

E-Mail Newsletter from Mayor of Okayama City "Challenge of Legendary Okayama"
(35) December 10 number

[AEON MALL Okayama Grand Opening]

Hello, I'm Omori, Mayor of Okayama City.

Last December 5, AEON MALL Okayama was finally opened in front of Okayama Station. 356 specialist shops (65 of them are local companies) were born during single night.

I also visited there with my wife last Saturday (December 6). We took our time over to looking at attractive shops. We both were so excited and I am sure Okayama citizens would also enjoy this exciting place very much.

There is also a local commercial broadcasting TV station (Okayama Broadcasting Co., Ltd. —OHK) in the mall. To move all facility of program production in commercial building is the first trial in the whole country. I expect this spot would give some closer feeling about the broadcasting to visiting people.

Anyway, it was on Saturday, so there were many young people (students, 20's and 30's) with heated atmosphere in the building. That's like young people. They are well attuned to new things. I was surprised there are such many young people in Okayama.

10 days or so are passing by after Soft Opening (November 29). According to President Okazaki, he said the number of customers who visited the mall is exceeded a little more than we expected. The mall has had a smooth launch that there will be more than 20 million people from out of city and prefecture expecting to visit the mall every year.

Not only trams and buses, but there are cycle ports for the community cycle "Momochari" (100 yen/every ride and 60 yen with a coupon ticket). I hope people who visit the mall also can enjoy going around in town. On the other hand, nearby shopping streets may get some influences from the mall more or less, however, I expect they also make benefits from it. I hope we all dynamize the economy of Okayama with multiplier effect. I would like to support them as much as possible.

By the way, we're afraid of massive traffic jams before the opening, however, there has been no serious traffic jams so far. What people used the public transportation like JR and traffic restrictions such as right-turn prohibition at part of intersections along the road by Okayama City Hall imposed by Okayama pref. police were probably effective for that.

I hope it will continue the same with no traffic confusions.