

# News from Iwate's Reconstruction

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

Volume 137  
May 2018 Edition

## 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.

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

## Taro Rest Station's Grand Opening

Miyako

On April 7 (Sat), the Taro Rest Station, which was built by the Taro branch of the Miyako City Government, held its grand opening.

The Taro Rest Station, which has been under construction since 2015, is seen as a core part of the region's reconstruction. It has been provisionally open since July 2016, but since then construction has been completed on facilities like a free rest space with travel

information, and extra parking. This means that the station can finally be used to its full capacity.

The rest station includes the "Taro Shiosato Station" tourist information area, and "Sanchoku Toretarō", a shop run by the Tarō Farm-fresh Association, which sells local produce. Other facilities include a cafeteria, a fast food shop, and a mochi rice shop.

Next door, a new dog park called "Dog Run Wantaro" has also opened.

On March 21 this year, the section of road from the Sanriku Coastal Taro Masaki Coast IC to the Iwaizumi Ryusendo IC opened, and in 2020, the Taro South IC is scheduled to open. Taro Rest Station looks likely to be a lively regional hub for many years to come.



The grand opening of the Taro Rest Station



The popular "Sanchoku Toretarō" shop



The free rest space, with travel information

## The Ofunato Disaster Prevention & Tourism Exchange Center Now Open

Ofunato

On April 28 (Sat), a ceremony was held to celebrate the third stage of Ofunato's town renewal in the area around Ofunato Station.

The ceremony marks the completion of a local, city-led construction project, which was a key part of the reconstruction from the tsunami. Completed facilities include the Ofunato Disaster Prevention & Tourism Exchange Center, a privately-owned wine distillery, a food manufacturer, and a

woodworking factory.

As well as serving as a local landmark, the Tourism Exchange Center will distribute tourism information, and act as a hub for disaster prevention activities.

The building itself is 3 stories tall, and made from reinforced concrete. The first floor is dedicated to tourism and exchange, the second floor has an exhibition about the tsunami and a multipurpose space, while the

third floor has an observation deck. This can also act as a shelter during a tsunami for those who didn't get to high ground in time.

Last year, several other facilities in neighborhood were also completed, including Kyassen Ofunato and Ofunato Yume Shotengai shopping centers in April, and the Saito Confectioners and Kamome Terrace in November. Ofunato's city center is starting to take shape.



Ofunato's third-stage town renewal ceremony



The new Ofunato Disaster Prevention & Tourism Exchange Center



New constructions in the Ofunato Station area

### 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.  
**(Information only available in Japanese.)**

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

Iwate Ooendan

Search



## Yamada Police Box Now Open

Yamada

On April 23 (Mon), an opening ceremony was held for the Miyako Police Force's Yamada Police Box, which was rebuilt in Iioka, Yamada.

The former police box, in the central (Hachimancho) region of Yamada, was destroyed by the tsunami. Afterwards, its role was filled by a temporary building in front of the town hall.

The new police box is located around 1 km south of its original location, on high ground. It's a 2-story, reinforced concrete structure, with 175 square meters of space. It is equipped with solar panels and batteries, so it can operate during power outages. There is also a police car based here.

The 7 police officers based here will continue the police box's community-based work, including patrolling temporary housing districts and public housing complexes.

The Yamada Prefectural Hospital and the Yamada Fire Station are nearby, making this a regional hub for disaster prevention.

Nineteen police stations and police boxes are to be rebuilt, of which 14 have been completed. The remaining 5, including Kamaishi Police Station, are due to be completed within the financial year.



The rebuilt Yamada Police Box



The building's solar panels

For more information

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■ Inquiries ■  
Volunteer program  
Call center  
☎ 03-4405-6225  
■ Opening Hours ■  
Closed weekends & holidays  
10:00 - 18:00



Construction work on the Kamaishi Unosumai Reconstruction Stadium (name TBD)

## Messages for the Future

Tanohata

Coordinator  
Tanohata Taiken  
Network

**Kota Akasaka**



"I'm sure it won't reach us here."

The Tanohata region has lots of tall cliffs and tall waves, and that geography is one of the causes of what happened. There are lots of tsunami warnings here, so I think a lot of people just thought, "Again?"

People congregated on slightly elevated roads or open spaces, thinking, "I'm sure it won't reach us here." Many of these people lost their lives.

Never underestimate a natural disaster. It's vital to talk to people around you on a daily basis, to

understand where to escape to, and what safety measures to take.

### Disaster awareness saves lives

The center of Tanohata, including its village hall and gym, is inland, so it avoided damage.

The fire service had long been conducting disaster prevention drills, including the distribution of emergency rations, so they were able to very quickly get a generator to the evacuation centers. People had access to information and warmth. They also received a lot of support from people living inland, and rations were swiftly distributed.

Disasters aren't just a problem for the directly affected areas, so I think that nearby regions should be prepared to support their neighbors.

It's very important to heighten awareness of disaster prevention, and to put regional support measures in place to support the region.

The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami devastated the Iwate coast. As the reconstruction proceeds, lessons learned from the disaster are being passed along in the coastal communities. Earthquakes will happen again in the future, and natural disasters can strike at any time. We will introduce some of the lessons we learned to help others prepare for these incidents.

### Tanohata Tsunami Guide Information

On March 11 2011, the homes we were born and raised in were engulfed by a tsunami. Many tears were shed. The bonds between people in the evacuation shelters and temporary housing were strong, but people couldn't live freely until they moved into reconstructed housing. We talk about the many people we lost, the damage suffered, and the lessons learned through these sad, all-too-real experiences. These are the stories told by the Tsunami Guides in the disaster-hit areas of Tanohata, and the regions of Shimanokoshi and Raga.

