

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

Volume 59
(March 1, 2014)
Iwate Prefecture

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.

There are a few signs of spring popping up, but snow remains thick on the ground. This is March in Iwate, where we will still have a bit of winter left.

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

Aiding the Reconstruction through Tourism

SL Ginga Tetsudo Steam Train to Open April 12



JR East's Morioka Branch Office has announced that the steam locomotive "SL Ginga Tetsudo" will begin running on the Kamaishi Line between Hanamaki and Kamaishi stations (90.2 km) on Saturday, April 12.

This is being done to promote regional development and reconstruction aid through tourism in the Tohoku region. The train itself was introduced as No. C58-239 in 1940, and ran on the Yamada Line until 1973, and will now be resurrected after more than 40 years of retirement.

The SL Ginga Tetsudo will make roughly 80 trips per year, mainly on weekends. On Saturdays it will leave Hanamaki Station at 10:37 a.m. and arrive at Kamaishi Station at 3:04 p.m., and on Sundays it will leave Kamaishi at 10:55 a.m. and arrive at Hanamaki at 3:20 p.m. As the trip takes around four and a half hours, the round trip will be made over two days.

The train seats 176 people, and tickets can be purchased up to one month prior to boarding.

Ignition of the SL Ginga Tetsudo was achieved in January of this year, with a lighting ceremony taking place in the square in front of Kamaishi Station. A prayer was offered for a strong recovery for the disaster-affected region.

This will be a powerful push for the reconstruction along with April's complete reopening of the Sanriku Railway.



A test-run by the SL Ginga Tetsudo



Tourists gather round the test-run



The "SL Ginga Tetsudo" plate on the passenger cars

Products of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima on Sale!

A One Stop Shop for Delicious and Useful Goods from the Three Tohoku Prefectures

Morioka

On Saturday, February 22, the Central Federation of Societies of Commerce and Industry opened "Hikari" in the Beltory Building in Saien, Morioka, an event highlighting the products of the three tsunami-affected prefectures.

Almost three years have passed since the disaster. Around 100 small and medium businesses are taking part from the still-recovering affected prefectures. The event is taking place simultaneously in Iwate Prefecture, (Morioka), Miyagi Prefecture (Sendai) and Fukushima Prefecture (Fukushima).



Regional Goods Galore!



Outside the shop

Roughly 600 different products are on sale, including unique regional goods and goods produced using local agriculture, commerce, and industrial resources.

The event will run until March 23 (Sunday), and is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tasty goods from Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima will make one-day appearances on Saturdays and Sundays during this period.

We are recruiting members for the Iwate Reconstruction Supporters Team!

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



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

Free to Register!

Learning from the Experiences of Niigata Youth Opinion Exchange by People with Experience of Disasters

Otsuchi

On Saturday, February 22, an opinion exchange meeting was held between young people in Otsuchi and survivors of the 2004 Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake. The event was organized by Oraga-Otsuchi Yumehiroba.

The goal of the event was for Otsuchi residents to learn from people their own age from the experiences of Yamakoshi Village (now part of Nagaoka City, Niigata) and work to improve Otsuchi's reconstruction.

Twelve citizens of Nagaoka in their 20s joined four students of Otsuchi High School and two Otsuchi-born university students.

The group was accompanied by the local guide Kazuki Tobai, who first took them to the former Otsuchi Town Hall where

many people lost their lives, and then to Shiroyama Park, where one can see the whole town.

At the opinion exchange meeting, the Niigatans described Yamakoshi's efforts after their earthquake: what was effective, and what should have been done but wasn't. The two groups discussed what Otsuchi can do to carry out a better reconstruction.

Third year students at Otsuchi High School Takuma Sato and Taku Oguni said "We're going to start working in the local fire department and the town hall in April, so it's good that we were able to exchange information and make new contacts. We hope that what we learned from the people of Yamakoshi will help with the reconstruction."



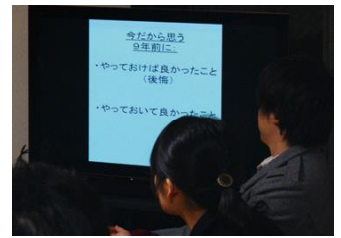
Visiting the old town hall



Looking on Otsuchi from Shiroyama Park



The opinion exchange



The opinion exchange

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 14 introduces Ms. Emiko Matsuda's efforts.

Profile:

Originally from Yokota, Rikuzentakata, Matsuda was one of the founding members of Sakura Line 311, an initiative to plant cherry trees along the line that marks the furthest point the tsunami reached.

While working in Kanagawa Seiko's Iwate factory (Sumita) she also serves as the executive director of the Rikuzentakata Youth Organization Council.



Rikuzentakata Youth Organization Council
Executive Director

Emiko Matsuda



"Building a society that looks forward to the future."

I want to make Rikuzentakata a place where young people's voices are heard

gathering performers who were less active after the disaster to entertain and cheer up the local people.

She opened the "Young People's Congress" organized by the Youth Organization Council in response to the mayor's request for the opinions of young people regarding the rebuilding of the city. She has deepened the discussion of what Rikuzentakata should evolve into, and has sent a declaration to the city government.

"Most of the wreckage in Rikuzentakata has been cleared up, so now we must listen to the opinions of as many people as possible in order to proceed with the reconstruction," she told us. "We can't guarantee that there won't be future disasters, but we should work to make Rikuzentakata at least a little safer. We will hold discussions with young people once a month, and further build on our experiences to advise the mayor."

I want to cheer the local people up

Before the disaster, Matsuda was involved with traditional arts festivals and helped with the organization of taiko and performing arts demonstrations.

After the disaster, there were fewer opportunities to engage in these kind of activities, and so she decided to kill two birds with one stone by

Casualties & Damage in Iwate As of Feb. 28, 2014

- ▶ Human casualties/deaths: 4,672; Missing: 1,142
- ▶ Buildings destroyed (residences only, total/partial): 25,706

For more information on damage in Iwate, or to make a donation, go to the Iwate Disaster Information Portal:

Thank you for all your support!

As of Jan. 31, 2014

- Donations for survivors:** Around ¥17.85943 billion (87,052 donations)
- Donations for reconstruction projects:** Around ¥18.68803 billion (6,579 donations)
- Iwate Learning Hope Fund donations:** Around ¥6.26919 billion (12,017 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>

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