

Eco-Efficiency in Action: Canon's Manufacturing Headquarters in Virginia

Keypoint Intelligence tours impressive facility focused on sustainability

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The Virginia Peninsula is a region of the United States steeped in the country's history: from being the site of the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown in 1607, to the decisive victory of the American Revolutionary War at Yorktown in 1781, all the way to the pivotal moments of the Civil War's Peninsula Campaign in 1862. Amidst this backdrop of historical significance is Newport News, a town where Canon has made a history of its own through its continued commitment to manufacturing innovation and the sustainability of its products.

I recently had the opportunity to check out Canon's US manufacturing headquarters in Virginia, a trip that detailed some of the company's recent environmental initiatives in key focus areas and showcased its impressive toner remanufacturing operation.



Source: Canon Virginia, Inc.

Location Isn't Everything, but It Helps

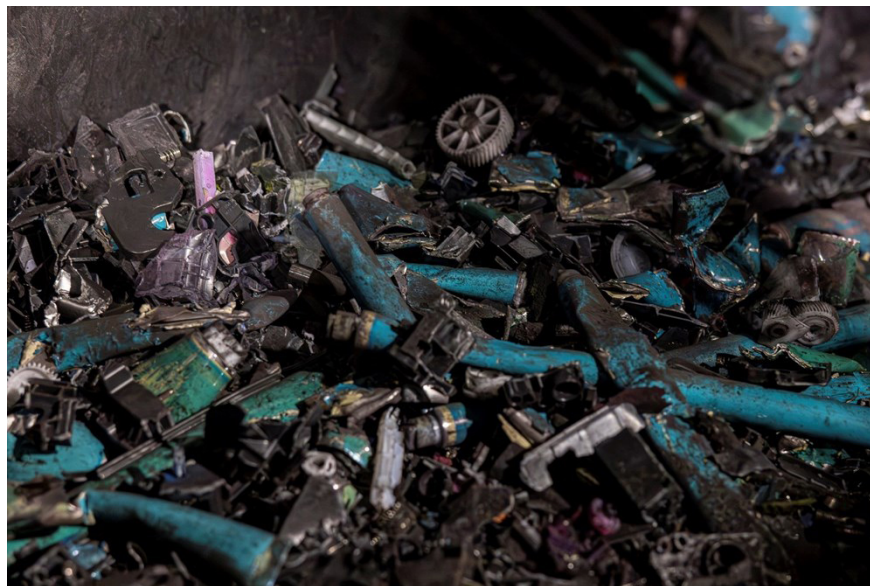
Canon Virginia, Inc. (CVI), will have been in the Hampton Roads region of the state for 40 years as of 2025. But why the Peninsula? What about this part of Virginia makes it a choice location for a manufacturing center in the first place? The area is home to a highly educated labor pool with institutions like Old Dominion University, Christopher Newport University, and Virginia Tech's Hampton Roads campus all in proximity. Its closeness to major transportation hubs like the Port of Virginia and two international airports (Norfolk and Newport News/Williamsburg) are also logistical advantages, not to mention that the state of Virginia offers various incentives and support programs to attract and retain businesses.

It's clear the company's decision to park its operations here was intentional, and Canon has doubled down on its decision by investing some \$900 million in the plant over the decades that CVI has been open.

Standardization Ensures Quality

CVI operates under a stringent framework of standardization, ensuring that every product leaving its facilities meets the highest levels of quality and environmental responsibility. During our visit, it became evident that these standards are not just a set of guidelines but are deeply integrated into every aspect of their manufacturing process. For example, [Canon's injection molding operations at CVI](#) are a demonstration of the company's commitment to precision, quality, and consistency. Their ability to manufacture their own tooling for injection molding ensures that the parts produced are not only of the highest quality, but that they also meet rigorous environmental standards.

The implementation of the ISO 14001 certification (which CVI has maintained since 1996) is another key aspect of standardization. The certification ensures the company's manufacturing processes minimize environmental impact. The Responsible Business Alliance (RBA) certification, where Canon scored a perfect 200 out of 200 points on its audit, further emphasizes the merit in the company's environmental, safety, and health programs.



Shredded cartridges in the first stage of recycling (Source: Canon Virginia, Inc.).

While it's one thing to implement standards in manufacturing, it's another to scale those standards across facilities, especially those that serve specific regions. Canon, though, replicates these standards across its global manufacturing network. For instance, Canon's manufacturing site in Prachinburi, Thailand, and its Eco Technology Park in Japan follow the same rigorous standardization processes as CVI. This means that, regardless if a toner cartridge is manufactured or recycled in Virginia or Thailand, it undergoes the same meticulous processes.

At the Intersection of Innovation & Localization

The team at CVI took us through one of their showrooms at the start of the tour, where the company exhibits some of its most celebrated technological and environmental innovations of the past, present, and future. Among the displays was a massive glass case that housed what initially looked like the world's largest collection of black #3005 Lego pieces. Instead, and to my inner child's dismay, the case was filled to the brim with pelletized waste toner—a product of the company's [Recycled Toner Pellet \(RTP\)](#) project.

Upon receiving exhausted toner cartridges from customers, CVI's Automatic Recycling System for Toner Cartridges (CARS-T) crushes and automatically separates the various materials that make up a cartridge,



toner included. The waste toner is then purified, extruded, and reused in a unique way. [Basic Construction Co.](#), a local paving and construction services business based out of Newport News, purchases 100% of the toner pellets produced by Canon for use as an asphalt binder and coloring agent. Through the partnership, and in a world where [only about 20-30% of toner waste is recycled globally](#), Canon has effectively diverted waste toner from landfills (more than 400 tons annually)—reducing its overall environmental impact while engaging and collaborating with the local business community. The use of recycled waste toner in asphalt production also reduces the need for new raw materials, thereby conserving natural resources and lowering the carbon footprint associated with material production. The sale of toner pellets to Basic Construction generates additional revenue for Canon, too, albeit a small amount compared to the company's annual revenue.



Pelletized recycled high-impact polystyrene (HIPS), ready for reuse (Source: Canon Virginia, Inc.).

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There's something to be said about all that is and has been going on at CVI. Canon's environmental focus cannot be ignored, and surely much more is to come from them on the subject as time moves on, but it's important to remember that it is not alone in its endeavors. Much of the digital imaging industry—from OEMs to channel partners—is prioritizing sustainability in one form or another, all of whom have their own specific focuses, goals, and benchmarks. But this collective, industry-wide shift towards environmental protection is far from being a bad thing: It's a great thing.

The tour of CVI that I was privileged to be a part of is a clear indication of that.

When all players in the print industry commit to sustainable practices, the entire sector stands to benefit. Customers enjoy more eco-friendly products, while vendors find and compete in new avenues for growth and

innovation. The future looks bright for an industry poised to balance economic success with environmental responsibility, and Canon is among the organizations leading the charge.

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