



The Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone is now the biggest integrated development zone in Shanxi province. YANG YU / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Demonstration zone a beacon of high-quality development



Province's economic transformation over last decade highlights success of upgrading

By YUAN SHENGGAO

After more than a decade's development, the Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone has transformed into a role model for local high-quality growth and a magnet for investment.

The zone was founded in November 2010 under the approval of the State Council, under the name of National Pilot Zone for the Transformation of Resource-Reliant Economy. It was renamed as the Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone in November 2016. The zone is located between the two central Shanxi cities of Taiyuan and Jinzhong.

Shanxi province, which used to be an economy highly reliant on coal mining and other heavy industries, began an economic transformation move more than a decade ago. The move highlights upgrading traditional industries toward the directions of more efficient and cleaner operations, and cultivating emerging industries as new growth engines.

The Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone was established to serve this campaign.

With a total planned area of more than 600 square kilometers, the demonstration zone is now the biggest integrated development zone in Shanxi.

Over the past decade, the zone has been the major test site for Shanxi's economic transformation.

It is designed to foster four large industrial clusters — precision electronics, synthetic biology, photovoltaics and modern services — each with an annual output value of more than 100 billion yuan (\$13.9 billion). It is also planned to cultivate other emerging industrial clusters each with an annual output value of 10 billion yuan, which include information technology, silicon carbide, sapphire substrate and other new materials. All the sectors are expected to form an advanced industrial system, according to local officials.

The Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone is also a test site of the province's institutional reforms, which aim to create a better business environment for enterprises.

Since the beginning of this year, the zone's authorities have renewed their efforts for business environment optimization, aiming to improve the confidence of investors and local entrepreneurs.

The latest policy move for the ease of doing business was an action plan announced by the zone's administrative committee on May 10 for further institutional reforms relating to improving administrative services.

By delegating power in business approval, streamlining licensing systems and providing whole-process assistance for enterprises' operations and policies for easier market access, the administrative committee pledged that the period from a

project's agreement signing to construction will be shortened to at least 58 days from the previous average of 238 days.

The recent settlement of significantly large projects is an endorsement of the authorities' efforts among investors.

On May 26, Jinko Solar, a new energy developer, signed an agreement with the zone's administration for a solar energy development project with investment totaling 56 billion yuan.

Local officials said this will be one of the largest solar power development facilities in the world, with operations ranging from photovoltaic panels, batteries and chips to other components.

The project is now proceeding smoothly as authorities are providing services according to their promises. Jinko executives said that construction of the facility can begin in September as scheduled.

Liandong U Valley, an industrial park for smart manufacturing in the demonstration zone, is a new establishment which began construction in October 2021.

Prior to the operation of its first-phase project in late August, the park had already signed investment agreements with more than 30 businesses from Shanxi and beyond.

Also in May, a synthetic biological park with investment from renowned local life science company Jinbo Bio-Pharmaceutical became operational. This is the largest facility for the production of human-origin collagen in China. It is a product that can be used in different sectors ranging from surgery, gynecology and dermatology to skin care cosmetics.

Taishan Fiberglass is another company whose executives have said

they are deeply impressed with the professional and considerate services offered by the zone's officials.

The company launched a smart fiberglass manufacturing facility with a designed annual output of 600,000 metric tons in the demonstration zone in August 2022.

"We had completed all procedures for land acquisition, environmental impact assessment and project design registration and approval within a month," said an executive of the company. "This efficiency is definitely beyond our expectations."

The administrative committee of the Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Demonstration Zone is providing businesses with whole-process assistance when they are launching operations there. For Taishan Fiberglass, officials were assigned to help them with all procedures relating to business registration and approval, with all the materials collected and all the forms filled in at the company's office, according to the executive.

Fan Zhaosen, deputy secretary-general of the Shanxi provincial government, is also the chief of the administrative committee of the demonstration zone. He said such a practice is "revolutionary" compared with the conventional ways of registration and approval.

"Our institutional reform is aimed at establishing an advantageous system for investment promotion and creating an optimized business environment," Fan said. "With such a system, along with our accumulated strength in industrial development, we believe we can build an ideal destination for investment and entrepreneurship."

Yang Yu contributed to this story.

# Digital technology used to assist Yellow River's ecological protection

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Major media outlets from nine provinces and autonomous regions along the Yellow River, including Shanxi, gathered in Shandong province to learn about its use of digital technology to enable high-quality growth and ecological protection.

The 5,464-kilometer Yellow River, originating from the snow-capped mountains in Qinghai province and emptying into Bohai Bay in Shandong's Dongying city, is the second-longest river in China. It is regarded as the mother river of the nation because it has nurtured Chinese civilization for millennia.

To protect the ecology of the Yellow River drainage basin and benefit local residents with sustained growth, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued a guideline on the ecological protection and high-quality development of the Yellow River drainage basin in October 2021. It kicked off a large-scale campaign for the region's sustainable development.

Shandong, the last province along the river, is one of the pioneers in using digitalization to assist environmental protection of the river and sustainable regional development.



The Yellow River about to empty into Bohai Bay in Dongying, Shandong province. WANG YUZHANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

The media tour's first leg was in Jinan, the provincial capital of Shandong, on July 25, where they visited the National Supercomputing Center Jinan.

Boasting a platform consisting of thousands of supercomputers, the center offers digital services to businesses, governments and communities in Shandong and beyond.

Assisting the high-quality development of the Yellow River drainage basin is one of the major missions of the Jinan center. The center cooperated with 10 computing institutions along the river to establish a Yellow River Computing Network Alliance in Jinan in March with the aim to

inject vigor into the high-quality growth of the river region.

