

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.

As autumn approaches in Iwate, the air grows crisp and cool, and tourists are visiting to enjoy the changing color of the leaves.

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

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

三陸復興

Volume 72
October 1, 2014

The Yamada Festival Returns – Proof of the Reconstruction's Success Yamada

Yamada's famous autumn festival was held over the three-day weekend of September 13.

On Monday, September 15, the festival held at Osugi Shrine saw its famous "mikoshi on the sea" rite, in which the mikoshi (sacred palanquin carrying the shrine's god) is carried out onto the sea. It's been four years since this event was last held, marking the complete restoration of the Yamada Matsuri after the disaster.



Men walk into the ocean carrying the sacred palanquin (photo courtesy of Yamada Tourism Board)

Osugi Shrine is dedicated to the god of the sea, and following the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami its annual festival went on a temporary hiatus. But in August the mikoshi was restored and the festival was able to once again take place. This ritual has been restored by the enthusiasm of the local people and lots of assistance from all around Japan.

On the day of the festival, the men of the town carried the mikoshi on their shoulders towards Yamada Bay. Once at the ocean, they stepped in to purify their bodies, and prayed for the safety of the sea and the fishermen while proceeding through the water. A huge number of people gathered on the wharf to watch, and they cheered the revival of the mikoshi.



Rafts celebrating the festival (photo courtesy of Yamada Tourism Board)

The full restoration of the mikoshi of both the Yamada Hachimangu and Osugi shrines marks a new step in the rebuilding of Yamada.

First Docking of the Tohoku Marine Ecosystem Research Vessel Shinsei-maru Otsuchi

The Shinsei-maru, a state-of-the-art marine research vessel, made its first docking in Otsuchi Harbor on Saturday, September 13, and debuted to the public the following day.

The ship is owned by the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) and is 66 meters long, 13 meters wide, and weighs 1,629 metric tons. It has a capacity of 41, and was built in a shipyard in Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi Prefecture in February 2013, at a cost of 11 billion yen. The vessel will perform functions for the Tohoku Marine Science Project, which aims to study the effects that the 2011 tsunami and earthquake had on the marine ecosystem off the Tohoku coast.

It was first displayed in October of last year, but was not able to dock because the quay had yet to be rebuilt. Now, with the quay fully restored, the Shinsei-maru has finally been able to dock in Otsuchi Harbor.

With an unmanned monitoring vessel, a wide variety of monitoring equipment, and an onboard research lab, the Shinsei-maru won in the "special ship category" in the 2013 "Ship of the Year" contest, and we all hope the vessel will fulfill its purpose of marine study off the Sanriku coast.



Many people showed up for the public viewing (photo courtesy of JAMSTEC)



Public viewing of the inside of the ship (photo courtesy of Otsuchi Town)



The Shinsei-maru's first docking in Otsuchi Harbor (photo courtesy of JAMSTEC)



"e! Iwate" is a mobile app that sends you news and information about Iwate's Reconstruction. You can then re-post this information on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. You can use the app with the following smart phone models:
• Android OS4.0 and newer, iOS6.0 and newer



For more information:

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On September 19 (Friday), an opinion exchange meeting was held at the Iwate Prefecture Public Hall, at which nine men and women in their twenties, thirties, and forties got together and held a discussion on what young people need to be able to live in the coastal region and what is currently required in the affected areas. This meeting is designed to draw in the views of young people from various backgrounds. This is the third time for the meeting, which was first held in June 2013.

Participants said they need gathering spaces, as well as housing information, and they urged government bodies to plan for a more extended period of time, not just for a certain fiscal year. Ichiro Nakamura, Director of Iwate's Bureau of Reconstruction, said "I hope to hear more from young people like yourselves, and work through these problems together with you."

MCing at the event was Kei Nakano, Representative Director of the NPOs "wiz" and "Iwate Fukko Collaboration Center", and a native of Ofunato. "We can't just rely on the government for everything; first we must work hard by ourselves," he said. "I hope that by doing this we can create an environment where we can work with government bodies. I want to keep holding opinion exchanges like this on a regular basis."



The young people participating in the event with prefectural employees



Young people expressing their opinions



The opinion exchange meeting

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 26 introduces Ms. Miho Kemuyama's efforts.

Profile:

Originally from Sumida Ward, Tokyo.

Starting in April 2013, she made regular visits to Hirota, Rikuzentakata City, and in August 2012 made a move to the area.

She currently works as the assistant director of the NPO "SET" on the "Hamayasai" project with local mothers.

Connecting Hirota with Tokyo

Kemuyama has two principal responsibilities.

The first is the "Change Maker Program", which invites university students, primarily from urban areas, to visit Hirota and learn about all the things that make it great, and discuss with the local people what they can do to solve the area's problems

The second is the "Hamayasai" project, which aims to bring people to Hirota by promoting



NPO SET
Assistant Director
Miho Kemuyama



"I believe in, and will continue to strive for, the agricultural potential of women!"

Hamayasai Project <http://www.hamayasai.com/>

its agricultural goods to people in Tokyo.

Hirota has one of the warmest climates in Iwate, and vegetables are harvested there all year round, so the goal is to connect the area with the capital by introducing these products to Tokyo.

"It's not like I'm here just because it was affected by a natural disaster; I'm here because I like Hirota!" says Kemuyama, who believes promoting Hirota will help with the reconstruction.

Taking pride in living in Hirota

When asked about the reconstruction, she had this to say: "It's been three and a half years, but I think there's still a ways to go. There's a growing number of people who, while acknowledging that there are things that we will never be able to get back, recognize that as long as they don't change themselves, they can't rely on outsiders coming in to fix everything. I hope the local people don't think that it would be better to live in the city, and will take pride in their beautiful hometown of Hirota, with all its natural scenery."

Hamayasai

Casualties & Damage in Iwate As of Aug. 31, 2014

- ▶ Human casualties/deaths: 4,672; Missing: 1,132
- ▶ Buildings destroyed (residences only, total/partial): 25,716

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 August 31, 2014

- Donations for survivors:** Around ¥18.15958 billion (89,806 donations)
- Donations for reconstruction projects:** Around ¥19.57121 billion (6,922 donations)
- Iwate Learning Hope Fund donations:** Around ¥6.95166billion (13,960 donations)

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