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Wenjiang's natural environment pays dividends

By ZHAO SHIJUN

An equestrian festival will begin tomorrow in Wenjiang district of Chengdu to promote the sport among locals and increase the district's recognition in the international community.

The 2011 China Equestrian Festival that will last to Sept 19 is sponsored by the General Administration of Sport and China Equestrian Federation.

According to the organizing committee, the festival will include five competitions for professionals — ranging from Western equestrian sports to Chinese-style horse racing — and a number of activities for amateurs.

More than 100 athletes and their horses will take part in the four-day event.

In addition to horse racing, other activities will include photo displays, paintings and

equestrian equipment.

An important part of the festival will be the 2011 Asia Equestrian Federation conference that will elect new leadership.

The next day after the equestrian festival opens, another international sport event — the Wenjiang leg of the 2011 China Cycling Race — will be held.

Twenty-two professional teams — including 18 from foreign countries such as the United States, France and the United Kingdom, and four from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taipei — will compete on a 90-km circuit in the district.

Why Wenjiang?

Big metropolises such as Beijing and Shanghai often have international sports events, but it is not an easy job for a small district like Wenjiang.

The district was selected over

many other candidate hosts for several reasons — including its good environment and complete facilities.

There is also the local government's attitude in planning economic growth.

Unlike the governments in other areas with ambitious plans to develop big manufacturing industries and make big money, the Wenjiang district government has a simple focus — only environmentally friendly industries are welcome.

Wenjiang is at the heart of the Sichuan Basin known as the "land of plenty" for thousands of years.

Thanks to its well-developed irrigation systems, including the nearby renowned 2,200-year-old Dujiangyan Dam, the people have seldom experienced flood, drought or famine.

Life has been easy and locals are satisfied, so they don't have much interest in making big money — which today often requires developing large industrial projects.

Some might term it a "lack of enterprising spirit", but to locals it means preservation of a good environment.

Wenjiang is a "garden city", with nearly 90 sq km of flower and tree farms on its total land of 277 sq km — though it is now part of urban Chengdu.

The district holds a number of honors for environmental protection — including the UN Scroll of Habitat and as a national ecological zone.

Today the district has based its development largely on environmentally friendly sectors such as education, research and development,



Athletes competing in last year's equestrian event.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



With a number of cycling events held in Wenjiang, the sport is now popular among the locals.

eco-agriculture, creative industries and modern services.

Fond of leisure

Because locals have a special love of leisure, the government gives it a high priority when planning development of the service industry and leisure-related sectors such as sports, tourism and culture.

The Jinma Sports Park combines sports, entertainment, dining and hotels. Because it

also has a large horse racing track, it will host this year's equestrian festival.

Cycling is also becoming increasingly popular after completion of a 140-km-long "green path".

The path, shaded in lush trees, winds through farms and along rivers and streams, offering locals and tourists an ideal venue for cycling and hiking. It has already hosted a number of national and provincial-level sports events.



The mascots for the 2011 China Equestrian Festival.