



Bonito, tuna, marlin, Pacific saury, shark... Kesennuma City Fish Market receives many different kinds of fish products from the Sanriku fishing grounds off the coast of Miyagi Prefecture, where the Kuroshio Current and the Oyashio Current meet. Since the first bonitos of the year were caught in May, not only the market but the whole city have come alive with energy. (This photo was taken in July 2013)

Public-private partnership for reconstruction support

On July 2, the Minister for Reconstruction Takumi Nemoto announced at the 8th meeting of the Reconstruction Promotion Council, which was attended by all cabinet members, that the government will start developing a “Growth Strategy” for the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and a platform for sharing information on job placements and private investment in the field of disaster reconstruction.

The strategy specifically aims to revitalize the affected areas through creation of sites for centralizing all information on job placements and providing venues where people can seek advice on business management from experts such as financial institutions.

There is also a plan to establish a system for dispatching experts from other areas to companies, municipal governments, and commerce and industry associations in the affected areas. The objective of these plans is to raise the level of reconstruction from “rebuilding” to “growth,” and the key to implementing the plans will be for both the public sector and the private sector to share an awareness of cooperating for the same goal.

Private sector efforts will be a driving force in changing the society

We envision a society where, in times of disaster, the government (i.e. the public sector) provides existing public services while NPOs, companies and individuals (i.e. the private sector) also contribute

towards attaining public benefit; both the public and private sectors, in their respective positions, will actively provide services ranging from emergency relief activities to building new towns in the reconstruction phase. We established Civic Force in the aim of creating such a society, and now we are focusing on supporting those people who are in the affected areas and are independently seeking to start new businesses for reconstruction.

Our “Mid- to Long-Term Reconstruction Support Projects,” which were launched in the summer of 2012, aim to solve the problems that had existed in the affected areas since before the disaster, such as the decline of the agriculture sector and issues related to the medical care system, which stem from depopulation and ageing of the communities. We have ongoing projects in five fields: “tourism,” “emergency medical service,” “renewable energy,” “town development” and “child support.” These projects take full advantage of our partnerships with NPOs and local governments that were built through our NPO Partner Projects, which were started just after the earthquake.

This Monthly Report features one of the Mid- to Long-Term Reconstruction Support Projects, in an article that covers the opening ceremony to launch the “Platform for the Creation of Ria Coast Tourism,” which was established in Kesennuma city, Miyagi Prefecture, and the role Civic Force played in the establishment of the organization.

The private sector will be a huge driving force for changing the society and leading the way to a new era. Civic Force will continue to work towards creating a system that will maximize such a driving force.

Opening Ceremony to launch Ria Platform for Tourism Creation on July 3, 2013

Monthly Topic

Civic Force selects hot topics among various projects in this month.

“To promote tourism in Kesennuma city, we will establish the “Ria Platform for Tourism Creation”, a general incorporated association, as a think tank which integrates human resources, funds and know-how gathered from both inside and outside the Kesennuma areas. And by distributing these resources locally, we expect to see more long-term revitalization programs for the tourism industry.” said Mr. Akihiko Sugawara, Chief Director of the association, in the opening ceremony held on July 3 at the Kesennuma office in Miyagi prefecture. Attendants included Mr. Masahiro Oue, deputy mayor of Kesennuma city; administrative officers; representatives of private companies, NPOs and the press from various regions.

Almost sixteen months earlier, the “Kesennuma City Tourism Strategy Council” was launched with the aim of increasing the number of tourists in Kesennuma city after the earthquake. A total of 24 council members, consisting of local tourist company staff and external advisers, met once a month to create strategies that would enable tourism to become a key industry. Attractive tour packages that introduce local food and cultures as well as tours introducing experiences, learnings from the earthquake and the reconstruction process are some examples of their ideas.

However, not much will change just by coming up with attractive tour packages, so the association was established in April 2013 to share the plans with local citizens and to involve the residents of Kesennuma city. At the end of June, 2013, the Ria Platform for Tourism Creation was approved as a general incorporated association.

In addition to tourism-related personnel, tour companies inside and outside Kesennuma city and the press joined the association which offers various kinds of support to individual business initiatives. The association is expected to play the role of re-defining the “tourism industry” as a reconstruction business for the city which can be realized by adopting external input and working with companies both inside and outside of the region. Until now, the administration had been setting tourism plans for the tourism committee (inclusive of Kesennuma citizens) to examine and submit reports. However, under the current disaster-hit Kesennuma city, it is considered that a flexible, private institution with funds and authority could best realize ideas inspired by suggestions from tour companies and citizens.



