

News from Iwate's Reconstruction

The news from Iwate as it moves toward reconstruction

We are deeply grateful for the heartwarming encouragement and support received from both within and outside of Japan in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, which struck on March 11, 2011. The precious bonds created during this time will always be cherished.

We will now bring you the news from Iwate's reconstruction.

Ganbaro, Iwate!
Let's stick together, Iwate!

Volume 139
July 2018 Edition

Iwate Prefecture's First Ferry Line Commences from Miyako Harbor

MIYAKO

June 22nd (Fri) - The long awaited maiden voyage of the Miyako – Muroran Ferry line departed from Miyako Harbor.

The ferry line is the first to be established within the prefecture, operated by Kawasaki Kinkai Kisen (of Tokyo). "The Silver Queen" will travel from Miyako City to Muroran (in Hokkaido) in ten hours, offering one round trip per day. On the 22nd, the ferry's departure was preceded by the

"Kuromori Kagura Dance," a traditional performance art of the Miyako area. The Silver Queen's Captain Furukawa also participated in this ceremonial event, in which he placed an arm into the mouth of a Shishigashira lion head mask to be "bitten" as a rite of spiritual strengthening, the purpose of which is to wish for safe sailing. Afterwards, around 1,000 townspeople gathered to see the Silver Queen off on its momentous first voyage.

The following morning, a welcoming ceremony awaited the ferry's first return to port from Muroran City. In front of the ferry terminal, Miyako's Yamaguchi Taiko group greeted the ferry alongside around 800 townspeople to celebrate its official commission.

This, along with the new Sanriku coastal highway, is expected to attract more visitors to the area, while simultaneously serving to better facilitate the distribution of goods.



The Silver Queen departs from Miyako Harbor



Kuromori Kagura spiritual strengthening



The ferry is greeted by Miyako's Yamaguchi Taiko group

Sanriku Food Court in Ofunato & the B-1 Grand Prix

OFUNATO

On July 7th and 8th (Sat-Sun), the "Sanriku Food Court (Gurutto Shokudo) in OFUNATO & B-1 Grand Prix" was held at the Kyassen Ofunato shopping center, which opened last year in the city's central district.

This event serves to showcase the food and charm of the coastal regions, and takes place every year. This is the third time the event has been held, following Kuji last year.

During the event, you could find offerings such as Ofunato's local saury fish dumplings, or fresh oysters grilled in miso from Rikuzentakata City. Along with 10 groups from along the Iwate coast, 7 groups from the B-1 Grand Prix (a national food competition) set up stalls as well. All those attending lined up to get a taste of this gourmet food for only 500 yen or less.

Also, in addition to a PR display for the 2019 Rugby World Cup™, Ofunato City put on a display in collaboration with Mogami Town in Yamagata Prefecture (its sister city) starring the Semi Onsen Traditional Arts Preservation Society's drum group. It was two days of regional exchange and enjoying the best of what the Iwate coast has to offer.



The Sanriku Food Court



An Ofunato City business offering saury dumplings



Semi Onsen Traditional Arts Preservation Society's drum group's performance

We are recruiting members for the Iwate Reconstruction Supporters Team!

Know, Buy, Eat, Go – and Help Support Us!

Free to register!



We are now recruiting both individual and group (corporate or other) members in the Greater Tokyo Area for the "Iwate Reconstruction Supporters". Members are e-mailed information regarding reconstruction and tourism in Iwate, and upcoming events in the Tokyo area.
(Information only available in Japanese.)

For more information, please see the website of the Tokyo Branch Office of the Iwate Prefectural Government:

Iwate Ooendan

Search



Giving thanks to The Tohokujin Spirit J-League Players Association

OFUNATO

June 9th (Sat), Ofunato City - The Tohokujin Spirit J-League Players Association (hereafter: The Tohokujin Spirit) was presented with a letter of thanks at the Akasaki Sports Field in Ofunato, as the field wouldn't have been possible without the Association.

The Tohokujin Spirit is an association of current pro-soccer players from Tohoku, and led by Mitsuo Ogasawara of the Kashima Antlers, they began installing safety nets, toilets, a prefab clubhouse etc. in 2013. They have held soccer classes and exchange events, in addition to helping provide for the installation of artificial grass on the field.

The letter presentation ceremony was held at the clubhouse at the Akasaki Sports Field. As a founder of the association, Ogasawara Mitsuo attended the ceremony, where he was handed the letter of thanks by Ofunato City's Mayor Toda.

The new field is in fact on the former site of Akasaki Elementary School, which damaged heavily in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Following the completion of the clubhouse in April 2018, the field is now available for use. The Akasaki Sports Field will be a new hub of sports exchange, and will be used by the people of Ofunato for soccer, mini-golf, and other sports of all kinds.



