

Exchanges with Kauai: Iwaki's Newest Sister City

Iwaki has had a lot to celebrate this year. To commemorate five years since a sister city agreement was signed with the Hawaiian county of Kauai, Mayor Bernard P. Carvalho Jr. and a dozen guests from Kauai were invited to Iwaki from 29 September to 2 October to coincide with the city's 50th anniversary festivities. The mayor's visit had another important purpose: the signing of the Iwaki-Kauai International Sister Cities Declaration – in other words, the signing of a document that would officially make Iwaki City and Kauai County sister cities.

Kauai info

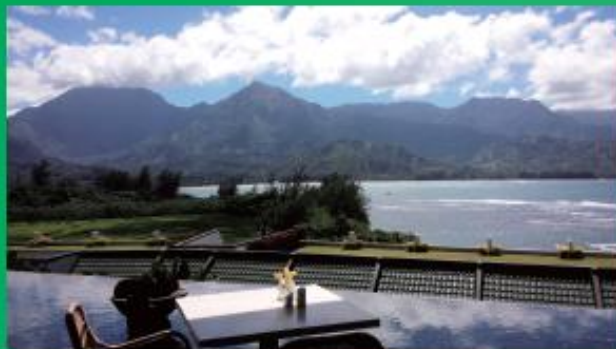
Population: 71,735 (2015)

Area: 3280km²

Climate: Subtropical with local variations.

Average temperatures of 22°C in winter and 27°C in summer.

Main Industries: Tourism, Agriculture



The island of Kauai is the northernmost and fourth largest island in the Hawaiian archipelago. It is no surprise that it is also known as the "Garden Isle"; with beautiful mountains, gorges, waterfalls and tropical rainforests, the island is truly blessed with nature.

Kauai was the first island formed and inhabited of the Hawaiian island chain. It was also the last to be unified under the Kingdom of Hawaii, peacefully joining in 1810. The 19th century also saw the arrival of Christian missionaries from Europe and immigrants from China, the Phillipines, Portugal and Japan to work on the island's sugar plantations. This led to Kauai having a diverse population of people with European, Asian, Pacific Island, native Hawaiian and mixed-race heritage.

Kauai mayor's visit to Iwaki and official signing of the International Sister Cities Declaration



The mayor of Kauai's recent visit to Iwaki was his third visit. On this occasion, he had the chance to visit a local primary school and interact with the children whilst sharing with them Hawaiian language and culture. He then visited the Iwaki General Library to celebrate the opening of a new section dedicated to Kauai that features books donated by the mayor and other members of the delegation. Members of the delegation also had a tour of Iwaki Green Stadium and other sports facilities as the two cities strive to build on their sport exchanges in the future.

The signing of the Iwaki-Kauai International Sister Cities Declaration was made on 30 September, fittingly, at Spa Resort Hawaiians with both mayors wearing traditional clothes of their respective countries. The ceremony also featured an exchange of gifts, hula dancing and a performance of Iwaki's traditional Jangara Nenbutsu.

Iwaki delegation's visit to Kauai for the Matsuri Kauai



Representatives from Iwaki visited Kauai from 13 to 17 October for their annual "Matsuri Kauai" Japanese cultural festival. The festival, which was held on 15 October, was an ideal venue to exchange with members of the Hawaiian community and promote Iwaki. The visitors from Iwaki set up a booth offering English pamphlets on the city and a soba-making booth was also set up by Iwaki Soba Juku.

During their visit, the delegation also visited Mayor Carvalho's office where they handed him a letter on behalf of Iwaki Mayor Toshio Shimizu thanking him for his earlier visit to Iwaki. In response, Mayor Carvalho expressed his gratitude for being invited to Iwaki and for the hospitality he received during his stay and expressed his desire to further strengthen ties among a range of fields including agriculture, tourism and culture.

Kauai Marathon

As part of another annual exchange with Kauai, Iwaki sent two runners to Kauai for this year's Kauai Marathon, which was held on 4 September. The two runners who took part were Sho Sakuma (Ibaraki resident, winner of the 7th Iwaki Sunshine Marathon) and Noriko Ishikawa (Tokyo resident, 3rd in the women's category of the 7th Iwaki Sunshine Marathon).

Unlike the Townsville Marathon (mentioned in the last edition of Iwaki Vision) which is known for being a very flat course, the Kauai Marathon course is full of undulations and must be a nightmarish course for those attempting the full marathon. Despite the challenging terrain, Sho Sakuma blitzed the competition and won the marathon with a time of 2:30:51 – a record time for the county's marathon. Meanwhile, Noriko Ishikawa finished 4th in the women's category and 14th overall. Honolulu resident Yuko Nakai won the women's category of the full marathon and has been awarded an invitation to participate in next year's Iwaki Sunshine Marathon.



Iwaki and Kauai have developed strong bonds through hula culture, tourism and sports over many years. Now that the two cities are officially sister cities, these bonds should only strengthen and expand for years to come.