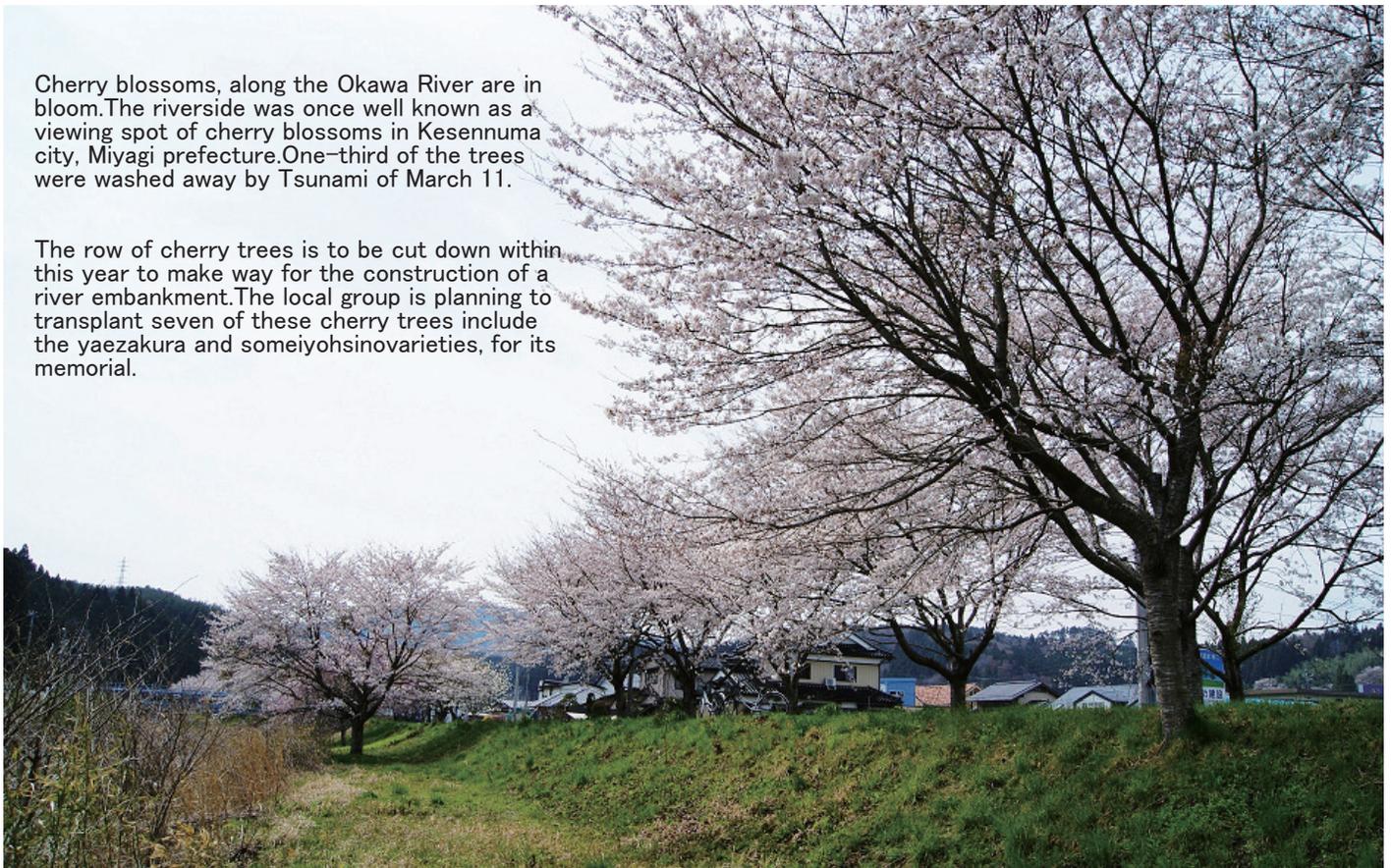


Cherry blossoms, along the Okawa River are in bloom. The riverside was once well known as a viewing spot of cherry blossoms in Kesennuma city, Miyagi prefecture. One-third of the trees were washed away by Tsunami of March 11.

The row of cherry trees is to be cut down within this year to make way for the construction of a river embankment. The local group is planning to transplant seven of these cherry trees include the yaezakura and someiyohsinovarieties, for its memorial.



