

News from Iwate's Reconstruction

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

三陸復興

Volume 53
December 1, 2013
Iwate Prefecture

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.

Lately the days have been growing cold, and it feels like winter is genuinely upon us.

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

Reconstruction Site Tour Held in Miyako and Shimohei

Miyako

A reconstruction site tour was held in Miyako City for the Miyako and Shimohei area on Wednesday, November 27, organized by the prefectural government.

The tour was held to teach residents about the current state of the reconstruction of disaster-affected sites. A total of 18 area residents observed a selection of four sites.

Settai District (Agricultural Reconstruction)

Residents visited the 20-hectare stretch of damaged agricultural lands in the Settai district (20 hectares = 28 soccer fields). Farmlands that had already been repartitioned for reconstruction were being used to successfully plant and harvest rice for the first time since the disaster. Local farmers praised the initiative, saying they had an easier time working in the larger fields.

The repartitioning of the rest of the farmlands will be completed by the 2014 fiscal year.

Taro District (Taro Port and Sea Wall)

The tour moved to the Taro district, where residents observed the status of the port and sea wall from on top of the sea wall.

At the port, the group saw workers repairing breakwaters and raising the ground level, which was part of the damage caused by the tsunami.

There are two sections to the sea wall of Taro (total length: 2,433m), which was devastated by the wave. The #1 sea wall, facing the sea, will be raised from 10m above sea level to 14.7m. The inland-facing #2 sea wall lies on ground that has sunk, so this section will be raised back up to its original 10m. Construction on floodgates is also planned. The two sections will be finished by the end of the 2015 fiscal year.

Waste Crushing and Sorting Facility of the Miyako Area

Residents then observed Miyako City's Sokei disaster waste processing plant. Burnable debris has been almost completely processed, so the current challenges are processing non-burnable waste and sorting materials collected in the mud left by the tsunami.

Currently around 80% of disaster debris has been processed. Completion is planned for the end of March 2014.

Miyako Port's Kanbayashi Marina

Last on the tour was the Kanbayashi Marina, which will host the sailing competition of the Iwate National Athletic Meet in 2016. Residents observed workers raising the ground level that had sunk in the disaster.

At this point, around 30% of the construction is completed. The prefectural Rias Harbor will be completed in the 2013 fiscal year, with the sea wall completed by the end of 2015. The area was bustling with construction needed to host the national meet in Iwate.



Viewing the Taro Sea Wall



Waste processing at the Miyako facility

Data from the 8th Iwate Reconstruction Index Report

The Iwate Reconstruction Index Report compiles data that can be used to understand trends in the reconstruction of the prefecture, concentrating on the 12 disaster-affected coastal municipalities. We will share some of the main points from our 8th report (data valid as of October 2013).

Coastal Population (as of October 1, 2013)

► Coastal Population: 252,780

(Population on March 1, 2011: 272,937)

There has been a 7.4% (20,157 people) drop in population since March 1, 2011 before the disaster struck. The population continues to trend downward, but that trend is returning to pre-disaster levels.

Processing of Disaster Debris (as of the end of Oct. 2013)

► Processed debris: 82.7% (processed debris at the end of July 2013: 62.3%)

Debris is being processed smoothly, with 10,680,000 tons processed since the last index in July (a percentage gain of 20.4 points).

Tourists to Main Attractions (from July to Sep. 2013)

► 1,698,107 visitors

(1,774,261 visitors in July to Sep. 2012)

There was a 4.3% decline compared to the same time last year, but a 14.9% increase when compared to pre-disaster levels (the same period in 2010).

For details:

Iwate Fukkou Index 8

Search

**We are recruiting members for the
Iwate Reconstruction Supporters Team!**



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.

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

Iwate Ooendan

Search

Know, Buy, Eat, Go – and help support us!

**Free to
Register!**

“Odensore” is a group of medical workers from Naha City of Okinawa who are supporting children survivors of 3.11. They visited the Yamada South Elementary School of Yamada Town to meet with students on Friday, November 22.

In February 2012, Odensore sent the Yamada South Elementary School a *kankara sanshin*, an Okinawan stringed instrument. This particular *sanshin* is fashioned from an old can to symbolize the reconstruction of Okinawa following World War II. The relationship started from this gift, and the students were so encouraged by the *sanshin* that the Odensore group has visited the school three times.

