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> **Masayasu Yamashiro**
> President, Okinawa Financial Group, Inc.

Okinawa Financial Group Advances Financial Education and Growth

Okinawa Financial Group is linking stronger performance with financial education, DX and human capital to support Okinawa’s long-term growth. BY DANIEL DE BOMFORD

Crystal-clear waters and tropical greenery adorn Okinawa, the geographic gateway to Japan. Carved shisa lions watch over homes and temples, evidence of a cultural exchange that extends as far as the Middle East. For centuries, the chain of islands was a cultural crossroads and center of economic exchange in the Pacific. The lions now preside over a new transformation that once again leverages Okinawa’s natural geographic advantages to be both the gateway to Japan and the financial crossroads of the Pacific.

However, the region faces economic challenges stemming from low income, shifting demographics and low financial literacy. The question for Okinawa, and perhaps all of Japan, is what kind of institution can turn local potential into durable growth?

From Bank to Regional Platform

Okinawa Financial Group Inc. is answering that question by providing economic and investment opportunities, sound financial education and a reimagining of banking services, realized through digital transformation (DX). With roots in local banking, it has evolved into a finance-centered comprehensive service group.

The group’s second medium-term business plan is built around three connected strategies under the theme “Co-creating Growth — Growing Okinawa together.” The first is to increase the value of local communities by supporting Okinawa’s leading industries, strengthening local companies, addressing community issues, raising prefectural income, supporting asset formation and responding to climate change.

The second is human capital management: developing people who can deliver community value and business growth, while promoting diversity, senior and female participation, and stronger employee motivation. The third is to build a base for growth through structural reform, group-wide synergies, market-driven services and higher corporate value. Together, these strategies tie the group’s growth to Okinawa’s long-term economic development and complement what President Masayasu Yamashiro calls its “Moonshot Strategy.”

The Moonshot Strategy: Performance as Proof of Execution

Regional contribution depends on a stronger financial institution. For Okinawa Financial Group, the “Moonshot” strategy is not simply a set of ambitious earnings targets; it is the financial foundation for a broader regional role. “The Moonshot concept embodies our determination to pursue a fundamentally new trajectory — management that is not a mere extension of the past but rather something

bold and transformative, as if aiming for the moon,” Yamashiro said.

The ambition reflects the belief that Okinawa Financial Group can only help raise Okinawa’s economic potential if it has the profitability, capital strength and operational discipline to invest in people, technology and community-facing services. The strategy is already yielding results. The group revised its fiscal 2026 targets upward to ¥71 billion ($439.5 million) in ordinary income, ¥11 billion ($68.1 million) in net income and an ROE of about 6.2 percent. In May 2026, it lifted them again to ¥80 billion ($495.3 million), ¥12 billion ($74.29 million) and 6.7 percent, respectively.

DX and Human Capital: Moving People to Higher-Value Work

The Moonshot strategy is built on DX, governance reform, cost optimization and the movement of staff from administrative tasks to lending and sales. “At the core, banking is about lending,” Yamashiro said. “To strengthen this area, we have used digital transformation to streamline administrative functions, reducing headcount in back-office operations.” The goal is to put more employees in front of customers, where they can identify financing needs, support business owners and help households make better financial decisions. By reducing routine processing and branch-counter work, Okinawa Financial Group is freeing staff to spend more time on advisory roles, relationship building and practical support for companies across Okinawa.

That shift is central to the group’s human capital strategy. Okinawa Financial Group links its growth plan to developing people who can support regional value creation, with particular emphasis on strengthening corporate sales, improving lending expertise, expanding training and creating more opportunities for women and senior employees. In practice, this means the bank is trying to turn operational efficiency into human capability. Employees who once spent more time on paperwork can now focus on credit decisions, succession planning, asset formation, digital adoption and other areas where local businesses need guidance. While DX has taken hold in Tokyo, regional areas like Okinawa have moved more slowly. Okinawa Financial Group sees that gap as part of its mission. The group is applying digital tools within the bank, but it is also bringing that expertise into the community, helping local businesses and governments modernize their operations. “We believe it is our mission to share our expertise widely — with corporations, local governments and individuals alike,” Yamashiro said. By training its own people to become more consultative and digitally fluent, the group is also creating a channel through which Okinawa’s broader economy can become more productive, resilient and competitive.

A Community Framework for Lifelong Financial Learning

Financial education is emerging as one of Okinawa Financial Group’s clearest contributions to Okinawa’s long-term development. The prefecture has struggled in national financial literacy surveys, ranking last in correct-answer rates in 2019 and 2022. Against this background, since December 2023, OFG has conducted outreach classes on financial and economic education at 159 junior high and high schools across the prefecture, providing learning opportunities to approximately 23,700 students. This collaborative effort among OFG group companies has inspired other companies in the prefecture, leading to an increase in initiatives involving partners outside the group. The results of these efforts are steadily becoming apparent. In a financial literacy survey conducted in 2025, the percentage of people in Okinawa Prefecture who recognized that they had “received financial and economic education” rose to third place nationwide. Furthermore, the prefecture moved out of last place in terms of correct answer rates, demonstrating that financial and economic education is indeed taking root. The Okinawa Financial Group set the following as its medium- to long-term goals: “to clearly break out of the bottom tier in the next survey in 2028” and “to raise the correct answer rate above the national average by 2031.”

“Our primary goal is to create a society where children in Okinawa do not encounter or become entangled in financial problems,” Yamashiro said, emphasizing the need for financial education. He pointed to social media and the internet, increasing the risk of young people being caught in financial trouble. He believes education from an early age will help them avoid risks. “Furthermore, I believe that improving financial literacy goes beyond simply acquiring knowledge; it leads to expanded opportunities for education and employment, and will ultimately contribute to raising the income levels of all Okinawa residents,” he said.

“I am convinced that nurturing individuals who understand money correctly and can proactively plan their lives will lead to the sustainable development of our region.” Okinawa Financial Group’s transformation is ultimately a test of what a regional financial institution can become. By combining stronger earnings with financial education, DX, business support and community partnerships, the group is positioning itself as civic infrastructure for Okinawa’s next stage of growth. Its bet is that a stronger bank can help build a more resilient, confident and prosperous region.