

Name of Community: Kumamoto City

Whole City Award 2011 Category E

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Ful Postal Address 1-1 Tetorihoncho Kumamoto-shi 860-8601

Community Web Address <http://www.city.kumamoto.kumamoto.lg>

Average daytime population: 800000

Area : 389.53 sq. kilometers

Mayor : Seishi Kohyama

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【Abstract】

Kumamoto City, with a population of 730,000 and a greater metro area population of about a million, is located near the center of Kyushu Island in the south of Japan and serves as the capital city of Kumamoto Prefecture. With Kumamoto Castle, one of the three most famous castles in Japan, the city has inherited a great deal of traditional culture and historical legacies. Kumamoto City is also blessed with a rich natural environment and remains the only city with a population over 500,000 whose citizens' drinking water is 100% supplied by natural, pure groundwater.

In addition, Kumamoto City is a very comfortable and convenient place to live due to the increase of government offices, institutes of higher learning and medical facilities as well as a low cost of living and crime rate. The city developed into the central hub of the politics, business and culture in Kyushu.

In this way we unveiled the Kyushu Bullet Train line in March, making trips to Fukuoka possible in around 30 minutes and those to Osaka possible in around three hours. This mode of transportation greatly increases the convenience for those sightseeing or travelling for business. Also, Kumamoto City will become an ordinance-designated city in April of 2012, which will result in increased authority and resources as well as further establishing our level of recognition and reputation as a city that makes the best of its characteristics.

In order for this transition of our city to succeed, we created a 10 year plan, "The Sixth Comprehensive Plan", in 2008 which focuses on the four themes of our initiatives.

- (1) Wakuwaku Civic Project : Creating a region where the children who will shoulder the next generation can be supported and support each other
- (2) Wakuwaku Nature and Culture Project : Creating a city where citizens grow up and protect the shared assets of Kumamoto City, like our history, culture, nature, and delicious food
- (3) Wakuwaku Transportation Service Project : Constructing a transportation system that is convenient for those without cars and makes people want to go out
- (4) Wakuwaku People Project : Creating a city that is ideal for exchanges with Asian countries and throughout Kyushu and promotes active interaction with a welcoming spirit

As far as specific measures are concerned, we are striving to preserve the landmarks in our city with our 400 years of history, such as Kumamoto Castle and the castle town, Jokamachi. Not only preserving those landmarks, the city also takes

initiatives to preserve landscapes or outlooks to and from the Kumamoto Castle. Preserving rich natural environment as well as the historical site of Suizenji Park is another initiative that we are taking.

Concerning the preservation of historical heritage sites and the promotion of the arts and cultural traditions, the Kumamoto Castle restoration project was made possible through donations and the National Hogaku (Japanese traditional music) Contest is hosted every year in Kumamoto. Also, the first modern art museum in Kyushu was opened in Kumamoto in October 2002 so that high quality art from both inside and outside of the country can be displayed, while providing new opportunities for art appreciation, and the study of fine arts can be promoted and spread throughout the region.

In order to preserve our environment, the city aims to build a society of resources recycling. We work on preserving our rich natural environments as well as takes initiatives to fight global warming through the Green Carpet Tram project and citizens' involvement programs of groundwater conservation, waste reduction and the promotion of recycling.

Along with the progressive decentralization of power, there is an increase in the roles and responsibilities of citizens and municipalities. Therefore we are currently undertaking an initiative to promote citizens' involvement in each community. Specifically speaking, the fundamental principle for autonomy is the duties and responsibilities of the citizens, the city council and the administration that are defined in the "Basic Rules of Autonomy". The specific content and structure regarding citizens' cooperation and participation in planning is detailed in the "Rules of Promoting Citizen Participation and Cooperation". We are planning to enrich the civic activities support centers and support the opportunity for citizens to participate in and work with the city administration.

In our city the number of individuals who need artificial dialysis due to chronic renal failure is 1.4 times the national average. So, beginning in 2009, we launched a campaign, led by medical institutions and businesses, to reduce the risk of getting CKD and of aggravating the condition. We aim to be in the average amount of new dialysis patients per capita in the country within five years.

Every year, there have been close to 300,000 cats and dogs throughout the country that have been abandoned by their owners and subsequently euthanized, but in Kumamoto City that number is approaching zero. This result is due to the tremendous efforts of the active members from the Kumamoto City Animal Welfare Association, our citizen volunteers, and city workers of the Kumamoto City Animal Shelter. This initiative was formally recognized at the aforementioned association in the form of receiving the highly esteemed Japan Animal Grand Prize award.

Currently, as our country faces a declining population and stagnating economic growth; therefore, in order to maintain and improve upon the vitality of our region, we must increase our nonresident population. Taking this in mind, we need to take advantage of regional resources such as groundwater, greenery, sightseeing attractions, our citizens' spirit, traditional culture and appeal to those inside and outside Japan. We have created this specific strategic plan, the City Brand Strategy Plan, to promote our city so it will be selected by others as a tourist or business destination from all around the world.