

CELEBRATING FIFTY FANTASTIC YEARS OF IWAKI

On 1 October 2016, Iwaki celebrated its 50th anniversary since it became a city back in 1966. The city held numerous commemorative projects throughout the year in the lead up to and after the anniversary, and the anniversary weekend was full of ceremonies, festivals and other large-scale events.

This year, Iwaki has also celebrated special anniversaries with its sister cities: 5 years of relations with Kaaui, Hawaii; 25 years of relations with Townsville, Australia and 30 years of relations with Yurihonjo City (formerly Iwaki Town), Akita Prefecture.

To commemorate this milestone, Iwaki Vision takes a look back on "Fifty Fantastic Years of Iwaki".

1966: Iwaki City formed through merger of 14 municipalities

First session of new city assembly (333 members)

1967: City emblem and anthem formalised

1968: "Dinosaur" fossil discovered in Ohisa (Futabasaurus plesiosaur)

1969: Nakata Caves discovered (later becomes national historical site)

Joban Line's Hitachi special express train begins regular service between Taira and Ueno stations

1971: Iwaki Athletics Stadium opens

Iwaki High School finishes as runners up in the 53rd Japan High School Baseball Championship

1972: Fukushima Rinkai Railway ceases passenger operations

1973: New city hall building opens

Completion of the Taira Station "Yan-Yan" Building

1975: Flower Centre, Iwaki City Cultural Centre open

1976: Joban Coalmine shuts down all operations

1978: Shiramizu Amida Temple's bridge restored

Misaki Park's sea-viewing deck opens

1979: Iwaki starts issuing their own car numberplates

Construction of Iwaki New Town begins

1980: Giant ammonite fossil discovered in Ohisa

1981: 1st Iwaki Odori

1982: Iwaki and Fushun (China) become friendship cities

Lots of residential land begin selling for Iwaki New Town

1983: 1st Miss Iwaki Contest (present-day Sunshine Guide Iwaki)

Iwaki's 12 Tourism Associations merge into one organisation

All Municipal Primary and Junior High Schools now possess a swimming pool

1984: Iwaki City Art Museum, Coal and Fossil Museum open

Poet Shimpai Kusano becomes an Honorary Citizen of Iwaki

1985: Kawamae Onigajo Recreational Village (present-day Iwaki Onigajo Village), Iwaki Marina Tower open

1986: Iwaki City and Iwaki Town (Akita Prefecture; present-day Yurihonjo City) become parent-child cities

Severe storms cause 4.9 billion yen worth of damage to the city

1987: Iwaki Meisei University opens

1988: Joban Expressway Iwaki-choo - Hitachi-kita section opens

Nakoso Barrier Literature and History Museum opens

1991: Iwaki City Sea Dinosaur Centre opens

Iwaki and Townsville (Australia) become sister cities

1992: Ammonite Centre opens

1994: Iwaki chosen as one of the 100 Views of Japan

Taira Station renamed "Iwaki Station"

1995: 21st Century Forest Park opens

Higashi Nippon International University opens

Ban'etsu Expressway Iwaki - Koriyama section opens

National Route 49 Taira Bypass opens

Fukushima Prefecture holds the "Fukushima Kokutai" National Sports Festival of Japan

1996: FM-Iwaki, Iwaki's community radio station begins airing

1997: Iwaki and Nobeoka (Miyazaki Prefecture) become brother cities

Iwaki City's official website launched

Iwaki City Tourism and Local Products Centre "La La Maw", Archaeological Centre open

1998: Tono Auto Camping Grounds, Kusano Shimpai Memorial Literature Centre opens

1999: Joban Expressway Iwaki-choo - Iwaki-Yatsukura section opens

Iwaki is designated as a Core City of Japan

Museum of Folklore and Traditional Housing opens



Left: While the new city hall building was being built, the former Taira Commercial High School site was used as a temporary Iwaki City Government building. (Photo by Iwaki City 1969)



Right: The completed Iwaki City Hall (large white building near top right corner) which was originally the site of Taira Technical High School. (Photo by Iwaki City 1973)



Taira Tanabata Festival along the street between 1-Chome and 5-Chome, Taira from 1951 (left) and 2008 (right). (Photos by Masahiro Matsumoto (left) and Iwaki City (right))



Taira Civic Centre (left) and construction of the Iwaki Performing Arts Centre Alias that replaced the Taira Civic Centre. (Photos by Tatsuo Hasegawa around 1975 and Iwaki City 2006)



The expansion of Onahama Port, which is now a port for global trade, from around 1975 (left) to 2014 (right). (Photos by Iwaki City)

