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[Front Feature] A New Proposal! Fuji Tram

Saving Mt. Fuji from the Brink and Designing the Future of Yamanashi

Governor Nagasaki Kotaro has proposed a new "Fuji Tram" (tentative name) for the Mt. Fuji mountain railway concept that connects the base of Mt. Fuji with the Subaru Line's fifth station.

This concept aims to control visitors to Mt. Fuji and pass on the Mt. Fuji's ideal appearance to future generations.

The Fuji Tram is an idea to design the "Yamanashi of the Future".

What kind of transportation is the Fuji Tram?

Why did it change from the conventional iron rail concept?

I will explain it to the citizens of the prefecture.

Mt. Fuji and the Linear are directly connected!

A daily life scene in Yamanashi of the future

I leave my home in Kofu City and walk to a nearby tram station. I get on the tram that is coming and head to the Linear Station. It takes only 25 minutes to get to Tokyo, so I commute to university from my home.

As I was about to board the Linear, a group of tourists got off.

"To climb Mt. Fuji, we took a long detour from Tokyo via Shinjuku, but we got there in no time." They seemed to be tourists from the Kansai or Nagoya areas. With the improved accessibility of 45 minutes from Nagoya, more people are coming from the west than before.

A mother who sent her daughter off to college muttered, "It's so convenient. Our generation had to pay high rent to live in boarding houses in Tokyo..."

The other day, a young family moved into the old vacant house next door. It is said to be "retro architecture," and the interior has been renovated, and they seem to be living comfortably. The young child is happy with the larger house than before, and you can often hear their lively voices. The father seems to work for a company that has relocated its headquarters from Tokyo.

"Come to think of it, I wonder if this is the kind of lifestyle that the prefectural government officials have been talking about recently when they talk about the "sub-

center concept."

The Fuji Tram is what will make this vision of the future a reality.

The "Mt. Fuji Mountain Railway Concept" aims to control visitors to Mt. Fuji, but if the Fuji Tram is realized, it has the potential to greatly improve the quality of life for everyone.

The key to the proposed "Fuji Tram" is the idea of linking the tram that connects the Fuji Subaru Line 5th Station with the foot of Mt. Fuji to the Linear Chuo Shinkansen Yamanashi Prefecture Station (tentative name: Otsu Town, Kofu City, hereafter "Linear Station"), which is scheduled to open in the near future.

If realized, the Linear Station will become the "gateway to Mt. Fuji" for people coming from Tokyo and Nagoya, and the "entrance to the metropolitan area" for the prefecture's residents.

What is the Fuji Tram (tentative name)?

It has two major features that address the concerns of residents.

● Uses rubber tires instead of steel wheels

It can be extended using existing roads and runs quietly.

● Uses a guidance system that does not use rails

Construction costs are significantly reduced because no steel rails are laid.

Visitors can be controlled by applying the Track Act.

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Grand Vision

Fuji Tram Network to be Deployed throughout the Prefecture

Magazine Station and Subaru Line 5th Station. Why can these two locations be directly connected? This is because the vehicles used for the Fuji Tram run on rubber tires. There is no need to lay new steel rails, and it can run on existing public roads, making it easy to extend.

The prefecture is also considering extending the Fuji Tram to various parts of the prefecture in the future. It has also drawn up a "grand vision" for when this is realized. In addition to railways such as the Maglev, Chuo Main Line, and Minobu Line, the plan is to deploy the "Fuji Tram Network" between major roads such as the ChuoExpressway, Chubu Transverse Expressway, and New Yamanashi Ring Road.

The opportunity of the Maglev opening will be directly linked to improving the lives of the prefecture's residents and revitalizing the local economy. This is the most important point of the grand vision centered on the "Fuji Tram."

As access to Mt. Fuji and the prefecture will improve from the Nagoya and Kansai areas, the number of users of the Maglev Station should increase dramatically. This is

expected to have the effect of increasing the number of trains that stop at linear stations.

In the past, there have been cases where Shinkansen stations were established, but few trains stopped at the stations, and they became mere "passing stations," and were not used to revitalize the region.

We must not let that happen in Yamanashi Prefecture.

Connecting the Linear to Mt. Fuji will improve convenience, and if the number of passengers boarding and disembarking at the Linear station increases, it will no longer be a mere "passing station," and we can expect an increase in the number of trains that stop there.

And by connecting various parts of the prefecture to the Linear station, the tram will encourage development around the Linear station, and it is expected that tourism, exchange, and industrial promotion will further advance in the area around JR Kofu Station and other areas. The blessings of Mt. Fuji will be able to spread throughout the prefecture. As shown in the "Yamanashi Future Vision" drawn at the beginning of this article, prefecture residents can get to the Linear station by boarding a tram station near their home. Then, it will take 25 minutes by riding the Linear to Tokyo, and 45 minutes to Nagoya. For the people of Yamanashi, the Linear will be a convenient means of

transportation that can be used on a daily basis.