Address: Tanohata Tsukue 142-3, Shimohei Iwate Fureai Banchi, Tsukuehama Banchi

Duration: 1 hour

Meeting point: Tanohata Station, Sanriku Railway

Bookings: Accepted until 5pm the day before.

(Please inquire regarding bookings on the day)

■ Inquiries and Bookings ■

Tanohata Taiken Network

TEL: 0194-37-1211 FAX: 0194-33-3355

## "Sobacchi-Go", Iwate's Disaster Prevention Bus

Iwate

On April 19 (Thu), the prefectural government held a ceremony to mark the first journey of "Sobacchi-Go", a new disaster prevention bus which lets people experience a simulated earthquake.

The bus is a renewal of the previous disaster prevention bus, which entered service in 1997 and was showing its age. The new vehicle weighs 3 tons, and is decorated with an image of Sobacchi as a fire fighter. It is equipped with modern features and equipment, including an earthquake simulator, a fire extinguisher training kit and a smoke experience tent.

The earthquake simulator can recreate the earthquakes in Kobe, Tohoku and Kumamoto. It can also replicate any intensity from 2 to 7, and give announcements in Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean.

The Sobacchi-Go will visit schools, regional training exercises and disaster prevention events, to improve people's awareness of disasters.



The Sobacchi-Go's ribbon cutting



Children experiencing a simulated earthquake

## The SL Ginga begins operating on the JR Kamaishi Line

The Coastal JR Kamaishi Line

On April 21 (Sat), the SL Ginga train began operations for the year, on the JR Kamaishi Line.

The SL Ginga is a C58 (C58 239) steam locomotive that was once preserved in Iwate Sports Park, but has now been restored for use. It is intended to support tourism and revitalized the region. The renewed train entered service in April 2014, making this its 5th year.

The SL Ginga makes its outward journey, from Hanamaki to Kamaishi, on Saturdays, and makes the return trip on Sundays. It is scheduled to operate until September 30th.

The steam locomotive pulls 4 passenger carriages, which are decorated with a design from Kenji Miyazawa's "Night on the Galactic Railroad".

The train is expected to make a significant contribution towards coastal tourism.

[Stops / Times]

To Kamaishi: Hanamaki (10:37) → Shin-Hanamaki (10:50) → Kamaishi (15:07)

To Hanamaki: Kamaishi (10:55) → Shin-Hanamaki (15:09) → Hanamaki (15:20)

\* All seating on the SL Ginga is reserved.

\* Please confirm the operating dates and times before riding.



The SL Ginga, bound for Kamaishi



## Sanriku Event Information



6/2

Sat

Hiraniwa Kogen Kuji  
Rhododendron Festival

Venue: Kuji-Hiraniwa Natural Park

6/10

Sun

Hiraniwa Kogen's birch forest is said to have 300,000 trees, making it one of Japan's largest. The Rhododendrons paint the forest red, and against that background this festival will have stalls, a stage show, and more.

Inquiries

Industry and Construction Dept, Kuji City  
☎ 0194-72-2111  
Executive Committee (Kuzumaki Tourist Association) ☎ 0195-66-2111

6/3

Sun

Kamaishi Daikannon Kamaishi  
Fire Festival

Venue: Kamaishi Daikannon

At the Flame of Prayer, people burn sticks to ask for blessings. At the Flame of Memory, people pray for their ancestors to grant them peace of mind. Besides these rites, the event will have folk performances, mochi rice throwing and a calligraphy performance. The usual entry fee will be waived on the day of the event.

Inquiries

Kamaishi Daikannon  
☎ 0193-24-2125

6/3

Sun

Mt. Kuji-Hiratake's Hirono  
Opening Ceremony

Venue: Hiratake's summit / Kujihira Shrine

The sight of the vivid greenery at the opening of Mt. Kuji-Hiratake is a sign that summer has begun. A parade of horses will make their way to Kujihira Shrine, to pray for safety. Mochi rice throwing and folk entertainment will also be at this lively event.

Inquiries

Hirono Event Executive Committee  
(Hirono Regional Promotion Dept.)  
☎ 0194-77-2111

6/10

Sun

Mt. Hayachine's Opening Ceremony

Miyako / Hanamaki / Tono

Venue: Odagoe Trailhead

Mt. Hayachine (1,917m) is the highest peak in the Kitakami range. Its opening ceremony is a busy event that attracts 1,000 hikers from in and out of the prefecture. A performance of the Hayachine Kagura dance will take place at Hayachine Shrine, at the summit of the mountain.

Inquiries

Kawai General Office, Miyako City  
Government ☎ 0193-76-2114

6/10

Sun

Hiraniwa Bullfighting Tsutsuji Tournament Kuji

Venue: Hiraniwa Kogen

It's said that Hiraniwa bullfighting began with Nanbu cows. When they carried salt from Noda to Morioka, they would lock horns to decide who would lead the ranks. The Hiraniwa tournament is the only bullfighting event in Tohoku. There are explanations to make it easy for newcomers to understand, and a chance to win special prizes in a raffle.

Inquiries

Iwate Hiraniwa Kogen Bullfighting Tournament  
(Yamagata Branch, Kuji City Government)  
☎ 0194-72-2111

6/17

Sun

Tanohata Milk & Tanohata  
Dairy Fair

Venue: Tanohata Industrial Development Company, Tanohata Milk Plant

Besides buying milk & dairy products, you can take part in a blind taste challenge, and enjoy a tour of the factory.

Inquiries

Tanohata Industrial Development Company  
☎ 0194-34-2080

