

旭川 ASAHIKAWA Info

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Hokkaido News Top 5



November 2021
Compiled by AIC

Hokkaido Experiences Sudden Chills and Its First Snowfall of the Year (9/17)

A strong cold front in the upper air over Hokkaido was observed in 141 of the 173 observation points within the region, finding it to be the coldest point of the season thus far. The lowest temperature recorded was in Rikubetsu reaching -3.6°C , with Shibecha and Nakashibetsu reaching similar lows. The sudden chill caused the first appearance of snow to be seen not only in mountain ranges but also on the roads, causing several sections of national highway and prefectural road to shut down.

Hoshino Resorts TOMAMU Gives Guests a Taste of Dairy Farming (9/23)

The hotel resort in Shimukappu has found success in allowing their guests to uniquely experience dairy farming firsthand. You can enjoy watching cows and other farm animals graze as you sit on sofas set out in their pastures, compare the taste of milk from different cows, or even simply take an afternoon nap outside on a hammock at this hotel that produces 240 liters of raw milk a day.

Red Tide May Be the Cause for Large Numbers of Deaths of Sea Urchins (9/29)

A recent survey conducted by the Konbumori Fisherman's Association found that 90% of the sea urchins on the eastern coasts of Hokkaido have died, which another survey by the Akkeshi Fishermen's Association in the same area confirming similar findings. Earlier confirmations of the appearance of red tide in the fishing harbors of Katsurakoi and increased numbers of dead salmon caught have led to the region to rush to find out if there is a relationship between the two.

Shibetsu Townspeople See Their Efforts Bear Fruit (10/18)

After six years of effort cultivating grapes for wine, a community organization within Shibetsu had success for the first time in harvesting around 820 kg for winemaking. Though there were concerns of the plants surviving the winter, all were calmed to see the snow had in fact protected the plants from withering. They have received requests from all over Hokkaido. Organization members and local supporters helped harvest the fruit, from which they anticipate making around 600 liters of wine.

Students Finally Get to Hold Nebuta Festival in Iwamizawa (10/18)

Despite its postponement due to coronavirus pandemic, students of the Hokkaido University of Education were finally able to hold the festival and carry their floats, reaching heights up to 2.8 meters and designed with depictions of roses symbolic of the city, warriors and long-tailed tits. One spectator commented: "It's incredible the students made such huge floats. They were beautiful; I hope they hold it again next year."



Inside This Issue...

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Life in Asahikawa



November, the entrance of winter

By KITAMURA Tadao

Can we expect coming November to be freed from the anxiety of the pandemic? Everyone seems to be mostly free from the fear of COVID-19, since the popularization of vaccination has reached a significant booster shot, in coming November. People who are engaged to medical workers will be first, the elderly second, and then the rest will follow; I wonder how foreign residents and visitors are getting services in this country for the vaccination. However, new variant strains are appearing and lots of countries are still under progressing in their vaccination efforts.

The season of influenza is coming around the corner. Chilly northern winds are coming. Everyone should be mindful and wear their face-masks more often. In November, here in Asahikawa, the average temperature for past 20 years has been 0.52 °C, the average daily amount of daylight is 4.5 hours, and the monthly average number of rainy days is 14 day. You might see the first snowfall around the 10th of November. November is literally the entrance of winter!

Everyone is busy preparing for the coming cold season. Since the daylight hours are very short, they work hastily. They are occupied changing the tires of their cars for winter-use, and they work on makeshift shelters for their plants to protect them from cold weather. Going into winter, some people's are most concerned about the seasonal snowfall. Every winter (from November to May), Asahikawa sees 773 cm of total snow-depth in average; supposedly, the world's largest quantity among many populated cities. Winter last year recorded about 20% more than that of previous year.

This year, there were many tragic disasters in various places not only in this country but also all over the world like floods people argue to be caused by global warming. That's why everyone's worrying about the snowfall. I'm don't mean to scare you with everything mentioned above, but I hope you share the same notion of "Carbon Neutral" with us.

Sooner or later a strong northern wind will come raging in and blow all the leaves from the trees. This is called kogarashi, the nipping winter wind. The next morning, you'll see quite a different scenery: a peaceful and serene world. Such lovely weather is called koharubiyori (小春日和) "slight spring weather", or as you may call "Indian summer" or "St. Martin's summer". On such a lovely day, it's very nice to stroll about the city on the sidewalk under the colorful trees.