The establishment of a route to Tokyo by the Linear will also affect the daily lives and businesses of the people of Yamanashi. This is because Tokyo will be within commuting distance. People will not have to move if they are transferred to Tokyo. There will likely be cases of companies with their head offices in Tokyo relocating to Yamanashi, and it is expected that people working in large metropolitan areas will accelerate their move to Yamanashi, where the living and child-rearing environment is good.

These changes should have a positive impact on measures to combat population decline.

Until now, tourists visiting the prefecture may have mainly visited Mount Fuji. However, there are many other tourist attractions in the prefecture. By realizing a tram tour of Yamanashi Prefecture via the Linear, tourists will be able to easily stop by Isawa Onsen on their way to or from Mount Fuji, or enjoy seasonal fruits at Fuefukigawa Fruit Park.

We believe that the revitalization of tourist destinations in the prefecture in this way will also have a positive impact on the local economy.

The prefecture is promoting the "Fuji Five Lakes Natural Capital Region Initiative" in the northern foothills of Mount Fuji area. The idea is to create a "world-first, advanced region" by utilizing cutting-edge art and advanced technologies such as hydrogen. The northern foothills of Mount Fuji, connected by trams, will become a hub where people from all over the world can gather and deepen their exchanges via the Linear Station.

The Fuji Tram, which connects various parts of the prefecture with the Linear Station as its starting point, will help create a "new shape for Yamanashi Prefecture."

Here are the features of the Fuji Tram!

Why does it lead to visitor control?

The Fuji Tram can be described in one word as "new mobility in the shape of a train." Because it uses rubber tires, it makes less noise than rail-running trains, allowing you to enjoy a comfortable and high-quality journey. It truly has the best of both trains and

buses.

The tram, which connects the foothills of Mount Fuji and the Subaru Line Fifth Station, runs by reading the white lines on the road and magnetic markers embedded in the road with sensors installed on the vehicle. The white lines are simply drawn on the Subaru Line, and in the case of magnetic markers, the only work required is to bury the markers at intervals, so the impact on the environment is minimal.

The tram is expected to be powered by green hydrogen produced in Yamanashi Prefecture.

Green hydrogen is hydrogen made from renewable energy sources, and as it does not emit carbon dioxide during the manufacturing process, it will contribute to the realization of a carbon-free society.

The facility operated by the Prefectural Enterprise Bureau at Komekurayama (Kofu City) near the Linear Station is a world-class research and development center for hydrogen and fuel cells, bringing together companies and research institutes.

Using green hydrogen produced in the prefecture to power the Fuji Tram will spread Yamanashi's track record and reputation as a "hydrogen pioneer" around the world, and will also contribute to improving the Yamanashi brand.

We will also explain how the introduction of the Fuji Tram will contribute to the original goal of the Mount Fuji Mountain Railway Concept, which was to "hand over Mount Fuji to future generations in its original form."

Since it will become a 'track,' buses can also be regulated

The current Fuji Subaru Line is unable to control the entry of vehicles beyond the restrictions on private cars.

When the Fuji Tram is introduced, white lines and magnetic markers necessary for operation will be laid on the Subaru Line. These white lines and magnetic markers will act as the "track."

Vehicles that run on tracks, such as trams and new transportation systems being introduced in various regions, are subject to a law called the "Train Act." The prefecture believes that if the Railway Act is applied to the Fuji Tram, it will be possible to restrict general vehicles from entering the Subaru Line. If this is possible, it will be possible to control the number of visitors to Mt. Fuji. The realization of the Fuji Tram will save Mt. Fuji, which is on the brink of collapse due to environmental impact.

Significant cost reduction

There are two major differences from the conventional mountain railway proposal.

The first difference is cost.It is expected that the construction cost of the Fuji Tram will be significantly less than the mountain railway proposal (approximately 140 billion yen). The fact that there is no need to lay steel rails is a major factor in cost reduction. We believe that maintenance costs after the start of operations will also be significantly lower than the mountain railway proposal.

The mountain railway proposal, which involves laying rails on the Subaru Line, would take a long time to build, and tourism to Mt. Fuji would have to be halted for several years.

In the case of the Fuji Tram, the simple construction of laying white lines and magnetic markers would have little impact on the environment, and the construction period would be short, so there would be no need to halt tourism to Mt. Fuji. This is the second difference.

A shift from the original plan, born from the collective wisdom of the prefecture's residents

The new proposal for the Fuji Tram was born as a result of intensive discussions with the people of the prefecture.

In 2021, the prefecture presented the mountain railway proposal, which was deemed the best at the prefecture's expert meeting. From the beginning of the proposal, we explained the idea that "the railway is not a given," and called for "starting a discussion to save Mt. Fuji."

