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Aizuwakamatsu Smart City

Aizuwakamatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan
2013-

Driving regional regeneration through digital innovation based on collaboration between industry, academia, government and local community.

Key Issue

The city of Aizuwakamatsu has a population of around 120,000. Its main industries include manufacturing (e.g. electronic components, precision machinery, nonferrous metal, etc.), medical welfare, local industries (e.g. Japanese sake, lacquerware, etc.) and agriculture centered on rice cultivation. However, the working-age population of the city has decreased greatly in recent years due to changes in the industrial structure and the impact of the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. As a result of this decrease, the vitality of the city had declined, and reviving the local economy had become a pressing issue. To tackle this issue, the city began working with the University of Aizu (which is dedicated exclusively to information and communication technology; ICT) to revitalize the region through the development and creation of ICT industry, which is a high added-value industry.

Project Approach

Provision of testing field to resolve social problems

In this project, ICT is being utilized as a tool to improve services for residents and develop effective measures in various fields relating to daily life, by establishing and developing ICT infrastructure that can utilize data not only in conventional individual fields but also in other areas. The project also aims to develop new industries and secure employment opportunities through the development of environments capable of accepting ICT human resources and companies, such as telework facilities.

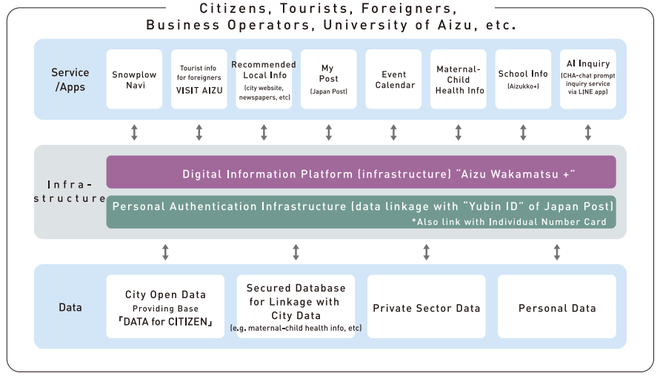
Unified framework for citizens, local government and private-sector companies to work together as one

In promoting smart cities utilizing ICT, it is important to accumulate data obtained through proactive participation by citizens, and to create an effective framework to operate and support the project. A service provision model is therefore being constructed through collaborative efforts among industry, academia and local government, based on the citizen participation. Specifically, representatives from each field of industry, the University of Aizu, and the Aizuwakamatsu City Government work together to compile data on the state of the smart city, and collaborate with local companies and other organizations in the actual implementation of the project. The project members have also built cooperative relationships with major ICT corporations, and received a wide range of progressive project proposals.

Laboratory for leading-edge ICT in Aizu (LICTiA), University of Aizu
University of Aizu was established as a prefectural university centralized in computer science & engineering. With the support provided by ICT companies, the university is developing human resources in the field of analytics in collaboration with Aizuwakamatsu City.
Source: University of Aizu

"AiCT" ICT office building
With the aim of attracting influx of new people through the accumulation of ICT-related companies and encouraging young people to settle in the area, this ICT office building was constructed with a capacity of around 500 people. The building will also function as a location for the creation of incubation projects through interactions with citizens and local companies.
Source: Aizuwakamatsu City

Illustrative image of Aizuwakamatsu City Digital Information Platform



Developing a common infrastructure for provision of information enables the development of various applications, and expansion of functionality.
The development of a smart city platform that seeks to share and standardize systems enables the mutual integration of various types of information on the cloud.
Source: Aizuwakamatsu City

To the Next Phase

In April 2019, the project members established the large-scale ICT office, "AiCT" , with the objectives of training human resources who will lead the next generation in the field of analytics, and encouraging them to settle in the region. Multifaceted initiatives are also underway for easing the centralization of people and resources in the National Capital Region, and maintaining and developing the region.

Data

Area: 383 square kilometers
Project implementing bodies: Aizuwakamatsu City Government, etc.
Population: 119,000 (as of April 2019)