Another example of digital technologies being used for environmental protection is the Yellow River Delta National Ecological Protection Zone, located at the river's estuary in Dongying city.

When the journalists visited the zone's ecological monitoring center on July 27, they were impressed with its powerful land-sea-sky monitoring system.

The monitoring room features dozens of display screens showing areas of the park. A staff member at the center said that the images are collected by sensors and cameras

scattered across the estuary, or from drones in the sky and even satellites.

Qiu Xuanmei, a tour member from Gansu Daily in Gansu province, said he was amazed at the center's bird identity technology.

"Every detail of the birds is shown on the screens, as if they are just meters away," Qiu said. "That is the power of the latest technology in computing and algorithms."

In Shandong, digital technologies are widely used in business operations and governance.

Niulan Diheni Food is a company in Zibo city engaged in beef cattle farming. Digital technologies are used in the whole process of its operations, according to Dong Guan, an executive of the company.

"From birth to the dining table, every head of cattle of ours is traceable with the help of digital technology," Dong told the visiting journalists. "This makes strict quality control possible and brings higher added value."

He added that beef cattle from his company can sell at more than 100,000 yuan (\$13,920) each, a price much higher than others on the market.

Digitalization is also playing an increasingly important role in local governance. According to Sun Qisheng, head of the Shandong Big Data Bureau, 72 percent of Shandong's county-level regions are governed with digital assistance and there are more than 1,200 "smart communities" provincewide.

Li Quanhong contributed to this story.

# Yuncheng sets sights on nation's best talents

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Realizing the importance of well-educated and well-trained professionals in local development, authorities in many regions of China are competing for talent nationwide.

This is no exception for Yuncheng, a city in the southwest of Shanxi province. In late June, Ding Xiaoqiang, secretary of the Yuncheng committee of the Communist Party of China, headed a delegation to Beijing, trying to attract talents and technologies from universities.

The delegation visited the prestigious Tsinghua University on June 27. In talks with the school's leaders, Ding said he hopes to establish a long-term partnership with Tsinghua, especially in the fields of talent training and technology transfer.

The delegation visited other universities including Minzu University of China and the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts. Several agreements were signed between the city and the universities during the trip.

Before this tour, Yuncheng's officials visited universities in the Yangtze River Delta region in late March. They signed talent attraction and technology transfer agreements with schools including Tongji University and Zhejiang University.

On April 21, Yuncheng Mayor Chu Xianghao was at Taiyuan Uni-

versity of Technology in the Shanxi provincial capital, hosting a job fair to recruit graduates.

To date, Yuncheng has organized a total of 210 similar tours this year, signing 132 cooperative agreements with universities and research institutions nationwide.

To the local officials' delight, the city's enterprises and institutions have signed employment contracts with a total of 434 students from the universities.

Local officials said a "brain hunt" is only one part of Yuncheng's talent-attraction campaign. It puts an even greater emphasis on retaining the professionals.

One innovative part of Yuncheng's talent strategy is to establish research and development facilities in China's developed cities. This ensures professionals can make greater contributions to Yuncheng by making the best use of resources in the city where they are based. It also allows them to enjoy the convenience of living in big cities.

One such facility is a research academy founded by Yuncheng-based Yabao Pharmaceutical in Beijing. This facility is home to a research team of more than 130 members who all have master's or PhD degrees, headed by Gao Fu, a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Zhang Haiying contributed to this story.



The Yuncheng delegation signs a cooperative agreement with Beijing-based Minzu University of China. JIN YUMIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Xinghuacun's support for team on the ball

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Xinghuacun Fenjiu, a renowned white liquor producer in Shanxi province and one of the official sponsors of the Chinese women's football team, is viewing the ongoing 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup as a platform to promote its brands and products in Australia and New Zealand.

The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup is being held in Australia and New Zealand from July 20 to Aug 20. The Chinese team was among the 32 teams to qualify for the final competitions in the two countries. Xinghuacun Fenjiu International Trade, an arm for exports at the Shanxi distillery group, became a branding sponsor of the Chinese women's football team on March 25.

Prior to the football event's opening, Xinghuacun Fenjiu, in cooperation with its dealer in Australia, hosted a cocktail evening party in the Australian city of Adelaide on July 18, to show its support for the Chinese women's football team and to help enhance cultural and economic exchanges between China and Australia.

An executive of Xinghuacun Fenjiu International Trade said at the gala that Xinghuacun Fenjiu and the Chinese women's football team share similar values, which include an enterprising spirit, diligence, endurance and tenacity in

the face of adversities.

Xinghuacun Fenjiu has shown its strong support for football in China after it became a sponsor of the women's national team.

On May 26, the company hosted a football-themed forum in Zhuhai, Guangdong province. Renowned former Chinese women's footballers Wei Haiying and Sun Yongxia, as well as representatives of local enterprises and communities took part.

At the event, participants talked about the exemplary role that the Chinese women's football team has played over the decades in the social development of Chinese women and the growing enthusiasm of Chinese women in various sports.

On the sidelines of the forum, Wei and other former Chinese women footballers held a special lesson for female trainees at a local sports school.

At the ongoing FIFA event, the Chinese team completed its World Cup journey after losing to European Champions England on Tuesday. This is the eighth time that the Chinese women's football team has played in the World Cup finals.

The Chinese team were crowned as champions at the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup held in India in February last year.

Li Shu contributed to this story.



Xinghuacun Fenjiu executives and its Australian dealer's representatives at the cocktail evening in Adelaide.

WEN ZHAOYAN / FOR CHINA DAILY