At the same time as the call, the prefecture held public information sessions in six cities and towns in the northern foothills of Mount Fuji from November 2011, with the governor in attendance. Residents raised many questions and provided valuable ideas. Following these sessions, the prefecture has considered not only the mountain railway proposal, but also other transportation systems.

In parallel with the consideration of new transportation systems, prefectural officials held a total of 14 meetings with people in the northern foothills region from June to July 2012 to exchange opinions.

On November 13th, Governor Nagasaki listened to detailed explanations from the representatives of three groups opposed to the Mount Fuji Mountain Railway Plan for about two hours. The representatives of the groups agreed that "it is necessary to

control visitors to Mount Fuji," but shared the view that "transportation using steel rails is a cause for concern as construction will destroy the environment."

After these discussions with the prefecture's residents, Governor Nagasaki decided to change the plan to the "Fuji Tram," which does not use steel rails, and stated the following at a press conference.

"Since the new transportation system on Mount Fuji is a fundamental system for Yamanashi Prefecture, I thought it would be desirable to gain the support and understanding of as many people as possible, even if I cannot say that I would congratulate them, so I made a political decision."

I believe that the Fuji Tram Plan is the optimal solution at this time, arrived at by the people of Yamanashi Prefecture pooling their wisdom and clashing their opinions.

The Fuji Tram proposal is merely one proposal. We need to exchange opinions with people with various ideas and create a transportation system that many people can accept. We are currently explaining the plan to residents in stages.

The opening of the Linear Shinkansen, scheduled for after 2034, will bring about a transformation in the structure of the nation's land area and will have a major impact on the location choices of industry and housing. In order to raise Yamanashi Prefecture's

profile within Japan, preparations for the opening of the Linear Shinkansen must be made quickly.

We must implement solutions to these issues as quickly as possible.

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Feature 2

P2G mass production factory coming to Tsuru City

As the movement towards decarbonization advances around the world, interest in hydrogen energy is growing.

This is because hydrogen does not emit carbon dioxide when used as fuel, and it leads to a move away from fossil fuels, which are said to be the root cause of global warming.

Yamanashi Prefecture has been leading Japan as a carbon neutral frontier.

And it has been announced that a new mass production factory for hydrogen production equipment will be built in the prefecture in 2024.

With the addition of the part of "mass production" to its rich research environment, Yamanashi Prefecture will move forward further as a hydrogen pioneer.

Kanadevia's new factory to start operation in 2028

Kanadevia (formerly Hitachi Zosen, headquartered in Osaka City), which handles hydrogen production equipment in Japan, has announced that it will build a new factory

in Tsuru City. Kanadevia is a manufacturer of machinery and factory equipment, and will invest approximately 8 billion yen to build the new factory, aiming to start operation in 2028.

The new factory will produce a core component of the electrolysis equipment, called a "water electrolysis stack," which produces hydrogen by electrolyzing water. Kanadevia has positioned its new factory in Tsuru as its "domestic mother factory," mass-producing electrolysis stacks and planning to gradually develop hydrogen production bases both in Japan and overseas.

Supporting the spread of the P2G system

Yamanashi Prefecture has been leading the nation in research and development to produce hydrogen and make it usable in factories and other places. Preparations have begun for the introduction of the "P2G system," a hydrogen production device developed by the prefecture, at the Suntory Hakushu Factory (Hokuto City) and other locations (see page 11 for details).

The industry is also very interested in the system, and the facility in Komekurayama (Kofu City), which is also a hydrogen production and research and development base, is

home to many companies, including NTT Docomo and Toray, and is constantly visited by domestic and foreign companies.

However, hydrogen energy has not yet been widely adopted. The main reason for this is that it is more expensive than conventional fuels. If the price of hydrogen production equipment falls through mass production, it will lead to a reduction in hydrogen production costs. Kanadevia's new factory will be a symbol of driving the realization of a hydrogen society in Japan.

The company's equipment (stacks) are also used in the "P2G system," a hydrogen production device developed by the prefecture. If stacks can be made cheaply, the cost of the P2G system itself will also decrease, and there is a high possibility that Yamanashi's technology will spread throughout the country.

The more the P2G system spreads, the lower the cost of hydrogen energy will be, creating a virtuous cycle. As a result, a society in which "hydrogen is used in daily life" will become a reality.

As the Yamanashi P2G system spreads around the world, Yamanashi will become synonymous with green hydrogen.

The "hydrogen effect" has a positive impact on the prefecture's economy

Being a hydrogen pioneer is expected to have a positive impact on the prefecture's economy.

Hydrogen-related companies are now starting to gather in Yamanashi. If companies base themselves in the prefecture, new "places to work" will be created. More people will return to Yamanashi to work. It will be an attractive job opportunity for university students in the prefecture.

New transactions with companies in the prefecture will also begin. There is a growing momentum for companies that are not currently involved with hydrogen to enter the hydrogen-related field, which may result in stable profit growth.