Renewable Energy and Reconstruction of the Disaster Stricken Area

Two years and two months have passed since the March 11 earthquake in the northeast area of Japan or Tohoku. Simply “restoring” the area revines its former state before disaster struck is not sufficient. Reconstruction efforts need to be comprehensive and aim to tackle problems that beset the area even before the disaster, such as aging society and declining industry activities. The crisis of nuclear power plant disaster after the earthquake offered an clue to also review at the energy policy of Japan, which has consistently increased its dependency on nuclear power after the World War II.

Under these circumstances, it is hoped that tapping onto renewable energy sources in the region, such as solar power, wind power and hydraulic power, could lead to increased energy self-sufficiency, prevent global warming, and perhaps even promote local industries.

Tohoku region with its abundant nature has high potential in renewable energy development. Aomori prefecture and Akita prefecture come in first and fifth respectively for having the most numbers of windmills in the whole country, evidence that they there are the forerunners in wind power generation. In addition, northeastern Japan is also an important rice-producing area in the country. Drawing on its agricultural heritage, Akita prefecture is starting to develop small hydraulic power generation systems along their irrigation channels used in farming.

More than 70 percent of the Tohoku area, an equivalent of 4.7

million hectares, is forest. The local lumbering and timber industry produces about 530 thousand tons of timber off cuts annually which could be a potential source of raw materials for woody biomass. In fact, some think tanks have proposed that forestry should be positioned as a key industry in the reconstruction efforts as it can create many jobs.

The feed-in tariff system started in July in 2012 aims to increase the use of renewable energy in Japan. Feed-in tariff refers to the amount paid by government to businesses, individual households and other organizations to generate renewable energy and the system includes other requirements such as the obligatory purchase of renewable electricity by electric power companies. Also, Special Reconstruction Act enforced in December in 2011 aims to accelerate reconstruction in the disaster-stricken areas by encouraging the local governments to develop their own plans to suit the needs and characteristics of the local communities. The act thus opens a window of opportunity for the local administrations to consider their energy security needs.

With the support from new policies and reconstruction assistance given, the private sector has begun to take on the new challenges to develop renewable energy systems. In this monthly report, we will include an article on “Green Cycle Project – Developing a sustainable forest industry and effective utilization of woody biomass”, as part of the Mid-to Long-Term Reconstruction Support Projects, which started in the summer of 2012 in Miyagi prefecture.

Local Production and Consumption of Natural Energy

Monthly Topic

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

About 20 minutes' drive from Kesennuma city, Miyagi prefecture, a lumber yard is located along the winding mountain road. A banner, displayed in front of the entrance, says "Thinned wood purchased here" while trucks carrying loads of wood are seen coming and going. Various sizes of logs are piled up in the property, where a hot spring resort once located. Since December 2012, the place has been used as a lumber yard where Kesennuma citizens could bring and sell thinned wood for biomass fuel, several times a month. At the end of April 2013, a record of 89 tons of logged or thinned wood was brought to the site.



Kesennuma Regional Energy Development Co., is implementing the project "Renewable Energy Promotion Project" as a part of the earthquake disaster reconstruction which Kesennuma City has been promoting. The project aims to develop a sustainable society by cultivating people interested in doing private forestry business through the process of selling timber from the wooded mountains they own. Promoting biomass fuel make energy supply sustainable and contribute to the community in terms of job creation.

Civic Force supports such challenges on a local level, which is a part of our Mid-to Long-Term Reconstruction Support Project called "Green Circle Project". The program includes managing lumber yards and training for forest owners and those who want to start forestry business as their side job.

Those who bring thinned wood earn 3,000 yen plus 3,000 ria, the monetary unit of local currency Reneria. Reneria was created to circulate the benefits of the local forestry business within the community, and could be used in more than 180 shops in Kesennuma city. Gathered wood are processed to wood biomass fuels, such as firewood and pellet, and will be used as an energy source produced and consumed in the local area.

Residents in the coast of Kesennuma are planning their group relocation to the highland area of the city where public housing will be constructed. A wood-fueled boiler is being considered for the public space in the new housing, thus, feasible studies are being made as to the amount of necessary power consumption, along with the analysis of the needs for natural energy.

