

Obihiro Hokoten

"Hokoten" is a shortened form of the Japanese word for "Pedestrian Paradise" (*hokosha-tengoku*). Every Sunday (starting July 4 and ending September 26) the City will be holding a big fun event in the downtown area of Obihiro in the hopes that more people will come into the city to enjoy the beautiful summer weather. The street in front of the Fujimaru Department Store will be completely closed off to traffic to allow people (and animals) to wander freely in the streets from 9:30am to 5:30pm. Events and performances are mostly held between 11am and 4pm, but food and other displays are set out for the duration.



At the *Hokoten*, there is plenty of food to try, performances to enjoy, and special events like cooking a giant pizza, having a super long pool of water, holding live concerts right in the street (picture at left) and many other intriguing things to entertain you and your family.

See this month's event page (inside this issue) for more information.



The Friends of the World Festival

It's time to get out and enjoy the summer weather again. What better way to do that than by meeting with and enjoying the cultures of people from around the world!

The Friends of the World Festival (also known as Sekai no Tomodachi) is a huge event where thousands of people come to enjoy international food, music, dance, and good conversation. There will be food for sale from over 15 different countries, live music and dance performances on stage, as well as a corner for kids to play and learn about the world.

There will be games that everyone can participate in, and there will be various international organizations providing information about their activities, so you will never be bored.

Event Details

Date: **July 4th** (Sunday)

Time: 10:30 to 15:00

Location:

Tokachi International relations Center and JICA

West 20 South 6 (on the southwest side of Obihiro)

Parking and Entrance fee: **FREE!**

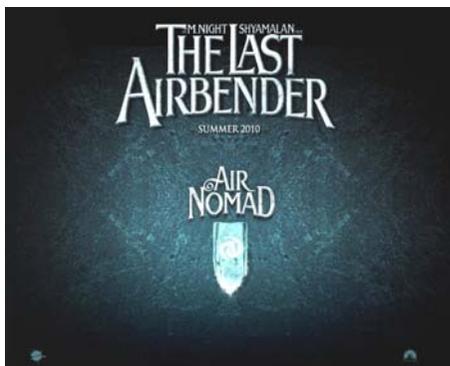
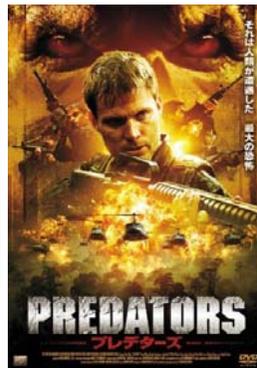
Food and Drink: Costs between 100—300 yen

For more info call: 0155-65-4133

(City of Obihiro, Int'l and Domestic Relations Section)

July Movies At Cinema Taiyo, in Obihiro

Title	Language	Starts - Ends
Green Zone	English	June 19 to July 9
Predators	English	July 10 to Aug
The Last Air Bender	English	July 17 to Aug
Sex and the City 2	English	June 4 – July 16
Iron Man 2	English	June 11 – July 16
Prince of Persia	English	May 14 – July 9



Inception	English	July 23 to Aug
Salt	English	July 31 to Aug
Macross Frontier the Movie: The False Songstress	Japanese	June 26 – July 9
Toy Story 3	Japanese	July 10 to Aug
Odorū Daisosasen The Movie 3	Japanese	July 3 to Aug
Flowers	Japanese	June 12 – July 31

Movies ending this month

Iron Man 2



Editor's Board

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International and Domestic Relations Section - Articles
What's Happening in Obihiro? can be found at the following locations: Obihiro City Hall, Tokachi International Relations Center, Obihiro University International Center, Obihiro Tourism and Convention Center inside the Obihiro JR Station, Obihiro Public Library, Cinema Taiyo, Joy English Academy and online at www.city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp

"WHIO?" Is a newsletter published monthly by the Obihiro International and Domestic Relations Section for residents of the Tokachi District and related parties. The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the official views or opinions of the International and Domestic Relations Section or the City of Obihiro. Questions? Tel (0155) 65-4133 or send e-mail to WHIO Editing Team at international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp.

July Events in Tokachi and Obihiro



Story Telling Around the World



Friends of the World



Obihiro Tanabata Festival

New CIR in Obihiro



A parting message from former Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in Obihiro, Greg Hertel. He left his position on June 29th, 2010 after 4 years working at City Hall.

There is no way I can sum up my four years here in this small space, so instead I will make this a brief thank-you message.

First of all, I would like to thank all of the citizens of Obihiro who support the city's international activities with sweat and treasure. According to city surveys, not many of Obihiro's citizens even know there are international activities going on in Obihiro, much less that their city has almost as many CIRs as Sapporo; Hokkaido's biggest city.

Despite the lack of PR, there are still plenty of people who participate in our events every year, and even a precious minority of enthusiastic volunteers who are the main reason we can accomplish anything here at all.

Next, I'd like to thank all of the public servants in Obihiro who made international relations and understanding a priority at their job. It was all of you who gave me the tools and knowledge I needed to be successful in my duties as a public servant. City Hall is a challenging place to work, and there are a lot of walls a CIR needs to climb over by himself, but it would have been nearly impossible for me to navigate all of the intricacies of city bureaucracy, etc without the support of my reliable coworkers. And rules and paperwork were only one part of the many obstacles I had to overcome at this job.