In order to attract Kanadevia to build a factory, Governor Nagasaki Kotaro visited Kanadevia's Tokyo headquarters in October 2011 and promoted the company's favorable location. In February 2012, he and Tsuru Mayor Tomihisa Horiuchi toured the candidate sites together, and as a result of top sales efforts, Tsuru City was selected as the location.

Governor Nagasaki stated his full support for the new Kanadevia factory, saying, "A new piece of the puzzle, mass production, will be added to our prefecture, which already

has a well-established research environment. This will accelerate the speed at which we move from demonstration to implementation."

Hydrogen will change your life

Hydrogen produced in Yamanashi Prefecture has attracted attention from the industrial sector, and many companies are planning to actually start using it.

"Yamanashi's hydrogen" is also attracting attention from overseas. As demand rises and hydrogen use increases, the production costs of hydrogen energy will fall.

The era in which "life using hydrogen is the norm" is about to begin in Yamanashi Prefecture.

Is a life using hydrogen just a distant dream?!

Examples of companies using hydrogen in factories and other places are steadily

increasing.

So how will our lives change?

From fiscal 2025, the prefecture plans to begin demonstration experiments to develop a "hydrogen heater" to be used in agricultural greenhouses. JA and farmers will use solar power to produce "green hydrogen"* at the Komekurayama Power Storage Technology Research Site. The challenge is to use this hydrogen as fuel to heat agricultural greenhouses.

Although heavy oil is generally used as fuel for heaters for agricultural greenhouses, we will proceed with creating a system to reduce costs by replacing the fuel with green hydrogen.

The prefecture is also testing the electrification of light trucks used for collection and other purposes, and agricultural machinery used in farm work.

As "ethical consumption," which actively chooses products that are good for the global environment, spreads, carbon-free is a strong condition for a "product of choice." For farmers, adding value to crops such as grapes and peaches as "carbon-free fruits" and selling them will lead to increased profits.

In the near future, hydrogen buses and hydrogen trucks will be a common sight on the streets.

In the 2030s, hydrogen may be used at home as well.

Currently being considered is a method of mixing hydrogen into the city gas pipes connected to each home. The idea is to gradually increase the proportion of hydrogen and eventually hydrogen will become one of the energy sources for homes. This way, there is no need for infrastructure construction such as burying new hydrogen pipes underground.

A life using hydrogen may not be a distant dream.

In the prefecture and overseas

P2G system from Yamanashi

Construction of a hydrogen production plant began in February 2024 at the Suntory

Natural Water Minami Alps Hakushu Plant and Suntory Hakushu Distillery (Hokuto City). The plant uses a "P2G system" developed by the prefecture.

The plant is scheduled to be operational in fiscal 2025 and produce 2,200 tons of hydrogen per year, the largest in Japan. It is expected to reduce CO2 emissions by 16,000 tons per year.

The plant is equipped with a hydrogen pipeline with a total length of about 2 kilometers, which will be used for sterilizing natural water.

The P2G system can also be made small-scale.

By making it small-scale, it can be installed in existing plants and equipment that previously used fossil fuels can be switched to hydrogen. So far, it has been decided that the Kawagoe plant of Taisei-Eurec (a group company of Taisei Corporation) will introduce a small-scale "P2G system" for the concrete curing process, and the Shirakawa plant of Sumitomo Rubber Industries will introduce a small-scale "P2G system" for the tire manufacturing process.

In addition, cosmetics manufacturer Kose has decided to build a new plant in Minami-Alps City. In this new plant, "green hydrogen" produced at Komekurayama will be used as fuel for the boilers used to manufacture skin care products. Construction has

already begun and is scheduled to begin operation in the first half of 2026.

We have also begun expanding overseas.

In India, a subsidiary of the automobile manufacturer Suzuki is considering introducing a P2G system. They plan to use surplus electricity from renewable energy sources used in factories to produce hydrogen using a P2G system.

In Indonesia, efforts have begun to use surplus electricity from geothermal power generation to produce hydrogen using a P2G system.

By expanding the P2G system overseas, we hope to be able to import hydrogen energy in the future. It may be possible to import large amounts of hydrogen produced by the hydrogen production equipment developed by Yamanashi Prefecture and support the decarbonization of Japan as a whole.

California, USA, is also paying attention!

Governor receives invitation to international conference

Governor Nagasaki visited California, USA, in November 2024. He visited the state with a group from the "Fuji Five Lakes Natural Capital Region Forum" that the

prefecture is promoting in the northern foothills of Mount Fuji.

The forum places the use of hydrogen as one of its important pillars. The aim is for people who want to take on new technologies and businesses that utilize hydrogen to come together and interact with each other, creating new business models.

During his visit to California, Governor Nagasaki met with representatives of "Renewables 100," a group working on the production and utilization of clean hydrogen, and "SGH2," a company that owns the world's largest green hydrogen production facility, to explain Yamanashi Prefecture's hydrogen initiatives.

