

Corporate News

■ *Effective Use of the Shinkansen Network*

JR East is effectively operating an expansive network of five Shinkansen routes connecting Tokyo and major cities in its operating area: the Tohoku, Joetsu and Nagano Shinkansen lines and the Yamagata and Akita hybrid Shinkansen services. In December 1999, the Yamagata hybrid Shinkansen Line was extended from Yamagata to Shinjo, enabling through service between Tokyo and Shinjo. Due to this extension, the number of passengers carried on the Yamagata-Shinjo sector from its commencement date through the end of September 2000 was about 90% higher than in the same period prior to the start of this new service.

To accommodate growth in Shinkansen commuters, JR East increased the number of all-double-decker series E4 Max trains operating on the Tohoku Shinkansen Line during the morning rush-hour period from December 2000. In the spring of 2001, these trains are to enter service on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line as well. This will result in an overall increase of eight of these eight-car units.

■ *Giving a New Vitality to Stations*

JR East's stations serve more than 16 million passengers every day. Stations are thus an invaluable resource holding great potential for commercial developments. Under its *Sunflower Plan*, JR East is altering station facility layouts to open up more commercial space for stores offering a diverse range of products and services.

Among recent accomplishments are the opening of the *Dining Court* restaurant mall and *Media Court* interactive information center at Tokyo Station and the opening of a *UNIQLO* store at Shinjuku Station through an agreement with this highly successful apparel retailer. JR East will continue to develop stores that address the needs of customers through large-scale developments at main stations in the Tokyo metropolitan area, the use of IT and more alliances with partners outside the JR East Group.

■ *IT Businesses Grow at JR East*

The *eki-net* electronic mall opened its cyber doors in April 2000. The e-mall's most distinguishing feature is a service allowing customers to pick up merchandise at stores conveniently located at stations.

Also on its railway services, visitors to the company's Web site can make seat reservations, view information about hotels and package tours, which can also be booked online, view information on train operations, and access other information. Thus far, the site has attracted an average of 40,000 daily visitors for information and is selling a large number of reserved tickets every day.

JR East is planning to use its IT infrastructure to add still more services and businesses. This IT infrastructure includes an IC card called *Suica* that is slated for introduction during 2001, fiber-optic networks, station LANs, *View Cards* and other elements.