Civic Force will subsidize projects proposed by NPOs and citizen groups. Civic Force will also invest, provide loans and professional advice to small or larger projects in all areas on the Sanriku coast. Some of the activities the association plan to conduct during this fiscal year are fieldwork, trial tours for new sightseeing routes, business talks, and symposiums to develop attractive tourism resources.

Civic Force has been supporting the planning of the tourism strategy and the founding of the association as part of the “Tourism Revitalization Project” of the Mid-to Long-term Reconstruction Plan. Civic Force will continue to support the association by participating as a member of the board directors.

Tohoku Common Benefit Investment Fund supports NPOs in Fukushima



Civic Force established the Tohoku Common Benefit Fund (Tohoku Kyoeki Toshi Kikin) in December 2011 to support the revitalization of businesses and industries in disaster areas. The fund contributed five million yen to the NPO TATAKIAGE

Japan (roughly translated as “Work our way up! Japan”) late June. The NPO supports entrepreneurs contributing to the recovery in Fukushima by serving as a platform for communication and manages common office space for them.

Moreover, in early July the foundation contributed three million yen to the Reconstruction Support Office for Disaster-Affected Business Establishments which started the solar power business as part of the “Project:

A Town Regenerated” in Ishinomaki city, Miyagi prefecture. This project was funded with money from the fund “Capital to Startups for Reconstruction”. This fund is specially set aside by the foundation to support entrepreneurs working for reconstruction. The foundation has invested in eleven projects so far.

All Round Helicopter website launch

All Round Helicopter (ARH), one of Civic Force’s NPO partners, launched its website in June.

ARH is planning to operate emergency helicopters in the disaster areas. The disaster areas tend to be underpopulated and accessibility to medical services is a problem. Its website explains the organization’s outline, structure, and the importance of operating private medical helicopters.

ARH is working hard to coordinate and forge partnerships with related organizations to ensure smooth operations. The services will start this summer with a ceremony to be held in Kesennuma city.

<http://www.arh.or.jp>



“I want my lively town back!”

I have always been heavily involved in policy and planning to enliven my city of Kessenuma even before the earthquake occurred. I contribute in my capacity as both the president of the traditional sake maker, Otokoyama; as well as the chairperson for “Slow Food Kessenuma” a group which promotes local development and revitalization through food products. Many people lost what they cherished in the disaster. I also went through a period of doubt, wondering whether I should reopen my business or not. I eventually restored my business, in the belief that sake-making could contribute to local recovery efforts.

My priority now is to restore the local industries as quickly as possible. In Kessenuma, there are many individual entrepreneurs and the fish trade formed the backbone of the local industry. However, the city is gradually losing its liveliness that I used to feel in my childhood days with the decline in the fishing industry and the steady decrease in population. I wanted to do something about the situation. I got together with my fellow members from the local chamber of commerce to organize events and tried out various ways and means to bring back the buzz into our city. The establishment of the Ria Platform for Tourism Creation (see page 2 for more details) is an extension of our work for local revitalization which has been going on even before the disaster. It is filled with our hopes to see our city bustling again after the earthquake. We will develop a system to involve everyone in the city as a key agent in



Mr. Akihiko Sugawara, Chairperson, Ria Platform for Tourism Creation

the system to involve everyone in the city as a key agent in the promotion of tourism to implement the plans developed by the Kessenuma City Tourism Strategy Council in the last fiscal year.

From strategy development to establishing the platform, Civic Force has given us ideas and useful advice that we would not have thought of by ourselves, helped us get into contact with organizations outside the city, and have acted as an extra pair of hands and legs in our efforts.

We are still at the starting point of the platform and it will take some time before we are able to see any concrete results. But we wish that everyone who visits Kessenuma city will be with us in the long run to see how our city changes bit by bit for the better.

Face Face

Civic Force is supported by various companies, NPOs and government.

This corner features the latest messages from our partners.

Here are some reports on what we are doing in Tohoku region, as of June 11, 2013.

Mid-to Long-Term Reconstruction Projects

Civic Force has been active in providing assistance in the Tohoku region of northeastern Japan for a year and a half ever since the earthquake struck. To better concentrate our efforts to solve the problems and difficulties that the region faces, we began some mid- to long-term projects in the summer of 2012. The progress report of each project is listed below.
<http://www.civic-force.org/emergency/higashinohon/choki/>

▪ Tourism Revitalization Project

—Enhancing cooperation between the public and private sectors to make Kessenuma City into a “city that tourists want to visit” .

