



LACOMBE & DISTRICT RIKUBETSU FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY



History

The towns of Rikubetsu, Japan and Lacombe, Alberta were twinned in July 1986. A "Citizens' Study Group" with 13 members including the mayor from Rikubetsu, arrived in Lacombe on July 4, 1986. The following day the formal agreement was signed by Mayor Minoru Sugita and Mayor Charles Budd.

The Lacombe and District Rikubetsu Friendship Society was formed on May 9, 1991. The purpose of the society is to enhance the understanding of the Japanese culture, education and commerce, and to encourage the friendship between Lacombe and Rikubetsu. The main activity of the society is to organize the visit of the delegation from Rikubetsu every September.

In 1998 during the September visit by students and chaperons from Rikubetsu, 52 Street in Lacombe was named Rikubetsu Street. The sign is written in both English and Japanese.

In January 1993 the first group of Rikubetsu Junior High School students travelled to Lacombe. A second delegation arrived the same year in September. As of September 2008, we have hosted 17 student delegations from Rikubetsu for a total of 356 students and chaperones.

Rikubetsu Delegation Visits Lacombe

The Rikubetsu delegation arrives on Saturday of the third week of September and they spend 4 days in Lacombe. The students and chaperones are billeted with families in Lacombe.

Upon their arrival a Welcome Ceremony and Luncheon is held. Dignitaries from the municipal, provincial and federal government and the school board are invited to attend the ceremony to welcome the delegation to Lacombe. Following lunch, sport activities are organized to allow the students to get acquainted with each other.

The next day is a free day with the host families. On Monday the Rikubetsu delegation, with their host students, travel to Drumheller to visit the Tyrell Museum and the hoodoos. Upon their return, a meeting with Lacombe Town Council is arranged..

Tuesday is spent touring the town and visiting the Junior High School and the Composite High School. A Farewell Banquet is held in the evening with a presentation of culture and games by the Japanese delegation. Very early the next morning the Rikubetsu delegation boards a bus for Edmonton International Airport. It is not without many tears shed as they bid farewell to their new friends in Lacombe

Lacombe Visits Rikubestu

A delegation from Lacombe has visited Rikubetsu in 1994, 1996, 1998, 2001 and 2004.

The Town of Rikubetsu and its citizens have welcomed every delegation with their wonderful hospitality. It is an amazing opportunity to see the incredible sights of Hokkaido, and to experience the culture of Japan.

The twinning has strengthened the relationship between Lacombe and Rikubetsu over the years. It has also provided an opportunity for Lacombe students to learn about the Japanese culture and for the Rikubetsu students to learn about the Canadian culture.

Photo Album



Town Councillor Wayne Rempel and Chizuko Tsutsumi (JTB tour guide and translator at the Farewell Banquet)



Students at the Lacombe Corn Maze



Getting Acquainted at the Welcome Ceremony & Luncheon



Volleyball Game at the Welcome Ceremony & Luncheon



Group Picture in front of the Dinosaur at Drumheller



Group Picture at the Hoodoos