Hello Asahikawa!

Name: Gabriel González

Home Country: USA

Interviewed: 23/10/2021

If you live in Asahikawa or are just passing through and would like to be interviewed for "Hello Asahikawa," email us at cir_kokusai@city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp!

AIC: So Gabriel, where are you from?

Gabriel: I'm from a little town called Lake Villa, Illinois which is of course in the USA.

AIC: Can you tell me more about Lake Villa?

Gabriel: It's very different from Asahikawa! It's small and quiet, but very quaint. It has its own unique local atmosphere that just feels like home to me.

AIC: What does Lake Villa offer?

Gabriel: Well, it might not be known as a tourist destination (not that I'd ever recommend it as such), but like any other American town we hold holiday events for days like Christmas and Hallowe'en, and the local food tends to center around German and Polish specialties since we historically have had a lot of immigrants come from those areas! The nature that surrounds us is beautiful as well; it's called "Lake" Villa for a reason!

AIC: So is the area covered in lakes?

Gabriel: You guessed it! Although I don't, many people like to go fishing on the lakes or swim. That used to be what made Lake Villa such a popular place to visit!

AIC: So, what brings you to Japan?

Gabriel: I came on the JET Program, but instead of working as an ALT, I am a CIR. My job is mainly translation work, but I will also be helping teach English and maintaining this newsletter for the time being!

AIC: How did you get interested in the JET Program?

Gabriel: Like most things, it was because of my older brother. He was always the one interested in Japanese and consequently the JET Program. After he challenged me to learn Japanese with him, I found I really liked it! I took some classes in college and then I remembered he wanted to do JET, so I applied!

AIC: Was there anything difficult about learning the language?

Gabriel: Well, I never had a moment where it was extremely difficult, but there were a lot of times where it felt like plain old drudgery. Especially the kanji... But you have to learn it!



AIC: **How long have you been living in Asahikawa?**

Gabriel: I've been living here for about three weeks now, so I'm sure you can tell I moved here recently! Before I came here, I was quarantining in Chiba Prefecture for about two weeks, so in total I've been in Japan for a little over a month! I've never been here before, so everything is completely new, a little fun, and a little scary!

AIC: **What has been difficult for you to get used to?**

Gabriel: Knowing what to say and when to say it. Granted, the U.S. has its own stock phrases we say in specific contexts, but it feels like Japan has a lot more than we do!

AIC: **What do you like to do in your free time?**

Gabriel: I love learning, so I'm always somewhere that gives me that satisfaction; whether it's the bookstore (normally it is), the library or a museum, I always am on the lookout!

AIC: **What do you like learning about?**

Gabriel: Well, I mainly have been doing translation work for the International City Affairs Department of the city government, but outside of my professional life, I wanted to come to Japan (mainly Hokkaido) to learn more about the Ainu people.

AIC: **That's a pretty specific reason! What have you done so far to learn about that kind of stuff?**

Gabriel: Like I said, I'm a bookworm so I've been spending a lot of time at the bookstore, as unfortunate as it is for my wallet. But I recently also went to the Kawamura Kaneto Aynu Museum, and I was so excited I read every single sign to learn as much as I could!

AIC: **Sounds like you're really passionate. So, how does life in Japan compare to life in your home country?**

Gabriel: Everyone so far has been wonderfully warm and kind, thank goodness. I can tell that there are still moments where my Japanese does not suffice to convey what I want to say, and although I get flustered everyone has been gracious enough to assist me in any way they can. Of course, there's still so much that I miss about the U.S. (like my family and some of the food), but the new opportunities that lay before me are too great to pass up!

AIC: **What are some of the most noticeable cultural differences between your home country and Japan?**

Gabriel: When you speak with people, you need to be very adept at inferring what people are about to say. Japanese people will begin to say something, but the sentence is left unfinished. During that brief moment of silence, you are supposed to connect the dots and complete the conversation yourself. Boy, am I terrible at that!

