

# Zone stepping up efforts to support projects

A new 100-hectare industrial park will be completed in 2025

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The Weifang Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone in Weifang city, East China's Shandong province, is taking a series of measures to attract and upgrade its business environment aimed at supporting long-term development of the region.

Over the past few years, the zone has been committed to replacing old economic development drivers with new ones. One of the efforts is supporting Weichai Power, one of leading heavy truck engines and component developers and suppliers in China, to construct a new energy power-focused industrial park in the zone.

Construction of the industrial park, which covers nearly 100 hectares of land, started in 2018 and will be completed in 2025. The park is located on an old thermal power plant site, which needed to be relocated before Weichai to settle in. A key issue, effectively and efficiently supporting relocation of the old factory to ensure the new project's speedy progress, was the key issue considered by local government at the initial stage, according to the zone's officials.

"We formed a service team especially for Weichai to support the industrial park's construction. The relocation plans were completed as it was scheduled," said Liu Wenzeng, deputy director of the zone's economic and development bureau.

The "service team" mentioned by Liu is an example of a recent service upgrades that has supported key business projects.

In February, the new service model got its official name, zhuan ban, which translates to "special service teams." Under this model, supporting teams formed by government officials have been assigned responsibilities to oversee key projects in the zone and ensure any difficulty in the construction process is solved in an efficient manner.

According to local officials, meetings are organized weekly for key projects so companies can raise problems with officials, with all related government departments required to provide feedback in limited time.

Apart from Weichai, acoustics solutions and smart hardware provider Goertek is also a beneficiary of the new model.

The zone's efforts signaled clearly to companies its resolve to strengthen economic growth. Companies have responded by adding more new investment projects to the area.

Weichai celebrated the groundbreaking of the Weichai International Engine Component Industrial Park in the zone on July 13.

Twenty global leading automotive parts makers, including Knorr-Bremse from Germany and Tyco from the United States, have signed agreements to open production sites in the industrial park.

Xu Zizhi, director of new projects at Weichai, said Weichai can raise



The Weifang Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone is one of the growth engines in Shandong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



From left: Weichai Chairman Tan Xuguang (third from left) shares his opinions during the Qingdao Multinationals Summit held from Oct 19 to 20. A Shengrui Transmission technician checks the company's products at the production line. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



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Wang Shaoxiong, Tsinghua Holdings executive



any project-relevant problems to the zone in the park's construction progress. The zone will spare no efforts to support Weichai's work.

## High-tech hub

In recent years, a large number of high-tech industrial park projects were initiated by the zone to attract leading companies.

The internet of things industrial park, launched on April 3 in the zone, focuses on attracting the next generation of information technology businesses. The zone has established an industrial investment fund with a total of 5 billion yuan (\$705.81 million) to support businesses' focus on IoT, big data, artificial intelligence and blockchain.

Companies such as Shenzhen-listed Sunsea AIoT Technology has launched a regional operation center in the park.

Construction of a geographical

information-centered industrial park is underway. The park, with a total of 1.5 billion yuan in investment, will be opened on August 2020. Businesses focus on satellite remote sensing, survey and mapping are welcome to the park.

An advanced equipment production project partially invested in by Tsinghua Holdings Capital broke ground on June 30. The site is scheduled to start production later this year, according to the investment company.

The project took only 18 days for investors to announce the groundbreaking after agreements were signed by the zone's government.

"We did not rush to make decisions, though the time it took to make the final decision was short," said Wang Shaoxiong, from Tsinghua Holdings.

Wang said the project's operators

were well-informed about the development of the Weifang Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone, which helped them to make a detailed evaluation about the zone according to their investment standards.

"We (Tsinghua Holdings Capital) compared the zone with many other regions, and we believe it is the most desired investment destination," Wang said.

It also pays attention to business, urban and legal environment enhancements to make the region a first-class national economic zone in China.

## Urban upgrades

Measures have been taken to upgrade the living environment of the zone as economic growth maintains stable.

Companies in the zone were tasked to promote environmental

protection in response to requirements of the central government. Weifang Special Steel in the zone has invested 390 million yuan in two low-emission projects in the upcoming years to improve regional air quality.

Roads were built and expanded to ensure smooth traffic flow in the region during peak hours. More greenery, decoration and lightening projects are also in progress.

Drones were deployed to monitor unpermitted activities such as soil dumping and unlicensed construction projects.

As it has been doing in previous years, the zone continues to enhance living standards for its residents this year. Three new schools have been put into use and four schools were expanded this year, providing nearly 9,000 additional positions to students.

## Weifang sustains growth despite trade turmoil

By YUAN SHENGGAO

A solid foundation for the manufacturing industries has become key for companies in Weifang city, Shandong province, to maintain growth amid the uncertainties in global trade.

In the first eight months of 2019, export value of Weifang was 74.48 billion yuan (\$10.53), an increased of 13.4 percent year-on-year, and was 7.3 percentage points higher than the national average. Exports to emerging markets such as Russia, Africa and Latin America also increased significantly year-on-year, according to local officials.

Goertek, the acoustics solutions and smart hardware provider headquartered in Weifang, is one of the largest mobile earphone and microphone producers in the world in terms of annual sales volume.

In the ongoing climate of global trade turbulence, some of its clients considered partnering with other foreign suppliers to lower overall costs, according to Gao Xiaoguang, vice-president of Goertek.

"We suggested contacting suppliers outside China to see if they can get products with the same quality and standards," Gao said.

After visiting some suppliers in South Asia and Southeast Asia, the clients came back to Goertek because either the quality cannot meet the requirement or the costs are high, Gao said.

Goertek's professional team is key to boosting its bargaining power in global trade.

Gao said Goertek has 10,000 development engineers and 10,000 technicians to guarantee the quality of their products. Those experts are the most valuable assets of the



From Left: A Goertek engineer works at the company's acoustic laboratory. Renowned Hungarian fashion model Viktoria Varga tries a VR headset when visiting the company. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



company and will not be affected by the changing global environment.

Goertek is not the only company in Weifang that has established strong bargaining power in foreign markets. Himile Group, a tire mold equipment manufacturer in

the city, has built their own laboratories to test newly developed equipment.

"We have a large development team to ensure we can introduce a new generation of equipment in three to five years and keep up with the pace of the market," said Shan

Jiqiang, general manager of Himile. Starting in 1995 with about 30 staff members, Himile has grown into an industrial leader with more than 10,000 employees.

The company built a vocational school to train professionals to serve its development needs.

Educational service providers in Weifang also keep introducing new courses to serve companies' demand in recent years.

Li Guangjing, a researcher from Weifang's education bureau, said the city has made changes to 84 courses.