

News from Iwate's Reconstruction

Ganbaro, Iwate!

Let's stick together, Iwate!

三陸復興

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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.

This year will be the last year of our focused, full-fledged reconstruction. Iwate is preparing for the Land of Hope National Sports Festival, and there are high hopes that it will speed up the recovery.

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

Tohoku Odan Expressway Kamaishi-Akita - Tono and Miyamori Section Opens

Tono

On December 5, 2015 (Sat), a 9km-long stretch was officially opened on the Tohoku Odan (East-West) Expressway between Kamaishi and Akita. This section, which lies between the Tono IC exit and Miyamori IC exit, was built by the national government in support of the reconstruction.

An opening ceremony was held on this day near the Miyamori IC in the Shimomasuzawa area of Miyamori (part of Tono City). Roughly 160 attended, including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Governor Tasso, local authorities along the coast and local residents.

"With the opening of this road, 80% of the road connecting Kamaishi, Tono and Hanamaki has been completed. We hope that this road will play a large role in the region, as well as contribute to building and reconstructing the area. In 2019, the Rugby World Cup will be held in Kamaishi, and many athletes and spectators from all over the world will come here by this road. The government will do its very best to support the event, hoping that it will inspire and impress all the youth in the area," said Prime Minister Abe Shinzo during the ribbon cutting

ceremony.

Roughly 63km of the 80km road between Kamaishi and Hanamaki (a city in central Iwate) is now accessible. Construction on the 11km section connecting Tono IC and Tono-Sumita IC, as well as the 6km section between Kamaishi-nishi IC (temporary name) and Kamaishi Junction (temporary name) is scheduled to be completed in 2018.

The opening of all the sections will revitalize the distribution of goods and tourism in the region, allow emergency transportation from the coast, and much more.



Opening ceremony at Miyamori IC



The ribbon cutting ceremony



The newly opened road between Miyamori IC and Tono IC

The Iwate-Sanriku Reconstruction Forum in Shizuoka

Shizuoka

On December 18, 2015 (Fri), the Iwate-Sanriku Reconstruction Forum in Shizuoka (organizer: Iwate Prefecture) was held at Shizugin Hall "Euphonia" (Aoi District, Shizuoka City). The theme of the event was "Using Connections to Foster Reconstruction and Preparation."

The goals of the forum were to express gratitude for the support Iwate received after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, to preserve the memories of the disaster in people from outside the prefecture, and to instill the importance of being prepared. This is the 4th Reconstruction Forum, which was previously held at Osaka, Nagoya, and Kobe.

"Shizuoka Prefecture and Shizuoka City were among the local governments that sent many of their workers to Iwate to help out just after the disaster. There were also many civilians who volunteered and supported the fishing industry. We have seen so many kinds of relief activities for the disaster affected areas," said Governor Tasso in his opening speech.

Heita Kawakatsu (governor of Shizuoka Prefecture), Governor Tasso and Motoyuki Ushiyama (professor and deputy head of the Shizuoka Center for Integrated Research and Education of Natural Hazards) discussed how to build towns that are resilient against natural

disasters using the lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

Masahiro Ogita, the assistant managing director and editorial and senior staff writer of the Shizuoka Shimbun newspaper, facilitated the panel discussion on the power of connections. Panelists from both prefectures used their personal experiences and activities to discuss the critical importance of being prepared for disaster. In the lobby, a sale of local goods, as well as a display of information panels entitled "Moving on Together" helped to deepen the ties between Iwate and Shizuoka.



The panel discussion



Both governors peruse Iwate local goods



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Miffy Café Opens in Kamaishi!

Kamaishi

On December 23, 2015 (Wed), the Miffy Cafe Kamaishi opened on the 1st floor of the Kamaishi Information & Community Center, located in the center of Kamaishi.

The cafe was built with the support of Miffy's creator, Dutch artist Dick Bruna, the Netherlands Embassy and Dick Bruna Japan, to bring hope and energy to Kamaishi and provide a place for people to get together.

The cafe was designed around the concept of Miffy, a globally-adored cartoon rabbit, in hopes of bringing color to the damaged city and becoming another symbol of its revival. It is the only restaurant of its kind in Japan.

Miffy-themed lunches and waffles are on sale at the café. You can also buy tote bags, and many other original Miffy goods.



The newly opened Miffy Cafe

Construction finishes on the Omoto Tsunami Preparedness Center

Iwaizumi

A ceremony was held on December 23, 2015 (Wed) to celebrate the completion of the Omoto Tsunami Preparedness Center. It was built in the Omoto area of Iwaizumi, a northern coastal town which received damage from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

The center has a multi-purpose room that can be used as a safe assembly area during disasters, and has a passageway to Iwaizumi-Omoto Station (Sanriku Railway, North Rias Line; previously 'Omoto Station'). It is a three-story steel-reinforced concrete building with a total area of 2,121m². The 1st floor contains a town hall branch office, a souvenir shop and a ticket office, the 2nd floor has Omoto Medical Clinic, a meeting room and a tsunami archive room, while the 3rd floor houses the community/multi-purpose room that also serves as an evacuation site.

In case of a disaster, the center is equipped with power generators and solar power, as well as blankets and emergency rations. The region was badly damaged five years ago; this facility is expected to be an important part of the new disaster preparedness efforts.



Omoto Tsunami Prevention Center
(photo courtesy of Iwaizumi)

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 51 introduces Mr. Akihiro Kumagai's efforts.

PROFILE

Originally from Rikuzentakata. Educated in Rikuzentakata through high school. After high school, he moved to Tokyo to study business management at a technical school. After that, he worked at a restaurant in the city. In 2009, he returned to Rikuzentakata at the age of 25 to work at his family's business, Kanda Vineyard. He is now head of the business.



Kanda Vineyard
Managing Director

Akihiro Kumagai



"Supporting the reconstruction by creating unique local flavors."

with the idea of making wine since before the disaster. I want to keep making wine so that Kanda Vineyard will continue on to its 150th and 200th anniversaries too!" said Mr. Kumagai.

Aiming to make locally established products

Mr. Kumagai delivered his product to many local eateries and hotels in the area before the disaster. "A lot of stores in Rikuzentakata were washed away. Local trade didn't come back until 1-2 years after the disaster, but lately people are opening up their stores again, and business is reviving. As someone who's been in the area for so long, it's really great. The reconstruction is not a fleeting project. I want to stand my ground and make products that really take root in the local community. I want people to come to Rikuzentakata, with all of its freshly caught seafood, and pair that with our wine."

With the community developing every day, there's hope that Kanda Vineyard's wine will one day become known as a special local product of Rikuzentakata.

Winemaking with a history

Mr. Kumagai's company, Kanda Vineyard, was established in 1905, which marks this year as its 101st anniversary.

The vineyard is located in Yonesaki-cho, which is known for its apples, but it also grows grapes. These are made into soft drinks and jams.

In Japan, it's very rare for coastal areas to grow their own grapes, so starting last fall, Kanda Vineyard used grapes from their farm to start making wine alongside its other products.

"I do see it as part of an effort towards reconstruction, but we've actually been toying

Casualties & Damage in Iwate As of Dec. 31, 2015

- ▶ Human casualties/deaths: 4,672; Missing: 1,124
- ▶ Buildings destroyed (residences only, total/partial): 26,168

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 Dec. 31, 2015

- Donations for survivors:** Around ¥18.43776 billion (92,605 donations)
- Donations for reconstruction projects:** Around ¥19.72779 billion (7,599 donations)
- Iwate Learning Hope Fund donations:** Around ¥7.89788 billion (17,032 donations)

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

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