



Haikou's modernization campaign

THE RESIDENTS of Haikou have benefited from the city's campaign to build a civilized and clean city, which offers them a better environment for living. YI TIEQIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

By ZHAO SHIJUN
zhaoshijun@chinadaily.com.cn

Millions of residents in Haikou, the capital of Hainan province, have benefited from the city's recent campaign for improving the environment and people's quality of life.

In July 2015, Haikou launched an initiative to build a national model for civilized and clean cities, according to the city government.

Since then, the city has carried out a number of projects to improve local ecology, sanitary conditions and people's quality of life.

The local government has taken new measures to better serve both the residents and enterprises.

To date, more than 2,400 streets and lanes have been renovated to better accommodate pedestrians and vehicles.

As many as 46 agricultural product retail markets have been renovated or relocated, making it possible for every resident to reach one of them on foot within 15 minutes. Several big wholesale markets for agricultural products have recently been added to ensure sufficient supplies.

The city stresses employment for handicapped and underprivileged people. In the process of building market facilities, about 1,200 people were offered jobs as vendors.

The city has improved public transit in traffic management, offering more bus stops and bus lines in the past year.

Haikou has also reformed its compulsory education system, with about 40 percent of the schooling opportunities offered to students without Haikou *hukou* — or a permanent resident certificate.

To improve the local environment, the city has launched projects to curb the pollution of its 31 rivers and streams. A number of new sewage and



LOCALS exercise at one of the parks in Haikou. XIE FEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

solid waste treatment facilities were built.

The local government has taken measures to engage residents in these city improvement projects.

Residents are encouraged to report problems they find in their neighborhoods and propose solutions, according to local officials.

The government has received residents' reports on issues such as illegal parking, untidy streets and traffic congestion in certain spots, and has quickly responded to those problems with practical solutions, officials said.

Thanks to these efforts, positive changes have taken place in Haikou in the past year, with a better environment, more convenience for living and more job and business opportunities.

Even foreign guests have noticed these changes.

Chua Teng Hoe, Singaporean consul-general in Guangzhou, paid a visit to Haikou in March.

"Haikou is a beautiful city. It reminds me of my home country Singapore," Chua said. Singapore is known as a "garden city" for its excellent environment.

As improving government services and administrative efficiency are part of the city's recent campaign, local entrepreneurs and investors from the rest of the country also said they have benefited.

Kandi Technologies Group Inc, a Zhejiang-based electric vehicle producer, signed an agreement with the Haikou High-Tech Development Zone in December 2015 for investing in a 2-billion-yuan (\$300 million) production facility there.

"We appreciate the service offered by the local government," said Hu Zengfeng, general manager of Kandi's operation in Haikou.

"For business registration, all we had to do is to forward our application documents to the zone's planning bureau, which helped us go through all procedures in only four days," Hu said.

Haikou's city government leaders require all the officials to offer effective services to both residents and businesses, and respond to their demands as quickly as possible.

The leaders said: "all government bodies should go all out to support local businesses with their best-possible services."

The Haikou government's initiative to improve services also highlights streamlining administrative procedures, as the process was downsized by about 70 percent.

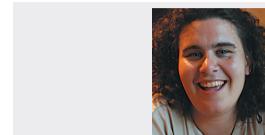
A result of the better business environment, more companies came to invest in Haikou recently.

According to the city government, a total of 81 investment projects were launched in Haikou in the first half of this year. The combined investments of the projects totaled 43.2 billion yuan, growing 31 percent from the same period last year.

Sun Xinyang, Party chief of Haikou, said the "civilized city" campaign also intends to make Haikou a first-class international tourism destination, as the province is on its way to building an international tourism island.

He expects the campaign will give Haikou a fundamental change in three years, making it an ideal place for living, for doing business and for touring.

What is a civilized city?



MARIAN ROSENBURG

The writer is an American citizen who has lived in Haikou for more than 10 years.

with baskets at all hours of the day and night.

But, much as I may miss the former state of affairs, I have no choice but to admit that the current state of affairs is a vast improvement.

Stalls have moved into buildings. Shopkeepers have refrigerators. There are licenses clearly posted to let me know the health department says this place is clean.

And if I can't get my coconut milk dessert on the street corner any more, I can now get it during the day. I can eat it for lunch if I want. I can get it when it's raining.

While there was something quaintly charming about a metal bowl wrapped in a single-use plastic bag because the stall-owner had no place to do dishes, I ultimately prefer a kitchen with hot soapy water.

I've personally lost many conveniences that I once enjoyed, but now I enjoy many more conveniences that I didn't have before.

Motorcycles and three-wheeled motorized tuk-tuks have been replaced with safe transportation suitable for a modern city. Using ride-hailing apps like Uber, prices are standardized for locals and visitors. Furthermore, traffic moves a lot faster when nobody runs red lights or drives the wrong direction on the road.

Haikou is changing into something new. It's becoming a modern city. It's clean and bright and welcoming.

It may not be a tourist mecca like Sanya, but it is no longer the sort of place that people are uncertain about visiting. "Clean and bright and beautiful" have become more than just a slogan. They've become the reality of Haikou.



QILOU, or arcade houses, were built from the 19th century and now form Haikou's most exotic landscapes. Qilou streets remain Haikou's business centers while giving visitors a taste of traditional local life. WU ZHEKUN / FOR CHINA DAILY