▪ Wings for Life Project

—Support of helicopter services for emergency medical purposes

Even before the disaster, availability of medical services was already a problem in the coastal areas devastated by the earthquake. We are planning to start a helicopter service to provide better access to improved medical services. As we enter the final stage of launching the service this summer, we are now finalizing details with our partners.

▪ Green Circle Project

—Developing a sustainable forest industry and effective utilization of woody biomass

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▪ Community Revive Project

—Support efforts by the local community to create homes and jobs

Cooperating with local NPOs and local administrations, Civic Force has continuously supported construction projects and community development of new towns for group relocation of disaster victims. We also provide assistance by sending specialists and providing human resource development programs to new towns and existing towns that are looking to redevelop their community.

▪ Dream Support Project

—Support for local youths through scholarships and conducting locally-developed educational programs

Many high school students face financial difficulties as a result of the earthquake. To ensure that they can continue their education through to university, this project provides JPY 30,000 scholarships per month for such students. This project group is planning to provide work-study programs in Miyagi prefecture this July and August.

Brief Report on Our NPO Partner Projects

We have been supporting the activities of NPOs run by victims in the reconstruction of the local areas.

As of July 2013, we have supported six organizations. For details, please visit our website:

<http://www.civic-force.org/emergency/higashinohon/npo/>

- All Round Helicopter × Civic Force
- Shinrin × Civic Force
- Mori wa Umi no Koibito × Civic Force
- Network Orange × Civic Force
- Kessenuma Future Plan Osawa Team × Civic Force
- Iwate Society of Certified Clinical Psychologists × Civic Force

What we are doing
in Tohoku
NOW

Kensuke Onishi receives “G1-KIBOW Social Entrepreneur Award”

Information 

Civic Force’s activities have been supported by various corporations and individuals. Why don’t you join fund-raising activities through placing charity boxes in various places, such as next to your cash registers, in your shops or reception areas and at event halls to expand our circle of support?

More details:pr@civic-force.org

Kensuke Onishi (right), Chairperson of Civic Force with Yoshito Hori (left), Representative Director and founder of G1 Summit and KIBOW.



Civic Force gives disaster-preparedness lectures across the country



Civic Force gives lectures across the country to provide information on our aid activities in disaster-affected areas and the maintenance activities in preparation for disasters. On June 26, Chairperson Kensuke Onishi was invited by Bosch Corporation to speak at a management training program held in Tokyo, where he talked about the support activities at home and abroad and the support systems established for the Great East Japan Earthquake.

On July 4, Satoshi Kawakita, Deputy Head of the Tohoku Office, visited the Ritsumeikan University Tokyo Campus and reported on the current situation of disaster-affected areas and Civic Force’s aid activities in the Tohoku district, in a session entitled “Disaster Prevention Studies for the Indonesian Government.”

Satoshi Kawakita, Deputy Head of the Civic Force Tohoku Office



Start your support with only 33 yen per day

We must be ready for the “next one”. Your donation will be a great help in backing up our activities to prepare for the next large-scale disaster. Donate a fixed amount each month in units of 1,000 yen so you can be a monthly supporter and participate in activities to prepare for large scale disasters.

•Credit card: Please see the “Donate Now!” section on the Civic Force website.

https://bokinchan2.com/civicforce/donation/bokin/page1.php?bokin_type=donation

A Message from Disaster Areas

Two years and four months have passed since Civic Force started activities to support recovery in the disaster-hit Northeastern Japan. This section showcases the voices of the people who live in the affected areas. In this 4th installment, we are featuring Mr. Kenji Sato who owns and runs an izakaya, a Japanese-style pub, called KEN in Kesennuma city, Miyagi prefecture.



Mr. Sato

—— I started this business about 20 years ago. It is an izakaya with catering services, which was not common in Kesennuma city at that time. Today, we are known as an izakaya that offers tasty sake and other alcoholic beverages as well as shark’s fin dishes. Our shop floor was flooded up to about 30cm right after the disaster but we suffered less damage than the coastal areas. We evacuated to the shelter in Kesennuma High School. I cooked hot soup and meals using food contributed by local suppliers and friends.

Two weeks after the disaster, I reopened the izakaya. Right after the disaster, many people felt lost about how to live going forward. I thought that someone should just take action, and so I did. One customer asked me,

I think they were happy to be here and my izakaya has become an oasis for them. After I restarted the Izakaya, not only do I get local customers, but people from outside the city such as young volunteers, news reporters and fishermen of tuna also came and spent the night here. I hope that my izakaya will continue to be a place where people gather to have an enjoyable time.