



Taipei Mayor Hau Lung-bin (left) and Publicity Department Director of Xi'an Wang Jun signed cooperation agreement on the horticulture exposition.



Senior Xi'an government officials opened a promotional event for the upcoming expo.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Culture exchange across Straits

By LU HONGYAN

The Xi'an International Horticultural Exposition's organizing committee has even more reason than just the expo itself, to congratulate themselves.

They signed a cooperation memorandum with the Taipei International Flora Exposition, this past July, which hit a new high point in exchange programs between the mainland and Taiwan.

"This cooperation can be seen as another great event, following the opening of a direct air link between Xi'an and Taipei, in 2008. That raised communication between the two cities to a higher level," said Wang Jun, head of publicity for the Xi'an Party committee who went on to call it a "match made in heaven."

Wang said the two cities will work together to promote a green lifestyle during their respective expositions.

"In addition to showing different approaches to gardening and culture, the shows are expected to have the mutual benefit of strengthening economic, tourist, and cultural development."

The experience of hosting a large event can be shared and this is helpful in improving operational and management ability, Wang noted.

More cooperation

Hao Longbin, Taipei's mayor, emphasized the tourist attractions of Xi'an, with historical elements like the terracotta warriors. He said he hopes that these relics, which embody Chinese culture, have the chance to be enjoyed by the people of Taipei.

Greater, in-depth cooperation is expected in field of marketing, Hao commented.

The two cities will have their own pavilions at each other's exposition, along with Culture Week activities.

At Xi'an's Culture Week, for instance, visitors can see the art of the paper-cut, listen to classical music, and see calligraphy, films and other local culture.

Meanwhile, work on a Xi'an pavilion for the Taipei exposition, called the "Xi'an courtyard", has been completed.

Wang said the people of Taipei can enjoy the characteristics of Xi'an garden architecture and sculptures, in the courtyard. Visitors will be surrounded by various plants and flowers, like rare peonies, the Chinese dove tree (the "panda of plants"), and persimmon trees, whose name has the sense of "everything goes well."

There is a place for visitors to write their impressions of the exhibit. Wang explained that, "The idea originates with the Tang Dynasty, when aspirants at the imperial examination (a sort of civil service exam) would write their names on Xi'an's Yanta Tower for good luck."

Taipei's Straits Exchange Foundation's director general Chiang Pin-kung joined the city's mayor in visiting the courtyard before it opened to the public, and expressed his approval of it.

A Taipei pavilion, for the Xi'an exposition, is under construction.

These two most unusual horticultural gatherings have a connection with the International Association of Horticultural Producers.

Xi'an goes from gray to green in its horticultural exposition



Taiwan visitors hold their copies of the publicity brochures for next year's Xi'an exposition.

By LU HONGYAN

In recent years, Shaanxi province has seen some progress in its reforestation and is becoming greener as the date of the Xi'an International Horticultural Exposition approaches.

This is important because mostly Shaanxi sits on a loess plateau and used to impress people not with its greenery but with its sand storms and murky yellow sky, according to Yao Yinliang, the vice-governor, and vice-chairman of the expo organizing committee.

So, the expo organizers are working hard to prepare for it and Yao, who inspected the site on Dec 16, said that, obviously, "The horticultural expo is a great opportunity to promote Shaanxi's new image." The expo takes place in 2011.

So far, work on the site is going well: 37, out of a total of 109 outdoor gardens, have been built, including the Guangzhou, Harbin and Chengdu exhibits as well as Italian and Swedish ones.

The remaining gardens and major buildings will be completed by the end of this year.

The roads, bridges, and water, electricity and gas facilities are still being worked on.

The expo has four landmarks — a Chang'an Tower, Theme Pavilion, Green House, and Guangyun Entrance — which are almost completed.

The whole site is clearly visible from the top of the 13-story Chang'an Tower.

Chen Baogen, Xi'an's mayor, explained that, "The expo is the largest, highest-level international event Shaanxi province has ever held since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949.

"This is a great opportunity to show the world a green, modern, fashionable and international Xi'an."

The city's public garden administration announced in November that it has an ambitious plan to decorate the whole city with flowers and various plants for the duration of the expo (April to October).

So, it is placing 600,000 pots of flowers along main streets and even alleys in the old town, inside the city walls.

