

High-tech report

中国日报 CHINA DAILY A JOINT PUBLICATION OF CHINA DAILY AND STATE-LEVEL WEIFANG HI-TECH INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE

VR key to competitive edge

Zone focuses on advantageous industry for expansion and business opportunities

By TANG ZHIHAO
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In the near future, virtual reality technology will give customers the chance to experience potential new homes as though they were really inside the property, in Weifang, Shandong province. VR technology will also allow property buyers in Weifang to purchase furniture without leaving the comfort of their home.

Authorities said Weifang Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone, a national independent innovation demonstration zone in China with strong investment potential, aims to become an international VR development hub to better explore related business opportunities.

"The VR industry is the sector that gives Weifang a chance to develop a competitive advantage and make a name for itself," said Chu Baojie, Weifang's director of communications and Party chief of the zone's working committee.

He said that VR technology will unleash a new industrial revolution in the next five to 10 years, and that it will change people's working life, lifestyles and leisure time.

Weifang has a strong foundation to expand the local VR industry. The city's well-developed electronic information, industrial design and precision manufacturing industries can provide strong support to VR businesses' technological progress, production, promotion and logistics.

The software information industry in Weifang can provide development, outsourcing, internet of things technologies and geographical information services to VR companies, according to Chu.

Local companies represented by GoerTek Inc have been exploring the market for many years.

"GoerTek keeps pace with new trends in the world. It owns many world-leading VR technologies," Chu said.

Chu added that GoerTek has significant potential because it has set clear goals, made detailed plans, attracted many talented professionals and created leading technologies.

GoerTek has established partnerships with Stanford University, Beihang University and Changchun Institute of Optics, Fine Mechanics and Physics at the Chinese Acad-



A client experiences VR at GoerTek Inc. The company works with many world-leading technologies. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Shandong Fire Fox Interactive Entertainment Co demonstrates VR content it has developed for educational purposes.



A view of Weifang Software Park.

emy of Sciences to strengthen its position in developing core technologies and attracting talents.

GoerTek is the exclusive supplier major international businesses in this sector. The company will deliver three million VR headsets to global markets in 2016.

The company also plans to boost sales of its home-brand products and to supply 30 million units of such products in 2020, which will account for 40 percent of global demand.

In 2024, GoerTek expects its sales revenues to exceed 100 billion yuan (\$14.77 billion).

"The industry is experiencing fierce competition. Companies who move faster may

become the market leader, while the rest might even lose their chance to compete," said Chu.

Xin Lizhi, general manager of Shandong Fire Fox Interactive Entertainment Co, a virtual reality content developer in Weifang, said that some companies focus on developing VR hardware instead of content.

"We will focus on content development and we believe there is huge development potential," Xin said. "The development zone has a strong VR industrial development foundation and the local government is providing strong support. I think we are in the right industry at the right time."

Weifang, which intends to

become a global VR technology city, has set detailed plans to support its long-term mission.

Local administrative departments are required to provide all necessary help to support GoerTek.

"We will put more resources into the VR industry to provide more opportunities for companies. We will also pay more attention to attracting new businesses along the VR industrial chain to support GoerTek's growth," said Dong Yulun, director of the Weifang Software Innovation and Enterprises Service Center.

The Weifang government considers the expansion of leading companies to be the key to accelerating the construction of its VR technology city. GoerTek has been encouraged to take more responsibility in developing a VR technology platform, support the national VR technology development strategy and strengthen independent development capacity. The company will also take the lead in establishing a VR industrial research institute and training center.

Local authorities have realized that a premium business environment is crucial in supporting VR industry development. Led by GoerTek, the Weifang VR Industry Development Alliance and Shandong VR Industry Development Alliance have been established to optimize the market's local ecosystem.



Dong Bo (left), founder of Fire Fox, discusses the details of VR content design with a colleague at his company in Weifang.

Design firm sees explosive growth

By ZHUANTI
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Fire Fox Interactive Entertainment Co, a virtual reality content developer in Weifang, Shandong province, sees tremendous business opportunities in the Weifang Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone's international VR city construction.

According to the company, its orders have already queued up until January 2017. Its founder and general manager believe the VR industry will report explosive growth in three to five years, while "mixed reality" will be developed around five years later, they said.

Dong Bo, founder of Fire Fox, established Weifang Fire Fox Digital Animation Co in 2008. The company's name was changed to Shandong Fire Fox Interactive Entertainment in 2016. It is not related to the Firefox web browser.

The startup process was not as smooth as Dong expected. In the initial stages, demand for digital animation content was low because internet games were rarely seen and smart phones were not so widely used in China 10 years ago, he said.