AIC: **What do you like about living in Asahikawa?**

Gabriel: For the short amount of time I've been here, I've grown to really enjoy all the museums and bookstores for sure, but the fall colors have been outstanding! I like being able to stroll down to the park and see all the leaves reflect on the pond, or go to the bridge and just gaze at the river. A lot of it reminds me of home (granted, we don't have a river), so it's really comforting to see before it all disappears in the winter! Even in the countryside, which I visited once to go see a kotan (Ainu village) in development, what astounded me weren't only the views, but the fragrances! It's just so nice to get away from the city once in a while to breathe in the fresh air! I am not a city person, so such environments can get a little tiresome after a while (go to Chicago frequently enough and you'll know!



AIC: **Do you like Japanese food?**

Gabriel: I'm not an culinary expert, but I am a lover of good eats! Japanese food, fortunately, has a lot to offer in terms of delicious food. Actually, I don't think there's been anything so far that I have disliked; everything has been a variation of good to great! I also really appreciate my coworkers for them taking me to new places to try new dishes. I'll admit I am a creature of habit, and unless someone else takes me somewhere new, I am most likely sticking to the same places out of convenience rather than fear of the new. I have found that I really like donburi, tonkatsu and anything that includes raw fish (sushi, sashimi, etc.)!

AIC: **Do you ever miss American food?**

Gabriel: From time to time. I am Mexican-American, so rather than the American classics we may be known for, I miss stuff like Mexican bakeries and my mom's cooking.

AIC: **Not food you can really get here, huh?**

Gabriel: And how! During my time in France, it was near impossible to find anything remotely similar to what I knew. They had some restaurants, but they were expensive and adjusted to French tastes for food that is not as strongly flavored.

AIC: **I suppose it's just the truth that certain foods are harder to find than others in Japan.**

Gabriel: That's right! But Japanese food is so varied, I might find myself busy tasting it all!

AIC: **How long do you plan to be in Asahikawa?**

Gabriel: I've only just arrived, so the future might not be so clear right now! I can wish as much as I want to stay longer, but if I can't fulfill the expectations set out before me at work, they may not ask me to recontract! I am not concerned about that, but it is a reality that floats over my head! The plan at the moment is three years, but I do find myself pondering over whether or not I should stay for all five years (if possible). I've also been considering going to graduate school in Japan, but I don't know!

AIC: **Do you miss anything about life back in USA?**

Gabriel: There can be no question that I do! I think I'm still working through some culture shock, but in a way that I didn't expect. I don't think I'm the type of person that cries over missing their home country. I didn't really feel homesick in France, but I knew a few others that did have some rough, emotional patches of time. What I find that I miss is the certainty of life back home and the lesser amount of responsibility. Up until this point, I had been in school and was privileged to have friends and family help me along the way. Here in Japan, I still have people who help me greatly, but it feels different. I don't feel adept enough to adjust quickly to adulthood, especially the Japanese kind of adulthood. I feel less inclined to conform personality-wise, but I do feel the pressures to figure out how to function in society and fast! I'm truly grateful to have been given this opportunity, but I'm still human! I miss my family and friends like crazy! Luckily for me, I live in the digital age and social media helps me stay connected!



AIC: **Truly, what an age we're living in! Thank you so much for participating!**

Gabriel: Thank you very much!

★ Movies ~ November ★

*The 1st day of every month is "Movie Day" in Asahikawa. Admission (tax included) is ¥1,100 for Adults, ¥800 for High School Students and Under at all theaters.

*<Aeon Cinema Only> Every Monday is "Happy Monday." Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for all.

*<Cineplex 7 Asahikawa and Dinos Cinemas Only> Every Wednesday is "Ladies' Day." Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for women at all theaters.

*<Dinos Cinemas Only> Every Thursday is "Men's Day." Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for men.

