamic life sciences and emerging technology community. It is home to the Virginia Biotechnology Research park, where nearly 70 companies, research institutions, state and federal laboratories reside. The park is conveniently situated adjacent to the medical campus of Virginia Commonwealth University, one of the top life sciences research centers. She stated, "It is reasons like this why Richmond keeps attracting new talent. Apart from the abundance in job opportunities, the cost of living is reasonable and there is a rich quality of

life. According to TIME magazine, it was ranked as the second most popular city where millennials are moving.”



*Vice President of Business Investment, Vince Barnett from VEDP*

At the end of the tour, the delegation also visited the Port of Virginia, the third largest port on the Atlantic coast. It serves an attractive asset not only as a route to import raw materials and products, but also acts as a channel to reach the European and Latin American markets. It is the only port on the East Coast authorized for 55-foot channel depths to handle the larger cargo ships of the future. There are currently plans for additional growth with major expansion projects underway, raising high expectations for it to be the best positioned first and last call port for post-Panamax ships. Several of the delegation members praised the significance the port can have for businesses, offering access to both the U.S. and European markets at the same time.