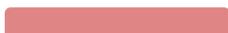




The Japanese government expresses interest in ILC

Deliberations on the ILC project will continue in Japan. Scientists were relieved to see that the Japanese national government has finally stated an interest in the project, after being reticent for so long. However, there was also frustration: "there is not much time left" as Europe heads into planning for its next particle physics strategy (2020-2024).



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The Tohoku ILC Promotion Council makes a last-minute visit MEXT to urge a positive decision on the ILC

The Japanese government is set to make their position on the ILC clear on March 7th, the deadline set by international scientists for moving forward on the ILC. On February 27th, the Tohoku ILC Promotion Council (chair: Hiroaki Takahashi, honorary chairman of the Tohoku Economic Federation) made a last-minute visit to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to urge them to make a positive decision and to start international negotiations.



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At a press conference, the governor of Iwate and others welcome the show of interest from the national government

Takuya Tasso (Governor of Iwate), Kunihisa Yamura (Chair of the Iwate ILC Promotion Council as well as the Federation of Iwate Chambers of Commerce) and Atsuto Suzuki (President of Iwate Prefectural University and Director of the Tohoku ILC Planning Office) gave a press conference on March 7th. Governor Tasso praised the government's position: "This is the first time the national government has shown an interest in the ILC, and I welcome them to make a clear decision." These three men have worked hard to push forth the ILC here,

and they have all taken this statement to be a move forward. They have good expectations for future international negotiations.



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Some of the best places to visit in Iwate!

If the ILC is realized, then many researchers and their families from around the world will come to Iwate. I'd love for you to really enjoy the best of what Iwate has to offer, so I asked residents of Iwate to tell me their "Osusume" spots. ("Osusume" means recommendation in English) I had people put stickers on each spot, with Japanese residents using red stickers and foreign residents using blue. I've got some more information about the highest-ranking spots below.



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How to enjoy hot springs in Japan

Onsen (hot springs) are amazing. In Japan, they usually tell you how amazing they are with a laundry list of health conditions purportedly treated by that particular hot springs posted outside the bath entrance. Even if you don't 100% believe that laundry list, onsen are still amazing. They're twice as relaxing as a regular bath, make your skin smooth, and soothe sore muscles. You can also enjoy the extreme luxury of spending time outside, gazing at a mountain stream or a forest blanketed by snow, while soaking in hot waters. At the same time! It's glorious. You can even [birdwatch](#). My onsen list includes Grey Wagtails, Crested Kingfishers, Brown Dippers, and even a mammal: a displeased-looking Japanese giant flying squirrel that emerged cute face and enormous bushy tail-first from the roof of a hot spring enclosure I was soaking in!



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Spring Beauty in Tohoku, Japan





With its extended geographical length from south to north, Tohoku allows visitors to enjoy cherry blossoms from early April all the way to early May. Abounding with water from the melted snow, mountain hamlets burst with scenes of blooming flowers as pretty as a painting. Many visitors time their trips to coincide with the cherry blossom season, which usually lasts from mid-April to early May.

About Tohoku ILC Promotion Council

This conference, consisting of industry, academic, and government representatives, has been established to promote basic scientific research and to deepen the understanding of the International Linear Collider, as well as to research and maintain the environment during ILC installation.

<http://www.tohoku-ilc.jp/en>

That's the news for this month! As always, feel free to send us any questions about local activities for the ILC, life in the region, or about working in Japan.

Best wishes,

The Tohoku ILC Promotion Council



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