The word *odensore* is a portmanteau of the Yamada dialect for “please visit (*odense*)” and the Okinawan word for “thank you (*mensore*)”. The group was named this to encourage a mutually supportive, long-lasting relationship.

During this visit, participants read versions of Kenji Miyazawa’s famous poetry in both Iwate and Okinawan dialects. They also fashioned whistles and tropical fish designs out of the leaves of Okinawan plants so that students could see how fun it was to play with things found in their surroundings.

Even though it was tough for the children to get sound out of their leaf whistles, they had a lot of fun. “It was hard to make [the whistle] but I had fun.” “I learned that I could make toys out of plants that grow near me.”



Scene from the visit ①



Scene from the visit ②



Making leaf whistles



We finished our tropical fish!

Read this newsletter on the [Web](#) Online-only news for 12/1

◆ Yagisawa Shoten ships first batch of soy sauce since 3.11 (Ichinoseki)

◆ National Lifelong Learning Network Forum 2013 in Iwate

<http://iwate-fukkoudayori.com>

◆◆◆ Updated soon ◆◆◆

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

Part 10 introduces Mr. Ataru Konno’s efforts.

PROFILE

Originally from Ofunato City, Konno moved out for university, but in 2006 returned to Ofunato to take over the family inn. He helps out at the inn as well as a publicist for a seafood product wholesaler.

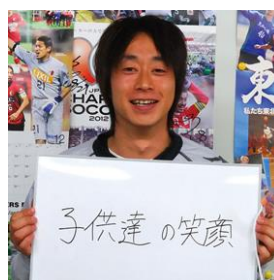
When not on the job, he devotes himself to the Iwate Grounds Project, which he started on March 10, 2012. This was with the complete support of the Tohoku Spirit Foundation (created by the Kashima Antlers and Mitsuo Ogasawara), which develops free-play spaces for children who lost their playgrounds in the disaster. The Iwate Grounds Project became its own organization in July 2012. Currently, the organization is being supported by donations from Hito Communications, Co. Ltd.

“I want to create spaces where children can play.”

After the disaster, temporary housing had to be built on school grounds, meaning that children lost their play areas.

People for SANRIKU'S Future

Tohoku Spirit Foundation:
Iwate Grounds Project
Director Ataru Konno



“For the children’s smiles.”

“I mean, it was just strange that children had no place to play,” Konno remarks. The children said that even if they played in the far corners of the temporary housing grounds, people would shoo them away. “You’re being too loud.” “Go elsewhere.”

Trying hard not to impede reconstruction efforts, Konno inquired at many places about a space for children to exercise. In March 2013, a new playground was completed in the vacant lot of Akasaki Elementary School.

From children’s smiles to grownup smiles

Konno feels for the students. “To a kid, a year or two is a really long time. Three years have passed since the disaster and students who were just entering middle school will soon be graduating. And the fact that they have never been able to have a sports meet in their own school grounds is just unbelievable.”

He gives his thoughts on the development of a strong, bustling town. “I think when the children playing on the grounds smile, that will inevitably spread to the adults. Children’s smiles are crucial to the community’s development.”

Casualties & Damage in Iwate As of Oct. 31, 2013

- ▶ Human casualties – Deaths: 4,672, Missing: 1,144
- ▶ Buildings destroyed (residences only, total/partial): 25,023

For more information on damage in Iwate, or to make a donation:

Thank you for all your support!

As of Oct. 31, 2013

- ▶ **Donations for survivors:** Around ¥17.85943 billion (87,052 donations)
- ▶ **Donations for reconstruction projects:** Around ¥18.6215 billion (6,307 donations)
- ▶ **Iwate Learning Hope Fund donations:** Around ¥6.03353 billion (10,956 donations)
(This fund is to assist in the study and daily life of affected children by encouraging sport and study activities.)

We’ve got a brand new website! Why not check it out at: <http://iwate-fukkoudayori.com>

News from Iwate’s Reconstruction, Vol. 53. December 1, 2013
Published by the General Affairs Division, Bureau of Reconstruction, Iwate Prefecture TEL: 019-629-6925

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Editing & Printing: SYNAPSE