

News from Iwate's Reconstruction

The news from Iwate as it moves toward reconstruction

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

三陸復興

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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.

The vivid colors of autumn are fading away as Iwate starts preparing for winter. We will now bring you the news from Iwate's reconstruction.

An On-site Reconstruction Tour for Local Residents

Kuji, Noda

On October 31, 2015 (Sat), 28 people from the Kuji and Ninohe areas attended an on-site reconstruction tour that was organized by the Iwate Prefectural Government.

Its goal was to keep citizens up-to-date on the reconstruction's progress, and to ensure that the memories and lessons taken from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami don't fade away with time. It was the second tour of the fiscal year.

The participants first travelled to the Jonai elevated housing estate in Noda, where 20 private homes and 54 public

houses (74 in total, within an area of 330 square meters) are being built. They're due to be completed next year.

Next, they looked at the progress being made on the provisionally-titled Sanriku Coastal Road, a 1.5km extension of route 45 towards Noda Interchange. Currently, the foundations and embankments are under construction. The road is due to open sometime in 2017.

The participants also went on foot to a construction site in Ube Tunnel (Kuji), which is between Fudai and Kuji on the

route 45 Sanriku Coastal Road. Excavation work on the 12m-wide, 446m-long tunnel has now been completed. It's due to open in March 2016.

The tour finished with a trip to the Kosode Ama Center, which opened on April 26th, 2015 (Sun) in Kuji.

One of the participants gave their thoughts on the experience. "We were able to see places you're normally not allowed to visit, like the tunnel construction site. I felt more than ever like Iwate is slowly but surely returning back to normal."



The Jonai elevated housing estate



The Ube Tunnel construction site



The Kosode Ama Center

Otsuchi Gakuen Students Write Messages on their New School Building

Otsuchi

On October 22 and 23, 2015 (Thu-Fri), around 730 students from the Otsuchi Gakuen elementary and middle school wrote messages onto building materials for their new school building, which is currently under construction.

Otsuchi Gakuen was created in April 2015 as an integrated elementary and middle school. It combined 4 elementary schools (Otsuchi Elementary, Ando Elementary, Akahama Elementary and North Otsuchi Elementary) with Otsuchi Middle School, all of which were struck by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

They gave the students a chance to write down their hopes for their new school life, which included such thoughts as "Let's smile for Otsuchi," "I want to make this school the best," and "I'm going to study really hard!" The messages were written on a 1m wide, 7m tall panel.

The students' classes currently take place in a temporary building. Elevation work is underway on the new premises, which are due to open in September 2016. The messages will appear on the underside of the classroom ceilings.



Students writing messages on building materials (photo courtesy of Otsuchi)

News from Sanriku

Oyster season is here at last! Yamada, Ofunato, Rikuzentakata

Of all wonderful food of the Sanriku Coast, oysters are the most well-known. There are little shops everywhere called "Kakigoya," offering all-you-can-eat unshelled oyster deals. Enjoy them while they're fresh and in season!

Inquiries

Yamada ▶ Yamada Town Tourism Association ☎: 0193-84-3775

Ofunato ▶ Fisherman's Kakigoya (in the Ofunato Fish Center) ☎: 0192-26-4788

Rikuzentakata ▶ Hirota Bay Kakigoya ☎: 090-8784-2114 (reservations required)



The Return of a Festival, Supporting the Reconstruction

Hirota Bay Fish Festival

Rikuzentakata

On October 25, 2015 (Sun), the Hirota Bay Fish Festival was held for the first time in 5 years. Many people came looking to buy fresh hauls of seafood.

At the fish handling facilities located in Hirota-cho in Rikuzentakata, local marine goods such as oysters, scallops, abalone, clams, and wakame seaweed were being sold, as well as a special sale of Pacific saury and mackerel, where you could take as many as you could pack into your bag. The festival was bustling with long lines of people.

Guests experienced all Hirota Bay has to offer with many other events where you could try to fish out salmon with your hands, shuck oyster shells, and eat freshly grilled seafood.

The festival, which was last held five years ago, was a successful, fun-filled day. It's just another sign of the continuing successful efforts of the reconstruction along the coast.



Mochi-maki event at the festival
(photo courtesy of Rikuzentakata)

Kumano Shrine Grand Festival

Ofunato

On October 31, 2015 (Sat), many people came to celebrate the Kumano Shrine Grand Festival, which is a festival that is held at Kumano Shrine in Ofunato's Massaki-cho once every 4 years. It has been 8 years since it was last held.

The festival was cancelled because of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami that occurred 4 years prior, which makes this year the 8-year mark since it was last held.

Festival groups from 9 areas within Massaki participated in the festival. There were also displays of the traditional tiger and lion dances, and within the grounds of the shrine, a dance in which they used a ladder 16.2m in height called the Ladder Tiger Dance was also performed and received great response from the crowd.

After that, a total of over 400 people formed several lines and paraded around the area.

It is hoped that the festival, which is both an opportunity to display traditional art folklore while also being a place for the local citizens to come together and socialize, will bring energy to and revitalize the region.



Traditional art performance
(photo courtesy of Ofunato (Digital Kominkan Massaki) Executive Committee)

Many young people are diligently helping the affected area of Sanriku move toward a full reconstruction. The section "People for Sanriku's Future" introduces these young people and their powerful feelings.

Part 48 introduces Ms. Eri Ishizaki's efforts.



Art Eriy's
Illustrator

Eri Ishizaki



"Dreams can come true in Miyako."

This is when she started making post cards that she drew pictures and words on.

Those post cards were well-received by many people. Now, she is currently working on projects like this every day, hoping to provide strength for Miyako.

Cherish human ties

"If the people of Miyako become happier because of our work, that in itself is enough. I hope that it show other young people that you can [draw and make illustrations] in Miyako too."

On the reconstruction, Ms. Ishizaki says, "Everyone's been working so hard since the disaster, and I think people's wounds are gradually healing as things start to settle down. Although Miyako is known for tourism, I'm worried about the sustainability. Many visitors we've been getting have come all the way to Miyako to support the reconstruction, but this might not last forever."

"Now it's time for the younger generation to lead the adults. It's not enough to just demand things to happen. I want people to carry out these thoughts."

"I want people to be empowered to make changes in their region."

Inspiration for Miyako

The disaster struck when Ms. Ishizaki had come home to Miyako from Tokyo, and she remained in her hometown.

At the time, she thought that she shouldn't be wasting the day drawing pictures at such a critical time. But once she scribbled something on the sliding paper doors of her home, which made her family laugh. She realized that she could help the people who were affected by the disaster and make them happy through her illustration skills.

Casualties & Damage in Iwate As of Oct. 31, 2015

- ▶ Human casualties/deaths: 4,672; Missing: 1,126
- ▶ Buildings destroyed (residences only, total/partial): 26,165

To make a donation to aid in Iwate's reconstruction:
www.pref.iwate.jp/fukkounougoki/dayori/news/011100.html

Thank you for all your support!

As of Oct. 31, 2015

Donations for survivors: Around ¥18.41415 billion (92,208 donations)

Donations for reconstruction projects: Around ¥19.71038 billion (7,503 donations)

Iwate Learning Hope Fund donations: Around ¥7.77931 billion (16,429 donations)

※ This fund is to assist in the study and daily life of affected children by encouraging sport and study activities.

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