And there will be five "flower

harbors" in the high-tech zone, the economic and technological development zone, the Qujiang new district, the scenic city wall area, and the Tang Dynasty (618-907) Daming Palace area.

Flowers will also decorate major transportation hubs like the airport and railway station, and historical neighborhoods, big hotels and shopping malls.

The administration will do a check on these flower zones by April 25 and will ask residents to vote on the 30 best spots.

Global friendships and green convention

The expo has received the support of college students from across the country. In fact, youth league leaders from 100 universities met in Xi'an on Nov 14 for an expo promotion campaign.

Liu Aiping, a senior Communist Youth League official, and Du Huiliang, vice-secretary general of the All-China Student Federation, opened the campaign along with members of the organizing committee.

They took the opportunity to sign a "Green Convention", on behalf of college students,

to urge young people to pay greater attention to an environmentally friendly, energy-saving, low-carbon life.

Guo Yong, secretary of the Tsinghua University Communist Youth League, said the gathering would help the country's college students better understand the expo and the importance of a "green, low-carbon life."

"We should start right now with the little things we can do in our daily lives to contribute to an environmentally friendly society, which is the mission of our generation," Guo said.

Through March of 2011, college students will be able to attend lectures, see sculptures and win special awards all related to the expo.

The organizers have tried targeting other people all over the world, over the Internet.

On Dec 18, the organizing committee signed an agreement with www.tianya.cn, a popular Chinese online forum, to promote an environmentally friendly, low-carbon lifestyle among Chinese around the globe.

Combining classical with modernism for new cosmopolitan look

By LU HONGYAN

The organizers of the Xi'an International Horticultural Exposition want to show a harmonious relation of city development to ecological preservation, a senior official has said.

"With the expo, we will prove that a city can modernize without damaging the ecology," said Wang Jun, publicity director of Xi'an's municipal Party committee.

Visitors will discover a new Xi'an with a good, natural environment and prosperous economy, said Wang, who is

also committee secretary of the Party's Chanba ecological zone, the expo's main site.

"The expo will enrich city life and stimulate economic and social growth. It will also guide the people to an eco-friendly, low-carbon lifestyle and help them build a livable city," he said.

Then, adding that the Chanba Ecological Zone, is itself a good example. That is because it had polluted rivers, mountains of garbage, and sinking riverbeds when it opened in 2004.

Since then, the people have made an effort to reduce the

pollution and restore the ecology, by giving the zone a natural environment.

That environment has significantly increased the zone's value and has made it a popular investment area for western China.

In 2008, the provincial government and Xi'an municipal government decided to locate a financial-business district in the middle of the Chanba Ecological Zone.

Wang said the expo, which runs from October 2011, is expected to have more than 12 million visitors. The site covers 418 hectares and most

of the major buildings have been set up

"We welcome everyone, from China and abroad to come and enjoy it" Wang said, explaining that the site is where the Xuanzong emperor of the Tang Dynasty (AD618-907) held an exposition. It showed local specialties and was the world's first exposition on record.

"We are determined to show people that Xi'an is a young, fashionable, green city and one with a rich history," Wang said.

"The Shanghai World Expo's success encouraged us to try to

provide the highest-level horticultural expo ever."

Wang explained that the 19 gardens were designed by nine of the world's top gardening masters with help from 10 prominent university landscape architecture schools.

These possible represent the highest level of the gardening art, he added.

Duke Farbo, chairman of the International Association of Horticultural Producers, after visiting the site, said, "You have set a new example."

Zhang Jinqiu, 73, a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and one of China's top architects, designed the expo's landmark, the Chang'an Tower.

Zhang is also one of two female architects to win the title of "Construction Master."

The Chang'an Tower stands 99 meters tall and is both observation tower and expo symbol.

Visitors can get a panoramic view of the whole site from the top of the 13-story tower. It is a combination of modern elements and classical style, and is intended to represent the height of the architecture art and to be a gift for future generations.

Wang said that the tower and some other prominent structures will stay in the park after the expo comes to an end.

Eva Jiricna, a British architect and designer, has come up with a special greenhouse for the expo to represent Xi'an's new cosmopolitan image.



Xi'an calligraphers demonstrate their different calligraphic techniques at the Taiwan expo, which opened on Nov 16, 2010. Two days after the closing ceremony of the Taipei exposition, the Xi'an horticultural exposition will open, on April 28, 2011.