Mayor Toda presents a letter of thanks to Mr. Ogasawara.
(Photo: Ofunato City)



Mr. Ogasawara and other people involved with the Akasaki Sports Field
(Photo: Ofunato City)



Chairman Ishikawa and an attendee with a donated vehicle
(Photo: Iwate Prefecture Social Welfare Council)



Commemorative photo of the presentation ceremony
(Photo: Iwate Prefecture Social Welfare Council)

The Japan Golf Tour Organization donates handicap-accessible vehicles for the reconstruction

MORIOKA

June 15th (Fri) – The Japan Golf Tour Organization's chairman Ryo Ishikawa visited the community center Fureai Land (in Morioka City's Sanbonyanagi), where he donated handicap-accessible vehicles.

Players from the Japan Golf Tour Players Association have been donating 1% of their acquired prize money since 2012 (around 30 million yen) to a charity fund for the reconstruction, and have used these charity funds to buy light vehicles since 2014. They have donated ten cars each to Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima's social welfare councils.

These vehicles will be used by the social welfare councils of the cities and towns of Miyako, Ofunato, Kitakami, Tono, Oshu, Takizawa, Nishiwaga, Otsuchi, Iwaizumi, and Hirono to look after the elderly of their respective areas.

At the presentation ceremony, Chairman Ishikawa said, "I hope that we players all work together to use the power of golf to make Tohoku whole again." Each of the representatives of the social welfare councils received a commemorative letter from Ishikawa.

Messages for the Future

IWAIZUMI

Director of the Association of Iwaizumi Tour Guides

Mr. Toshiaki Takehana



Knowing the history of disasters in your area

In Iwaizumi, there are monuments to the 1896 Meiji Sanriku Earthquake and the 1933 Showa Sanriku Earthquake and Tsunami. These monuments still stand today, to convey their lesson.

Disasters always repeat themselves, so it is crucial that we learn about the history of our regions, and the disasters of the past.

Listen to the stories of your elders about the disasters they have witnessed – this is not something that only happens to someone else.

Knowing the history will help prepare us for the next disaster.

Raising awareness, one person at a time

We have always felt it was critical to be prepared in Iwaizumi. Even before the 2011 disaster, we have held town-wide disaster drills.

The guide squad, first response firefighting squad, emergency rice provision squad; all roles have been assigned in advance. However, fostering disaster awareness in the people of Iwaizumi remains the biggest challenge.

First and foremost, it is essential to know your evacuation procedures so that everyone can be responsible for their own lives.



The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami devastated the Iwate coast. As the reconstruction proceeds, lessons learned from the disaster are being passed along in the coastal communities. Earthquakes will happen again in the future, and natural disasters can strike at any time. We will introduce some of the lessons we learned to help others prepare for these incidents.

Association of Iwaizumi Tour Guides Information

The Association of Iwaizumi Guides provides talented guides to anyone who wishes to see the rich natural beauty of Iwaizumi.

The "Ocean and Story" course's hike of the Sanriku Coast brings participants to the tsunami monument and other areas that suffered, looking back on documents and photos from the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami to help convey the lessons of the past.

Address: Iwate Prefecture, Shimohei-gun, Iwaizumi-cho, Iwaizumi-aza Kannari 1-1

Operating period: Year-round

Groups can be as small as 1 person.

Necessary time: About 1 hour

Bookings: Inquire by phone

■Inquiries・Applications■

Association of Iwaizumi Tour Guides

TEL: 0194-22-5955

FAX: 0194-22-4911

Reach for the skies! A Tree-Planting Event for the Future - Planting of Broad-leafed Trees

NODA

On June 10th (Sun), the Noda-Sennen-no-Matsu organization hosted "Reach for the Skies! A Tree-Planting Event for the Future" in the Maehama district of Noda Village.

Ten thousand black pine trees once stood in approximately twelve hectares of the area. But waves from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami swept most of them away. At the tree-planting event, 200 local and non-local participants gathered to plant 300 trees of five species: kobushi magnolia, Japanese rowan, beach rose, Quercus serrata (a type of oak tree), and burning bush.

At the end of the activity, participants were gifted with some Noda-brand hibiscus flavored pink salt (specially made for the event) and a hand-crafted wooden keyring as appreciation of their work. Cotton candy was also served from solar-power operated machines.

Last October, roughly a thousand black pine trees were planted within 0.2 hectare as commemoration of the replantation of a natural, tide-water control forest (hosted by the Prefectural Northern Iwate Regional Development Bureau, Noda Village, and Iwate Prefectural Greening Promotion Committee - Noda Branch). The district aims to completely restore the forest by the end of March 2020.