As a result, a basic agreement was signed between these two organizations and companies and the Fuji Five Lakes Natural Capital Region Forum Initiative for mutual cooperation.

After returning to Japan, Governor Nagasaki received a letter inviting him to be the keynote speaker at the international conference on climate change measures to be held in California in February 2025.

California alone has a gross state product that rivals that of the G8 countries. Even from such an economically advanced region, Yamanashi Prefecture's efforts to realize a hydrogen society are attracting attention.

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Feature 3

TRY! YAMANASHI! moves to the next stage

New business challenge taking root

When the Linear opens, it will be about 25 minutes from Shinagawa, Tokyo!

This is an opportunity for Yamanashi to become a new business hub.

With an eye on the post-opening period, the prefecture is gathering startups (emerging companies) from within Tokyo and aiming to become a "holy land of testbeds" for conducting demonstration experiments on new technologies.

The "TRY! YAMANASHI! Demonstration Experiment Support Project", which began in 2021, has supported 43 projects across Yamanashi by fiscal year 2024.

Drones in action in Kosuge Village!

In October 2021, Aeronext Co., Ltd. (Shibuya-ku, Tokyo), one of the companies selected for the first phase of the "TRY! YAMANASHI! Demonstration Experiment Support Project", began a demonstration experiment of drone delivery in Kosuge

Village. At the time, the villagers looked up at the flying objects with curiosity, but in a village where 95% of the total area is covered by forests, drones have now become established as a means of delivery and are an indispensable part of life.

"It's hard to imagine what a drone is when you suddenly hear it," says Kento Kondo, deputy general manager of the planning department at NEXT DELIVERY Co., Ltd. (Kosuge Village), a subsidiary of Aeronext that operates a drone delivery business. "We held information sessions on weekends, offered free delivery, and had residents try it out first to deepen their understanding." During the six-month trial period, 300 drone deliveries were made. Because it was easy to order via smartphone app or phone, delivery reservations would sometimes fill up in an instant, mainly for food items like beer and ice cream. Once the service was established, it moved into a paid phase. Currently, the cost of one delivery, including land transport, is 300 to 500 yen, and the service is used continuously by people of all ages, from children to the elderly.

Delivering supplies to disaster-stricken areas as quickly as possible

On August 28, 2024, the prefecture signed a partnership agreement with three companies: NEXT DELIVERY, Seino Last One Mile Co., Ltd. (Chuo-ku, Tokyo), and

Fugaku Transporting Co., Ltd. (Kofu City), and is working to spread drone delivery, which was established in Kosuge Village, to depopulated areas and isolated villages in the prefecture. The plan is to replace the cargo currently transported by truck with drone delivery. If a "drone delivery network" is established in peacetime, it will open up the possibility of using it for transportation in emergencies.

During the Noto Peninsula earthquake in January 2024, Aeronext was the first in Japan to transport supplies such as medicines to isolated villages and evacuation centers by drone. Drones can fly to places that trucks and helicopters cannot reach. We will build a regional logistics infrastructure in which services that are normally used as a means of shopping can be used as an emergency means of transportation in the event of a disaster.

Achieving a new lifestyle with self-sufficiency in electricity and water

"Is it possible to live a self-sufficient life without electricity or water?"

The company that conducted this demonstration experiment was U3 Innovations LLC (Minato-ku, Tokyo), one of the companies selected for the "TRY!YAMANASHI! Demonstration Experiment Support Project." On March 1, 2022, they opened the "Off-Grid Living Lab Yatsugatake," a "completely off-grid" residence that does not rely on public infrastructure for water or electricity, in Hokuto City. The facility is currently operated by INNFRA Co., Ltd. (Kofu City), which has become independent from U3 Innovations.

The living space, which is made up of a total of five white dome-shaped instant houses, can accommodate two to three people at any one time. By generating electricity with a solar system and purifying domestic wastewater to recycle it for showers, kitchens, etc., it is possible to live comfortably even in depopulated areas where it is difficult to maintain the existing infrastructure.

The results of the demonstration experiment led to the development of a unique water circulation system, which was adopted for the "MUJI House." By making it a mobile container type, they are considering whether it can be used as a tourist attraction

while being installed at disaster prevention centers such as roadside stations.

Supporting all kinds of challenges

We have launched the "TRY!YAMANASHI!" New Business Co-Creation Platform to support people who are working hard to solve social issues, regardless of the framework of startups or advanced technology.

Increasing the number of challengers and supporters

We will support people who want to tackle social issues and create innovation from Yamanashi by thinking together and running alongside them.

Connecting challengers and supporters

People who want to create innovation will connect with each other in a network and expand the circle of business. In addition, by collaborating with various support organizations and financial institutions, we will provide support that goes beyond the boundaries of organizations.

Establishing innovation and ecosystems

Many challengers will gather in the prefecture, and some of them will grow and become companies that take root in Yamanashi. These companies will support the next generation of challengers and create an environment where value is created one after another.

