

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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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.

We come to March, a month that Iwate and the coastal region will never be able to forget. Remembering that day, and renewing our determination to rebuild, we now bring you the news from Iwate's reconstruction.

Joint Iwate-Yamada Memorial Ceremony

Three Years Later

Yamada

Renewing our will for the reconstruction

March 11, exactly three years after the day the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami occurred. A joint-memorial ceremony by Iwate Prefecture and Yamada Town was held at the Yamada Central Community Center in the Hachiman area of Yamada, with over 400 people in attendance, including family of those who died.

Before the ceremony, the Ikebana artist Hiroki Maeno made a flower offering, and at 2:46 p.m., the moment the earthquake struck, all present observed a moment of silence.

Iwate lost 4,672 lives in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, and even today 1,142 people are still missing (as of February 28, 2014).

Governor Tasso, in his memorial address, expressed his hopes for the reconstruction:

So much was taken from us in the disaster, and nothing will ever replace what was lost. As time passes, we will have fewer opportunities to reflect on the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, and I fear that memory of the disaster will begin to fade. We who are alive today must work to honor the wills of those we lost by forever remembering the pain of that day and the lessons we learned, and passing these lessons on to future generations. Iwate Prefecture has designated this year the Year of Promoting the Full-Fledged Reconstruction. We plan to coordinate with the municipalities, the national government, and various individuals to ensure safety through the construction of anti-disaster infrastructure, construct houses and living areas in order to rebuild lives, and revitalize the fisheries and other industries. We promise that we will work ever harder to bring about a reconstruction that will continue into the future.



The altar at the memorial ceremony

As a representative of the bereaved families, Michio Uchida from Iioka, Yamada also gave a prayer of remembrance:

When I imagine the fear, cold, and regret felt by those who lost their lives that day, it drives me to work even harder as a survivor to overcome this pain. We who lost loved ones must turn that sadness and regret into kindness, and do what we can to help each other and think of others during this time. We need to take pleasure in those things that we always take for granted, treating each and every day with renewed importance. We believe this to be the highest form of respect we can pay to those who we lost, which we must do to go forward with our lives day-by-day.

Other visitors offered flowers at the end of the ceremony. The day offered a great many people from Yamada and surrounding areas a chance to remember those who had died, as well as an opportunity for survivors to renew their desires to work harder for a better tomorrow.



Flower offering by Hiroki Maeno, flower arranger



Attendee offers a flower and joins his hands in prayer



Prayer of remembrance offered by Michio Uchida

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.

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

Iwate Ooendan

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Otsuchi Junior High Storyteller Project Event Held in Victoria, Canada

In order to thank those who offered aid, Otsuchi Junior High, which was damaged in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, organized a "Storyteller Project" by sending students to places around Iwate and Japan in order to interact with people and describe their feelings about the reconstruction.

On February 21 (Friday) and 22 (Saturday) this Storyteller Project crossed the Pacific to Victoria, Canada, with third year student and singer Misaki Usuzawa acting as the Storyteller.

Victoria has a Sister City relationship with Morioka, and offered significant aid in the aftermath of the disaster.

This event was co-organized by the Victoria-Morioka Friendship Society.

The Storyteller Project event was held at the City Hall, St. Margaret's School, and Christ Church Cathedral. Ms. Usuzawa used photos and video footage to describe the disaster as well as her school life, and also sang for the audience.

A great many Victoria residents gathered to hear her presentation, and gave her a huge applause.

Ms. Usuzawa said of the bonds with Victoria "Our school was able to hold events thanks to the aid we received from Victoria, and so I was very happy to get to thank them. I was also very pleased that everyone listened so intently to my talk."



The singer Misaki Usuzawa giving a presentation on Otsuchi's reconstruction

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 15 introduces Mr. Takumi Kashima's efforts.

Profile:

Originally from Futtsu City in Chiba, Kashima happened to be leaving a management job at an advertising firm when he heard about a "Kamaishi Regional Coordinator" position. The Kamaishi Regional Coordinator directs reconstruction works on a freelance basis. He moved to Kamaishi last April.

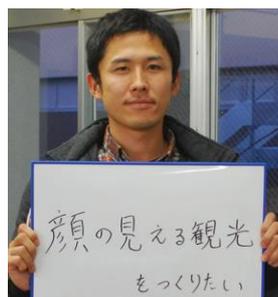
He is currently working with the Tourism and Exchange Division of the Kamaishi Municipal Government on supporting events and spreading information.

Kamaishi's people, one of its best points

Kashima receives commissions from the Tourism and Exchange Division to promote Kamaishi tourism through their Facebook page and website. He also works on "green tourism" that encourages people to visit and learn about Kamaishi through farming and fishery workshops.



Kamaishi Regional
Coordinator
Takumi Kashima



"I want to create a tourism where you get to know the locals."

"It seems a lot of people think that the tsunami-affected areas have still not recovered enough to be welcoming tourists," says Kashima, "but there are actually plenty of things for visitors to enjoy here. I really hope people will come here to meet Kamaishi's people. There are lots of warm, kind people here, even if they are unwilling to say so themselves. One of Kamaishi best points is its people, I think."

Letters from Kamaishi for people important to you

He also currently works on "Letters from Kamaishi". This project allows you to buy Kamaishi-themed postcards to be sent through a special mailing system and reach a friend or relative with a "2014.3.11" date stamp. The project aims to spread awareness about the current state of the city, and to thank those who have helped. The project shows Kashima's warm feelings toward the people of Kamaishi.

"I want to create a tourism where you really get to know the locals," says Kashima. We hope his efforts in tourism will help in the revitalization of Kamaishi.

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:

Iwate Pref Bousai

Thank you for all your support!

As of Feb. 28, 2014

- Donations for survivors:** Around ¥17.95467 billion (88,247 donations)
- Donations for reconstruction projects:** Around ¥18.69077 billion (6,612 donations)
- Iwate Learning Hope Fund donations:** Around ¥6.39807 billion (12,256 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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