★ **Aeon Cinema:** Miyashita-dori 7-chome / 0166 - 74 - 6411 URL: cinema.aeoncinema.com/wm/asahikawa (Japanese)

Now Showing

- No Funds For Retirement! (Japanese)
- And, the Baton was Passed (Japanese)
- Sing a Bit of Harmony (Japanese/Anime)
- Ron's Gone Wrong (English/Anime)
- Cube (Japanese)
- The Last Duel (English/PG12)
- Baragaki: Unbroken Samurai (Japanese)
- Lupin's Daughter (Japanese)
- Otoppe: Papa Don't Cry (Japanese/Anime)
- Dune (English)
- Child of Kamiari Month (Japanese/Anime)
- No Time To Die (English)
- In The Wake (Japanese)
- Free! the Final Stroke Pt1 (Japanese/Anime)
- Masquerade Night (Japanese)

Coming Soon

- What Did You Eat Yesterday? (Japanese) 11/3
- Sumikko Gurashi:A Magical Child of the Blue Moonlit Night (Japanese/Anime) 11/5
- Eternals (English) 11/5
- Shinonome Iro no Shumatsu (Japanese) 11/12
- Yo-kai Watch Keita to Orecchi no Deai-hen da Nyan (Japanese/Anime) 11/12
- The Lone Ume Tree (Japanese) 11/12
- Dawn of the Beast (English/R15+) 11/12
- The Ice Road (English) 11/12
- Parasite in Love (Japanese) 11/12
- The Cursed Sanctuary X (Japanese) 11/19
- The Mole Song the Final (Japanese) 11/19
- Dear Evan Hansen (English) 11/26
- Encanto (English/Anime) 11/26
- See You When the Curtain Goes Down (Japanese) 12/3
- Venom: Let There be Carnage (English) 12/3
- West Side Story (English) 12/10
- Your Turn to Kill (Japanese) 12/10
- Boss Baby Family Business (English/Anime) 12/17
- The Matrix Resurrections (English) 12/17
- 99.9: Criminal Lawyer (Japanese) 12/30

★ **Cineplex 7 Asahikawa:** Nagayama 12-jo 3-chome Western Powers Nagayama / 0166 - 49 - 1000

URL: <http://www.unitedcinemas.jp/asahikawa/index.html> (Japanese)

Now Showing

- No Funds For Retirement! (Japanese)
- And, the Baton was Passed (Japanese)
- Tropical-Rouge! Pretty Cure: The Snow Princess and the Miraculous Ring! (Japanese/Anime)
- Ron's Gone Wrong (Japanese/Anime)
- Cube (Japanese)
- Snake Eyes:G.I. Joe Origins (English)
- Dune (English 4DX)
- Baragaki: Unbroken Samurai (Japanese)
- Lupin's Daughter (Japanese)
- The Last Duel (English PG12)
- The Laws of the Universe:Elohim Chapter (Japanese)
- Girls und Panzer das Finale: Part3 (Japanese 4DX/Anime)
- No Time To Die (English)
- In The Wake (Japanese)
- Free! the Final Stroke Pt1 (Japanese/Anime)
- Masquerade Night (Japanese)

Coming Soon

- What Did You Eat Yesterday? (Japanese) 11/3
- Respect (English) 11/5
- Venom (English 4DX/PG12) 11/5
- Eternals (English 4DX) 11/5
- Princess Principal Crown Handler: Chapter 2 (Japanese/Anime) 11/12
- Halloween Kills (English/R15+) 11/12
- Musicophilia (Japanese) 11/12
- Cinema Fighters Project: Redder than Yesterday, Bluer than Tomorrow (Japanese) 11/26
- Encanto (English/Anime) 11/26
- Venom: Let There be Carnage (English 4DX) 12/3
- Your Turn to Kill (Japanese) 12/10
- West Side Story (English) 12/10
- Boss Baby Family Business (English) 12/17
- The Matrix Resurrections (English) 12/17
- The King's Man (English) 12/24
- Jujutsu Kaisen 0 (Japanese/Anime) 12/24
- 99.9: Criminal Lawyer (Japanese) 12/30
- House of Gucci (English) 1/14

Movie schedules change often. Please call the theater for confirmation and details.

★ *Movies ~ November* ★

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*<Cineplex 7 Asahikawa and Dinos Cinemas Only> Every Wednesday is “Ladies’ Day.” Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for women at all theaters.

*<Dinos Cinemas Only> Every Thursday is “Men’s Day.” Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for men.