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Yamanashi Design Center Launched

In November 2024, Yamanashi Prefecture opened the Yamanashi Design Center, attached to the Prefectural Art Museum, on the second floor of the new disaster prevention building as a new base for solving social issues and revitalizing the region.

The Design Center has invited Professor Kazufumi Nagai of the Department of Integrated Design, Faculty of Fine Arts, Tama Art University, to serve as Chief Design Officer (CDO), and together with three design directors, will connect all of Yamanashi's resources through design to create new value.

The purpose of establishing the center is to utilize the power of design to formulate policies for the prefecture and increase the value of local resources. "Design" here does not simply refer to creating beautiful shapes, but to thoroughly consider "for whom" and "for what purpose," make plans to achieve the goal, and put them into action, throughout the process.

By incorporating design thinking, Yamanashi Prefecture considers policies and services from the perspective of what the prefecture's residents really need and how to

make them easier to use.

In addition, we will effectively combine the resources, industrial technologies, and human resources of the region to increase value even more than before. Furthermore, while functioning as a base for building a network of designers and creators, we also aim to involve the citizens of the prefecture and create a place where new value is constantly being created. Please look forward to Yamanashi's "design" that will make your life better.

Each citizen plays a leading role.

Everyone's design that creates everyday life

We asked Kazufumi Nagai, who was appointed CDO and Director of the Design Center of Yamanashi Prefecture, about the goals of the center.

When you hear the word "design," many people may think of the work of artists and creators. However, our goal is not to create design only for people with special talents. Rather, our mission is to bring out the creativity of each and every citizen of the

prefecture and spread "design thinking" that can be used in daily life and work.

Rich nature, historic culture, and the world-famous Mt. Fuji. Yamanashi has many "cultural terroirs" that have already earned high praise, such as wine, fruit, and jewelry. An important part of the design job is to delve deeply into the value of the prefecture and convey the charm of Yamanashi to more people through the power of design.

To achieve this, we will begin by introducing design thinking to the prefectural office. Through employee training, we will work with prefectural employees to gain a deeper understanding of the true needs of the prefecture's residents and create policies that respond to those needs. This will lead to more effective and necessary administrative services.

At the same time, we would like to spread design thinking to businesspeople in the prefecture and to junior and senior high school students who will lead the future. In particular, in the field of education, we will not simply compete over who can draw the best, but will work to foster new ideas and problem-solving skills. In the future, we aim to work with the Board of Education and each school to realize classes that incorporate design thinking.

The role of the Design Center is to be a base for such activities, as well as a

community hub where designers and creators in the prefecture can gather. Through various events and workshops, we will create a place where not only creators but people from all fields can gather and learn from each other.

Through design thinking, each of us will play a key role in creating Yamanashi's future. We would like to create changes in our daily lives that will make people feel, "Oh, this is easier to use now," or "Yamanashi is attractive." We hope you will join us in the process. Let's design the future of Yamanashi together.

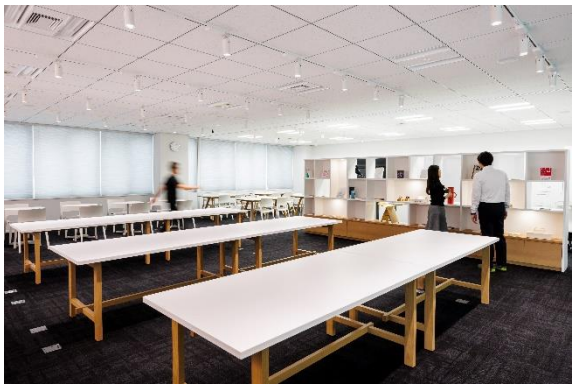
Nagai Kazufumi

Professor, Department of Integrated Design, Tama Art University

CEO, HAKUHODO DESIGN Inc.

Creative Director, "Tokyo Brand" Tokyo Metropolitan Government since 2015

Chairman of the Good Design Award Jury from 2015 to 2017



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〈Yamanashi Kenjin〉

Making the soccer stadium a place for everyone

Ventforet Yamanashi Sports Club Co., Ltd.

Ijiri Mariko

Maybe people are always looking for a trigger.

The third installment of Yamanashi Kenjin's series introducing prefecture residents who are working hard for the future takes place at a soccer stadium.

There is a woman who is trying to solve the problem of school absenteeism in Yamanashi Prefecture.

Why this place? Her efforts provide clues to solving social problems.

Meeting a woman

The story begins with a phone call.

"Please take care of her at your place, Ijiri-san."

It was from a teacher at Yamanashi Eiwa Junior and Senior High School, her alma mater. Mariko Ijiri (50), who is in charge of sales for the J-League team Ventforet Kofu (hereinafter Ventforet), looks back on that time.