Participants work to plant trees (Photo: Noda Village)

Beaches newly reopened 8 years after the disaster

TANOHATA · OFUNATO · RIKUZENTAKATA

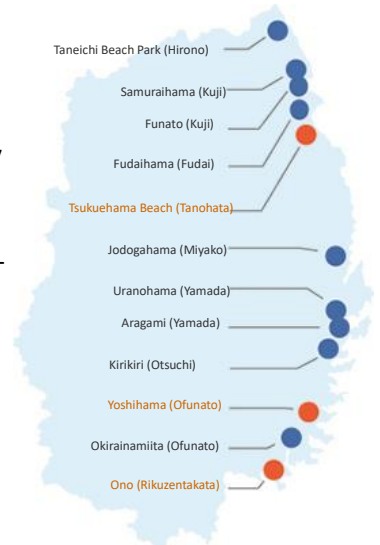
Several beach resorts located in Tanohata, Ofunato, and Rikuzentakata have reopened for the first time, 8 years since the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

Tanohata Village - Two beaches were heavily damaged by the disaster in the village. While the affected beaches aren't ready to open yet, so many residents have called for a beach that a new beach resort was created at the Tsukuehama beach (now that reconstruction has been completed).

Ofunato City - Since the reopening of the Okirainamiita beach resort last year, the Yoshihama beach resort in the Sanriku district also reopened this summer, making 2 out of 3 beaches in the city now accessible to the public.

Rikuzentakata City - The Hirota beach resort (Hirota Town - Ono and Taya coast) was once a popular leisure spot heavily damaged by the disaster. But fortunately not all of the beach sand washed away so the Ono beach resort is now reopened since reconstruction of the seawalls was completed.

With the beaches now accessible, there are high hopes for an increase in beach swimmers for the summer in the affected coastal regions.



The reopened beach resorts of the Sanriku coast of Iwate



Sanriku Event Information



8/5
Sun

Taste of Omoe Festival

MIYAKO

Location: Omoe Harbor

In addition to sea urchins in season, there will be lots of fresh seafood to buy at the festival. There will be a nice opportunity to take a tour boat towards the Todogasaki Lighthouse - the most eastern end of the main island (Honshu) of Japan. You will also be able to partake in festive events such as seaweed-satchel tossing.

Contact Omoe Fishery Cooperative Association
☎ 0193-68-2211

8/7
Tue

Kesen Town Kenka Tanabata & Takata Town Ugoku Tanabata Festival

RIKUZEN
TAKATA

Location: Kenka Tanabata Festival - in front of the Imaizumi Public Housing (Kesen Town)
Ugoku Tanabata Festival - Takata Town

The Kenka ("Brawl") Tanabata Festival is a competition where gorgeously decorated dashi (parade) floats tied to a cedar log fight to the end until either one knock each other out. For the Ugoku ("Moving") Tanabata Festival, similarly decorated dashi floats parade around the town.

Contact Rikuzentakata Tourism Association
☎ 0192-54-5011

8/18
Sat

The 29th North-ou Nanyadoyara Dance Festival

HIRONO

Location: central Ono district and Ono Elementary School

Introduced in northern Iwate from southern Aomori, the Nanyadoyara is said to be Japan's oldest form of obon dance festival. You will be able to enjoy a range of different dances that parade along the central area of the town with over 1000 dancers.

Contact Hirono Event Executive Committee (Hirono Regional Promotions Division)
☎ 0194-77-2111

Fireworks Information for the Coastal Region

8/4 Sat

Sanriku & Ofunato Summer Fireworks Festival

OFUNATO

Location ■Ofunato bay
Contact ■Sanriku - Ofunato Summer Festival Executive Committee (within Ofunato Chamber of Commerce & Industry) ☎ 0192-26-2141

8/11 Sat (Hol)

LIGHT UP NIPPON

Location ■Noda (Tofugaura Park), Tanohata (Sanriku Railways - Shimanokoshi station area), Miyako (Taro district event space), Otsuchi (Namiita Coast Village), Ofunato (Urahama Beach), etc
Contact ■LIGHT UP NIPPON Executive Committee
<http://lightupnippon.jp/>

8/12 Sun

Miyako Summer Fireworks Display

MIYAKO

Location ■Dezaki District
Contact ■Miyako Chamber of Commerce and Industry ☎ 0193-62-3233

8/12 Sun

2018 Kamaishi Evening Fireworks

KAMAISHI

Location ■Kamaishi bay
Contact ■Kamaishi Tourism and Products Association
☎ 0193-27-8172

8/14 Tue

Kesen River Fireworks Display - Pray for Reconstruction-

RIKUZENTAKATA

Location ■Undecided
Contact ■Rikuzentakata Tourism Association
☎ 0192-54-5011

8/14 Tue

Fireworks Festival in Yamada

YAMADA

Location ■Yamada Fish Market area
Contact ■Yamada Chamber of Commerce - Youth Division ☎ 0193-82-2515

8/16 Thu

Kuji Lantern Floating and Fireworks Evening Festival

KUJI

Location ■Kuji River area
Contact ■Kuji Fireworks Evening Festival Executive Committee (Kuji Tourism & Products Association)
☎ 0194-66-9200

Please contact individual locations for more information.