★ **Dinos Cinemas:** Taisetsu-dori 5-chome / 0166 – 21 – 1218 URL: <http://cinema.sugai-dinos.jp/pc/> (Japanese)

Now Showing

- Sword Art Online Progressive: Aria of a Starless Night (Japanese/Anime)
- No Funds For Retirement! (Japanese)
- And, the Baton was Passed (Japanese)
- The Mauritanian (English)
- Cube (Japanese)
- Ron's Gone Wrong (English/Anime)
- Lupin's Daughter (Japanese)
- Baragaki: Unbroken Samurai (Japanese)
- Dune (English)
- The Last Duel (English)
- Candyman (English)
- The Laws of the Universe:Elohim Chapter (Japanese)
- In The Wake (Japanese)
- No Time To Die (English)
- Masquerade Night (Japanese)
- Belle (Japanese/Anime)

Coming Soon

- Eternals (English) 11/5
- Hiraite (Japanese) 11/5
- Riku wa Yowakunai (Japanese/Anime) 11/12
- Chaos Walking (English) 11/12
- The Mole Song the Final (Japanese) 11/17
- A Balance (Japanese) 11/26~12/9
- Druk (Danish) 11/26~12/9
- Eureka Seven:High-Evolution (Japanese/Anime) 11/26
- Encanto (English/Anime) 11/26
- Mankai Movie "A3!" Spring & Summer (Japanese) 12/3
- Hula Fulla Dance (Japanese/Anime) 12/3
- Venom: Let There be Carnage (English 4DX) 12/3
- West Side Story (English) 12/10
- Your Turn to Kill (Japanese) 12/10

Movie schedules change often. Please call the theater for confirmation and details.



Language Courses at AIC

Foreign Language Courses: Beginner (8 Classes)

Language	Dates	Teachers
Korean	Every Tuesday starting 11/16	KIM Michie
Chinese	Every Wednesday starting 11/17	TSUYAMA Noboru
Russian	Every Thursday starting 11/18	SUZUKI Momoko

Time: 18:30-20:00

Capacity: 19 people (For each class)

Fee: ¥16,000

Sign-up: Contact or visit the Asahikawa International Committee (1-jo 8-chome, Feeeal Asahikawa 7F, International/City Affairs Division) at 0166-25-7491

Notes: Courses will be taught in Japanese

Japanese Language Course: Beginner/Intermediate (8 Classes)

A Japanese course for foreign residents and those returning from abroad.

Dates:

Beginner: Every Sunday starting 10/17

Intermediate: Every Sunday starting 10/17

Time: 10:30-12:00

Capacity: 8 people (If less than four people sign up. The class will be cancelled)

Fee: ¥3,000 (Fees can be exempted for special cases)

Sign up: Contact the Asahikawa International Committee at 0166-25-7491 or visit the Asahikawa International Center (1-jo 8-chome, Feeeal Asahikawa 7F, International/City Affairs Division)

FUN FRIDAYS

Interesting activities, such as quizzes, discussions, songs, games, handcrafts and many more, all in English! Come meet new people, relax, and relate on Fun Fridays!

Dates: November 12th & 26th, December 10th & 24th, January 14 & 28th

Times: 1:00pm-2:00pm ~Afternoon~ 2nd and 4th Friday of the month
6:30pm-8:30pm ~Night~ 2nd Friday of the month

Location: Asahikawa International Center, Common Meeting Room (1) (Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome)

Charge: ¥1,500 for 3 months (Free for volunteer leaders)

The AIC offers many services to make your life in Asahikawa more enjoyable. Here are just a few:

Volunteer Guide: Volunteers are registered to help translate and interpret.

Event Volunteer: The AIC plans many exciting events throughout the year, such as Friendship Parties. Why not become a volunteer and help plan these events?

Homestay: Families are registered to welcome you into their homes for an overnight stay or just for an afternoon visit.

For further information or to register, please contact AIC.



The Asahikawa International Center (Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome) has free wifi available for public use free of charge. Registration for a user card is needed, if you are residing in Asahikawa. Please feel free to come by anytime, as well as check out some of the other services and activities available at the Asahikawa International Center .

Spread the Word...

Contribute to the AIC newsletter and share any interesting information you may have with other readers. You may write on any topic including, items to buy or sell, offers for culture/language exchanges, or write an essay about your life in Asahikawa or your hometown. The article should not be profit related! Please send your submissions to us at the AIC.



Asahikawa International Committee

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****The opinions expressed in the essays are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Asahikawa International Committee or the City of Asahikawa.****