"It was sudden. When I heard about it, I found a woman who had been bullied in the past and was shut up in her house. She loved soccer, so they asked if they could help her do activities at Ventforet to connect with society."

And then she introduced me to Shiratori Emi. Shiratori immediately helped out with stuffing flyers and preparing for matches.

And then, day by day, I could see that Shiratori was getting better. Shiratori talks about how she felt at that time.

"No one here asked me about my past. All we talked about was soccer, like 'Who's your favorite player?' Even while watching the match, they would high-five me when the team scored. I had been avoided in the past because people would say 'it's gross' and 'don't touch me,' so it felt good to have a place where I belong."

Soon, Shiratori overcame her reclusion.

"Until then, I had never had any contact with people who had been absent from school. Shiratori was the catalyst for me to learn about the feelings of the students and their families, the teachers who looked after them, and the environment around them." (Ijiri)

After that, one by one, people who visited Ventforet were able to return to society.

Ijiri began to feel a strong desire to "make Ventforet a place for everyone."

Because I want you to know the warmth of people

Ijiri was born in 1974, in the middle of the second baby boom. When she enrolled at Waseda University, she joined the sports newspaper club and worked hard to report on the news. She thought she would continue to work in the same field after graduation. However, she was swept up in the wave of the employment ice age.

"Among my friends, the men were steadily securing jobs at TV stations, publishing companies, and other companies that everyone aspires to, but women were having a hard time finding jobs."

She managed to get a job as a contract employee at a publishing company. After that, she moved to an editing production company and an advertising agency, but her

employment was limited.

It was Ventforet that accepted Ijiri as a full-time employee.

"I wanted to give back someday."

While building her career in PR and sales, she supported people looking for a place to find peace, including Shiratori.

Then Ijiri encountered a new opportunity. It was the "Yamanashi Women's Mirai Quest." It was also attractive because it taught her how to proceed with a project and, if she passed her presentation, she would receive financial backing. As soon as he saw the call for proposals, he decided to participate, thinking, "I want to make a proposal that will help solve the problem of school absenteeism."

"I want to get this project through, not only to solve the problem of school absenteeism, but also to help them gain self-confidence! That's what I thought when I took on the challenge."

The business plan included distributing tickets to watch Ventforet games to children who are not attending school, with the hope that it would "provide an opportunity for them to get outside." Shiratori also agreed to cooperate with the project.

Even after work and on his days off, his mind was always full of thoughts about the presentation. When he received the "pass" notice later, his heart was filled with emotion.

On October 16, 2022, in the 102nd Emperor's Cup, J2 Ventforet defeated J1 Sanfrecce Hiroshima to win their first championship. At that moment, many supporters took each other's hands and embraced each other. "It's heartwarming to be able to interact with people. Even if you don't know each other, it's wonderful to see the same thing, enjoy it, and share your feelings. I hope that the tickets we distribute will become a 'ticket to the future' that will allow people to experience this joy." (Ijiri)

Yamanashi Prefecture will start the "Yamanashi Women's Mirai Quest" project in 2024, which aims to create female managers. 18 female managerial candidates are participating in the project. In conjunction with learning about the role of managers and the know-how of project promotion over several months of training, they will launch and put into practice in-house projects. Participants are stimulating each other and working hard to become the female managers they aspire to be.


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EMPEROR'S CUP 2022
WINNERS
VENTFORET KOFU
WINNERS
OFFICIAL SPONSOR

Fureai Square

Would you like to post a photo you took in "Fureai"?

We look forward to your favorite photo!

View Spot

Amazing view! A triple collaboration of Mt. Fuji, Linear, and Expressway, overlooked from the beautiful Kukiyama mountain in Tsuru City!

Dinosaur Race

The Koshu Fujikawa Festival is held in November. There are many Tyrannosaurus Rex,

from young to adult. It was a fierce race worth watching!

Illuminations in the hot spring town

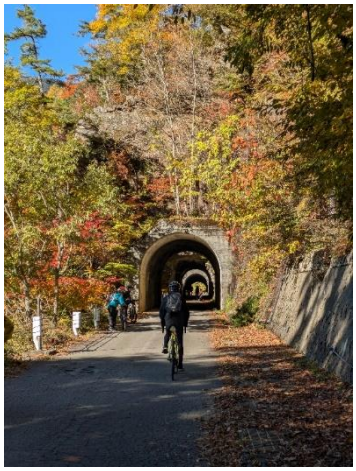
Isawa Onsen's "Sakura Onsen Street" is decorated with fantastic illuminations in winter.

Take a leisurely stroll along the wooden deck promenade.

Super Forest Road Cycling

Cycle Adventure Tour in the Southern Alps. Ride your bike through the Southern Alps

Super Forest Road, which is open for one day only for this event!



Addictive

"Teuchi Udon Toda" in Zenkoji, Kofu City. The hard noodles unique to Yoshida Udon.

And the addictive soup. Thank you for the meal.