This "Green Circle Project" is supported by corporations and groups promoting natural energy and revitalizing the forestry industry, including NPOs which already support our NPO Partner Projects. This project is also conducted in Tome city, Miyagi prefecture.

By providing an opportunity to make effective use of unutilized wood resources and preventing the outflow of money from the community, this project is expected to become a reconstruction model for disaster-hit areas.

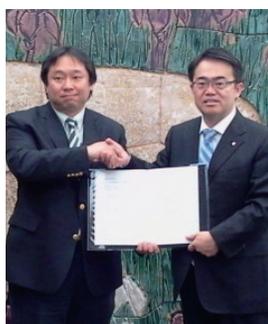


Preparing for the next disaster Conclusion of cooperative partnership with Aichi prefecture

Civic force has been building partnerships with local governments and companies in preparation for disasters. On April 17, Civic force concluded a mutual cooperative partnership with Aichi prefecture. Under the agreement, Civic Force will cooperate providing prompt and effective support to victims when disaster strikes, in the following ways:

1. Collection and sharing of information
2. Procurement, provision and emergency transportation of relief goods
3. Supporting victims at places such as shelters in the demand of the municipality
4. Participation in disaster drills organized by the prefectural government
5. Periodic sharing information

Mr. Hideaki Ohmura, Governor of Aichi prefecture (right in the photo) is strongly hoping that "When a disaster happens in our prefecture, Civic force will utilize the know-how accumulated from the support activity at the Great East Japan Earthquake and the network as a private sector." Following Fukuroi city in Shizuoka prefecture, Kesennuma city in Miyagi prefecture, and Mie prefecture, this is the fourth cooperative agreement with local government.



Nine Investment Projects by the Tohoku Common Benefit Investment Fund

Civic Force established the "Tohoku Kyoeki Toshi Kikin (Tohoku Common Benefit Investment Fund)" in November 2011, in urgent need to revitalize local companies to restore the economy in disaster-hit areas.

A year and a half later, the general incorporated foundation has invested and advised nine projects and two programs, including Ogatsu Suzuri Marketing Association, Sato Shipyard, Oikawa Electric (Ishinomaki city, Miyagi prefecture), Peace Nature Lab (Kesennuma city, Miyagi prefecture), Trust in Watari district, Onagawa Lodging Cooperation Association, Onagawa Factory (Ojika district), Hikari Foods and Sanriku iriya Suisan (Kamaishi city, Iwate prefecture).

Tetsuya Yoshida, who became the general manager since March 2013 says, "Using my knowledge and experience of more than 10 years to revitalize small-and- medium-sized businesses in local regions including Tohoku areas, I would like to contribute in reviving local businesses and its development. I hope this organization will be a role model for other disaster areas in need of local revitalization."

A new attempt to revitalize the local community

I have been involved in local energy supply business in Kesenuma area for a long time as president of Kesenuma Shokai Co., which conducts sales of oil products and sales and production of high-pressure gas in Miyagi prefecture. In the Earthquake Disaster, we had a very hard time as some of our tanks were swept away by the tsunami, but we tried our best to maintain a stable supply of fuels for the recovery of fishery. As president of an oil company, I wanted to face the challenge of reviving the “forestry business,” which ended during my grandfather’s generation, and established the Kesenuma Regional Energy Development Co. after the Earthquake Disaster.

As the importance of renewable energy increases, we must utilize it to develop a self-reliant community. To achieve this, it is necessary to make the maximum use of local energy resources with the participation of residents, so that the economic effect can be circulated within the region. I believe that dissemination of woody biomass, which is closely related to forestry and will lead to continuous fuel supply, is new challenge to revitalize the local community and will not be limited by the framework of reconstruction.

In the framework of the third supplementary budget for 2011, we were commissioned by Kesenuma city in Miyagi prefecture to undertake a validation study of a disaster area reconstruction model, “Green Decentralization Reform.” In the initial phase, we are aiming for utilization and the initial



Mr. Masaki Takahashi
President, Kesenuma Regional Energy Development Co.

phase, we are aiming for utilization and dissemination of woody biomass, and working to strengthen our wood supply system.