Getting acclimated to a completely different culture and society here in Japan was more difficult than I thought it would be. I had already studied Japan for 4 years and even studied abroad in Tokyo for a year, but I still experienced plenty of culture shocks and setbacks.

I want to thank everyone who was kind to me, everyone who shared a drink and a smile with me, and everyone who gave me a hand up when I was feeling down. Good times!

Being a CIR has taught me a lot about not only all the vibrant cultures and peoples of the world, but also about working a nine-to-five, human relations, finances, health, and just enjoying life in general.

I am going to miss all of the friends I've made here, and I will miss the grand beauty of all four corners of Hokkaido. Working here may be a small starting step in my life, but I think the rest of the world is going to have a tough time competing with Hokkaido's mountains, rivers, forests, and tasty food that I have very much enjoyed over my 4 years.

Thanks for everything, and I'll see you around!



Josh Neta is the newest Obihiro CIR. He arrived on June 23rd, 2010 and started work on June 25th.

Hello, my name is Josh Neta and I will be Obihiro's newest CIR. I come from a small town in Wisconsin called Lena. The population is about 500 people, so it is quite a bit smaller than Obihiro.

I can remember many summers on my grandmother's farm playing with my cousins. She had gotten out of farming long before I can remember, but there was still plenty to do at her house. We would go to the river down the road from her house and catch crayfish and whatever else we could find that would look interesting to a kid.

As I've gotten older my interests have changed, but family has always remained important to me. Included in that family is also close friends, even though they are not related by blood. I still like to think of them as family. I look forward to forming new relationships in Obihiro. I hope that the citizens of Obihiro will become as one of my family.

Having lived in Madison for the past 3 years I have realized there is far more to the town than just being a college town. The farmers market, the bike paths, and the food carts at lunch are just a few of the things I really loved about the town.

I hope that I can help bring some of the great things and ideas from Obihiro to Madison and from Madison to Obihiro. I also hope that the citizens of Obihiro will offer up ideas for things they think are great and would be great in Madison.

Finally, I'm hoping that I can get back into some activities I used to enjoy a few years ago, including fishing. So if anyone knows of any really good places to go fishing, feel free to let me know. Also, I love ramen. So if you want me to love you, show me where to get some really good stuff.

I look forward to meeting everyone in Obihiro!

When	What	Where/Contact #
7/3 (Sat.) 20:00-21:30	The Whitesnake Goddess Festival: An ancient Ainu legend will be performed by experienced dancers. The giant white snake puppet comes to life in the flames of the surrounding torches. At the end of the night, float your wishes across the lake in a special ceremony.	然別湖畔 Shikaribetsu Lakeshore / Hotel Area 0156-66-4034
Every Sunday from 7/4 to 9/26 9:30 - 17:00	Pedestrian Paradise: Obihiro closes off some main streets downtown and creates a <i>hokoten</i> (pedestrian paradise) every Sunday from now to September! There will be food, performances, and shopping. A fun way to enjoy a sunny Sunday in Obihiro.	帯広市西2条南8丁目～南9丁目 West 2 South 8 to South 9 (near Fujimaru and Hirokoji) 0156-65-4164
7/4 (Sun) 10:00 - 15:00	SEKAI NO TOMODACHI: This "Friends of the World" festival is going to have food and performances from all around the globe! There's going to be plenty of fun games and live bands playing as well, so definitely come on over with the kids! Contact the TIRC (at right) if you are interested in helping out with the festivities.	森の交流館・十勝 帯広市西20条南6丁目 Tokachi International Relations Center West 20 South 6, Obihiro TEL 0155-34-0122
7/10 - 7/11 (Sat - Sun) 9:00 - 18:00	Northern Blessings Love-Food Fair: The title at left is a rough translation of the Japanese name of this fair, "Kita no Megumi Ai Shoku Fea". Hokkaido producers will be directly selling their products (seafood, dairy, produce, etc) at the Ito Yokado Mall.	イトーヨーカド Ito Yokado (on the south side of Obihiro) 011-616-2633
7/19 (Mon) 10:00 - 14:30	Summer Tea Ceremony: Please RSVP for this free, traditional Japanese tea ceremony experience	森の交流館・十勝 帯広市西20条南6丁目 Tokachi International Relations Center West 20 South 6, Obihiro TEL 0155-34-0122
7/24 (Sat) 14:00 - 15:00	Story Telling Around the World: This month we will be reading a children's book from the Phillipines in both Tagalog and Japanese. We will also play some games and have a good time. Target audience: children 3 yrs. old to 2 nd grade elementary students. RSVP by TEL, FAX, or email.→	森の交流館・十勝 Tokachi International Relations Center TEL 0155-34-0122 FAX 0155-34-0165 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp
7/25 (Sun) 12:00 - 21:00	Shoko Natsu Matsuri: Beer, fireworks, and a cool summer evening; what could be better? There will be games and fun for the kids too. Fireworks at 19:30	芽室公園 Memuro Park 0155-62-2339
8/5 - 8/8 (Thu - Sun) 10:00 - 21:00	Obihiro Tanabata Festival : Huge tanabata decorations in the shape of all your favorite Japanese characters and more. There will be lots of good food, fun festival games, and it's a great way to enjoy the summer in Obihiro.	帯広市 広小路 Hirokoji Covered Arcade in downtown Obihiro 0155-23-5675