Peaches, grapes, and strawberries too!

Pick your favorite berries at a strawberry farm in Yamanashi City and eat them on the

spot. Sweet!

Q&A SPACE

This corner answers questions and inquiries about prefectural government sent to us by everyone.

Here is the question for this issue.

Q. I heard that they have started matching vacant old houses. Please tell me more!

A. Let me explain about the Yamanashi Vacant Old Houses and Retro Architecture Bank.

（Photo caption）Riko Ushioku, Architectural Housing Division

Q. What kind of service is it?

A. Yamanashi Prefecture had the highest vacancy rate in the country in a national survey conducted every five years, and was considering measures to make effective use of vacant houses. Therefore, in September 2023, we started a service that connects old house owners with voices of "I want to use old houses," which had been requested for a

long time.

After the prefecture's review, available vacant houses will be posted on a dedicated website. If there is an inquiry about a property from within or outside the prefecture who wants to use it for relocation or a new business, the prefecture will match it. There is no cost from application to registration.

Q. Are you specialized in retro architecture?

A. When registering available vacant houses, certain conditions must be met, such as "over 50 years old" and "built in a traditional way." This attempt by the prefecture to centralize and provide vacant houses with these conditions is a unique feature not seen

Q. Can anyone use it?

A. Properties must be located within the prefecture, but users can be from inside or outside the prefecture. So far, 10 properties have been listed, and three have already been contracted. We would like to increase the number of listings and use them to make better use of vacant old houses.

The prefecture is dotted with buildings that evoke the retro Showa era, romantic Taisho era, and sophisticated Meiji era.

If you are looking for such an old house or if you own a vacant house, please contact us.

From this month's special feature

Drones in the sky: Lively children of Kosuge Village

Eight first and second grade students at Kosuge Village Kosuge Elementary School. They are growing up in a village where drones flying in the sky are an everyday sight. They were very interested in learning how to fly drones and how they work in the elementary school gymnasium. The explanation was given by NEXT DELIVERY's pilot, Koki Sawai. They all gathered around the drone and took a commemorative photo.

Fureai83 Textbook22-23

Yamanashi Prefectural Government News

Student DX Leaders to Develop the Next Generation and Support Businesses

A new young talent has been born who will strongly promote digital transformation (DX) in our prefecture.

The prefecture will conduct practical DX training for university students in the prefecture from September to October 2024. As the first batch of students, 20 university students acquired skills to teach junior and senior high school students and support small and medium-sized enterprises. On the final day, as a culmination of the training, they used a virtual restaurant as an example and created a restaurant homepage after analyzing sales data and customer spending trends. Each group gave a presentation and exchanged opinions.

In the future, these 20 university students will serve as DX leaders, providing DX guidance to junior and senior high school students and solving digital issues for small and medium-sized enterprises.

While it is expected that promoting DX will make corporate operations more efficient and lead to increased productivity, there is a nationwide shortage of human resources to

introduce DX.

The prefecture aims to create a circular cycle of human resource development in which DX leaders will train the next generation of junior and senior high school students, and the students who have learned the skills will further hone their skills at university and train the next generation. We will steadily train DX human resources and support the growth of businesses in the prefecture through support for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Interim report meeting held for research project to overcome the population decline crisis

On October 28, 2024, the prefecture held an interim report meeting for a research project on measures to combat the declining birthrate. This project is being undertaken with a group of experts on population decline countermeasures, represented by Shiro Yamasaki, Special Advisor to the Cabinet Secretariat.

In order to deepen understanding of preconception care (Precon), which is a health management in preparation for future pregnancy and childbirth, it was announced that Precon medical examinations to check the physical condition can be taken in addition to workplace medical examinations, and that in companies that position Precon seminars as employee training, many men and women have participated, so it was announced that the cooperation of companies is essential to further promote Precon.

In addition, based on the survey results that an increase in household income and the improvement of childcare support systems at companies lead to an increase in the number of births, it was reported that it is necessary to encourage companies to increase wages and introduce support systems.

Cabinet Secretariat Special Advisor Yamasaki encouraged the governor, saying, "Under the governor's leadership, we have achieved very wonderful results. I hope you will continue to do your best."

The prefecture will continue to work actively to overcome the population decline crisis.

First successful artificial cultivation of domestic black truffles in the prefecture

In September 2024, the Prefectural Forestry Research Institute succeeded in the artificial cultivation of black truffles for the first time in the prefecture, which it has been working on since 2018.

Like matsutake, truffles are a type of fungus that live in symbiosis with the roots of living trees. They cannot be cultivated on mushroom beds and are extremely difficult to cultivate artificially. This is the second case in Japan after Gifu Prefecture where domestic black truffles have been successfully grown artificially.

In the future, in order to establish a method for artificially cultivating black truffles, research will be carried out to ensure stable growth, including searching for methods to effectively infect the truffle fungus and suitable conditions for cultivation.