There still are many challenges to build a system of positive cycle, in which many local people can be prospered by getting involved with the forest; people who cut wood in the forest, people who process it, people who consume it, and so on. Under these circumstances, Civic Force understood the significance of this business and decided to support us with our initial investment, which was difficult to obtain from the government or other organizations, by utilizing Civic Force’s network in and out of this region. I have some fear of trying new things, but more than that, I am pursuing this project with an utmost sense of mission.

Face to Face

Civic Force is supported by various companies, NPOs and government.
This corner features the latest news from our partners.

Here are some reports on what we are doing in Tohoku region, as of May 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 Kesenuma City into a “city that tourists want to visit” .

▪ Wings for Life Project

—Support of helicopter services for emergency medical purposes

▪ Green Circle Project

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

▪ Community Revive Project

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

▪ Dream Support Project

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

Brief Report on Our NPO Partner Projects

We have been supporting the activities of NPOs, which are run by victims, in the reconstruction of the local areas. As of May 2013, we have supported four projects. For details, please visit our website:
<http://www.civic-force.org/emergency/higashinohon/npo/>

■ Iwate Society of Certified Clinical Psychologists × Civic Force

The association is an unusual specialist team, which is acting in an affected area. With their extensive knowledge and experience, they have provided a wide range of mental supports.

■ All Round Helicopter × Civic Force

Excessively declining population and a shortage of physicians are serious issues in disaster-hit areas. This group aims to alleviate regional disparity of health-care services, along with local governments and medical institutions.

■ Shinrin × Civic Force

The group promotes a sustainable local community with using forest resources, such as wood pellet, domestic ltimbers, and wood chips.

■ Seikatsu Club Yamagata × Civic Force

The cooperative association has been supporting evacuees who fled from Fukushima in fear of radiation. They provide material and psychological support to evacuees.

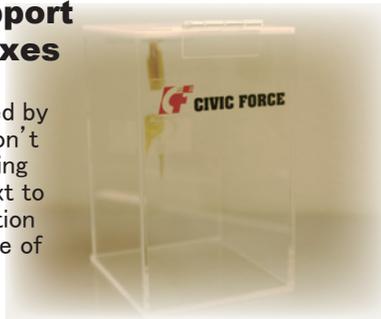
What we are doing
in Tohoku

NOW

Expanding our circle of support through placing charity boxes

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



Information 

Support us with single-click on the site

When you click the "Single-click donations" on the website, our sponsors will donate 1 yen. We would like to ask for your cooperation.

<http://www.clickbokin.ekokoro.jp/139.html>

<http://www.psc-inc.co.jp/clickdonation/index.html>

Civic Force Selected as a Finalist for the Nikkei Social Initiative Awards

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<http://www.clickbokin.ekokoro.jp/139.html>

<http://www.psc-inc.co.jp/clickdonation/index.html>

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 1,000 yen to be a monthly supporter and you can participate in activities to prepare for a large scale disaster.

Payment can be made through a bank transfer to Civic Force. Our account numbers are as follows:

•Bank: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Aoyama Branch, savings account No. 6953964

•JP Bank : 00140-6-361805

•Credit card: Please check 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 have passed since the earthquake disaster. This column features the voices of the people living in disaster areas in the Tohoku region (Northeastern Japan). Mr. Takehiko Inoue, who runs an electric appliance shop, "Inoue Denki Shokai," in Kesennuma city, Miyagi prefecture.



Mr. Takehiko Inoue

—— I was working on the other side of Kesennuma station when the earthquake occurred. Unstable things like the TV set fell down in the shop, cupboards on the second floor tipped over, and shards of glass were scattered all over the kitchen. We couldn't get into the house for about a week.

Today, when I see the roads paved and rubbles cleared, I feel that reconstruction is making progress in the town. But when I focus on the educational environment for children, restoration still has a long way to go. Some schools still have temporary houses in the school yard. Some students complain that they have no space for "bukatsu" activities, while others feel sad that there is no lunch break during the

school sports festival because of lack of space. Being a father myself, I want children to live without inconveniences as much as possible.

I sincerely thank all the people in Japan for their great support after the disaster. As a Kesennuma citizen, I would like to return the favor to you in some way. As long as we remember the sense of thankfulness, we should be able to remain connected with you for years to come.