At first, Dong worked mainly in big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. In 2008, when he came back to Weifang, the need for content was low and industry employees did not have enough work.

Orders from Weifang and neighboring cities in Shandong, such as Qingdao and Jinan, have increased gradually in recent years.

But now, Dong's company, known for quality content creation, has bargaining power in the Weifang market.

"We no longer need to beg for orders. Our position is so much better than before," Dong said.

Fire Fox has participated in the creation of 41 cartoons, four movies, 109 advertisements and media projects, and more than 70 mobile and web games since 2009. The company has also trained more than 200 talents for companies in the industry.

Xin Lizhi, Fire Fox's general manager, has extensive business management and media experience. He is working to strengthen talents training and has set detailed employee job responsibilities, two key tasks for the company.

"Establishing a scientific management system will help to enhance business profitability and support future development," Xin said.

Some large companies have shown interest in Fire Fox and offered acquisition plans.

Dong said his central focus at this stage is to strengthen the company's business development.

Zhou Jinjiang contributed to this story.

Urban planning bids evaluated by experts

By ZHAORUIXUE
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At the evaluation meeting for planning the upgrade of Weifang National Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone held on Oct 25, bids from Shanghai Tongji Urban Planning and Design Institute, Dorell Ghotmeh Tane/Architects Ltd and W&R Group came first, second and third, respectively.

The Weifang high-tech zone began wooing urban planning companies from across the world in June to upgrade its 110-square-kilometer area, set to include new international features.

Seven organizations were short-listed for the evaluation meeting, where they presented their design ideas and answered questions raised by the bid evaluation committee. The committee had five planning experts, including Qiu Baoxing, a Beijing-based housing expert and former vice-minister with the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

Experts selected the top three designs fit for the zone based on aspects such as design concepts, space layout, livability and environmental protection.

"Building an international zone that integrates the functions of industry and the city is the foundation for interna-

tionalized innovation," said Chu Baojie, Weifang's director of communications and Party chief of the zone's working committee.

Chu said innovation must be carried out with an international perspective and be supported by experts from home and abroad.

Throughout its development, Weifang high-tech zone has always featured international qualities. Advertisements in the zone are in both Chinese and English. An innovation-supporting industrial park within the zone, named Blue Wisdom Valley, attracts experts from both home and abroad, while enterprises there are also adopting global strategies.

The zone is encouraging more local companies to extend their reach and "go global" through acquisitions and joint development, according to the zone's department of communications.

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潍坊国家高新技术产业开发区
State Weifang High-Tech Industrial Development Zone

New logo delights residents and companies

By ZHUANTI

Weifang Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone's new city logo, released on Oct 10, has received significant appreciation from local residents and businesses.

The new logo consists of many upward Vs, representing the zone's prosperous city landscapes, growing economy and energetic local life, according to the logo designers.

"I've been following the logo selection process. The new logo symbolizes the rapid changes in the development zone," said Chen Xingjun, general manager of Shandong Xingmei New Materials Co. "I will print the logo on my business cards to make them more impressive."

Sun Jingjing, an associate professor with the cul-

ture and tourism college of Weifang University, thinks the logo successfully demonstrates the city's key characteristics to the outside world.

"The development zone is known for its high-tech, modern management systems, rapid economic growth and innovative development concepts, as well as its combination of traditional and modern culture," Sun said. "We need to increase investment in the city's brand building, as we have its hardware, so residents can feel proud of living here."

Zhao Honglong, a resident in Xin'gang Economic Development Zone, echoed Sun's opinion.

"A country needs a national flag and a national emblem because they are the symbols of that nation. We



also need a logo so our future generations can remember their hometown," Zhao said.

Sun added: "A logo is the most direct demonstration of the city's culture and spirit. It helps people to identify a city. A logo can showcase a city's current development situation and future development potential."

The new logo will also help to attract more capital and businesses to the region in the coming years, according to Wang Yuzhi, deputy director of the zone's investment attraction and promotion bureau.

"The new logo will illustrate our competitive advantages, create more brand recognition and better promote the city. It will support our investment attraction work," he said.

Yin Aijun, general manager of Shandong Supermaly

Generating Equipment Co Ltd, said that the development zone has achieved outstanding results in software and hardware development, and has progressed well in its internationalization. Businesses in the zone see tremendous opportunities.

"The logo will help to promote the zone's businesses in foreign markets and help foreign businesses better understand the zone," Yin said.

Supermaly is a key high-tech company in Shandong province. Over 70 percent of its products are distributed in foreign markets.

The local government has registered for intellectual property rights protection for the logo. Using the logo in public areas, the city hopes that people will have better knowledge of the development zone.