

Shinkansen Extension brings Northern Japan Closer

The 96.6-km extension of the Tohoku Shinkansen was opened between Morioka (535 km north of Tokyo) and Hachinohe, on 1 December 2002, 11 years after construction started. There are 20 tunnels totalling 69.2 km on the new section, including the 25.8-km Iwate-Ichinohe Tunnel, the longest mountain tunnel in the world. There are two intermediate stations at Iwate-Numakunai and Ninohe. Completion of the next extension to Aomori will take another 10 years due to a tight construction budget.

JR East runs 15 daily Tokyo–Hachinohe super express trains nicknamed *Hayate* (Swift Wind) in each direction. The fastest train links the two cities in 2 hours 56 minutes. By changing at Hachinohe, Aomori can be reached in 3 h 59 min, and Hakodate in 5 h 59 min via the undersea Seikan Tunnel. The conventional Tohoku main line between Morioka and Hachinohe has been transferred to local authorities who established the Iwate Ginga Railway to run the southern half, and the Aomori Railway to run the northern half.



(Transportation News)

Photos: *Hayate* super express opening ceremony at Hachinohe Station (left), Series E2-1000 used for *Hayate* services (below), futuristic design of E2 cockpit (bottom left), interior of Green Car (1st Class) (middle right), and standard car (bottom right)



(JR East)



(JR East)



(JR East)



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Learning from the Past: JR East's Rail Accident Exhibition Hall and Safety Training

JR East opened a unique exhibition hall at its Shirakawa General Education Centre on 1 November 2002. The 130-m² Railway Accident History Exhibition Hall displays photographs of 25 accidents that have occurred since 1949 on both JNR/JR and private railway lines (top left and right). Computers produce a graphical simulation of the notorious Mikawashima train collision that killed 160 people on 3 May 1962 (see page 10). Other accident displays include the train fire at Sakuragicho Station on 24 April 1951 (page 9), the collision on the Shigaraki Kogen Railway on 14 May 1991 (page 26) and the derailment and collision on Tokyo's Hibiya subway on 8 March 2000 (page 27).

Shirakawa General Education Centre boasts advanced safety education facilities including a full-size model of carriage doors used for passenger rescue drills (bottom left), and fully computerized driving simulators (bottom right).

Both new recruits and senior staff have an opportunity to visit the Centre to upgrade their skills and JR East hopes all visitors to the Exhibition will learn a valuable lesson from these past accidents.



(Transportation News)



(JR East Personnel Service)



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