

# Freight train makes history with Spanish stop

Shanxi-made goods arrive in Madrid for the first time via direct rail route as Belt and Road celebrates 10th anniversary

By YUAN SHENGGAO

A train full of commodities made in North China's Shanxi province arrived at Abronigal Railway Station in Madrid on Oct 16, marking the first freight train to Spain on Shanxi's China-Europe freight train service.

Officials in Shanxi said it helps to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative and the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation taking place in Beijing on Oct 17-18.

The BRI is a global initiative proposed by the Chinese authorities in 2013, which aims to build a community with a shared future that strengthens economic and cultural exchanges, facilitates connectivity and promotes the free flow of goods, capital and other resources.

Shanxi has been an active player since the initiative was launched. The China-Europe freight train service starting in Shanxi and destined for European and Central Asian countries is part of the province's contribution to the BRI.

According to an executive at Huayuan Land Port Group, the operator of the freight train service, the train bound for Spain carried 55 containers of goods with a total weight of 925 metric tons and total value of 12 million yuan (\$1.64 million). The goods included canned food, train wheel sets, machines and machinery components.

The executive added that the sale and purchase deals of these commodities were all made online, thus this was the first delivery for cross-border e-commerce trade via Shanxi's China-

Europe freight train service.

The train departed from Zhongding Logistics Park in the Shanxi city of Jinzhong on Sept 16. It then passed through six countries — Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Germany and France — and arrived in Madrid exactly one month later. The total distance traveled was more than 12,000 kilometers.

The train's arrival at 11:30 am was welcomed by officials and executives of Spain's railway administration institution Adif, Spanish railway operator Renfe and Huayuan Land Port Group.

Huayuan is one of the flagship logistics companies in Shanxi province. Its business covers international and domestic operations, as well as multimodal transportation over land, sea and air.

The international freight train service is the principal business of Huayuan. Goods depart from six logistics parks it operates in Shanxi, which are bound for more than 40 cities in 16 countries across Europe, Central Asia and Southeast Asia, using 15 domestic and international railway lines.

Shanxi, which has positioned itself as a new hub for opening-up in inland China, has developed the China-Europe freight train service since 2017. There are more than a dozen routes for the service, departing China via such land ports as Manzhouli and Erenhot in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region and Alataw and Khorgos in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Shanxi's freight train service toward Laos and the rest of Southeast Asia also started in March 2022. A bonded land port in the city of Houma is the starting point of that route.



Representatives of Spain's railway administration institution Adif, Spanish railway operator Renfe and Shanxi's Huayuan Land Port Group welcome the freight train from Shanxi at Madrid's Abronigal Railway Station on Oct 16. PHOTOS BY WU KANGBO / FOR CHINA DAILY

The number of freight trains from Shanxi to Europe, Central Asia and Southeast Asia has been increasing year-by-year, from 10 trains in 2017 to 185 trains in 2020.

On Aug 5, Shanxi witnessed the departure of the 700th international freight train, which was bound for Central Asian countries. Statistics show that, before that date, Shanxi's international freight trains had transported a total of 788,000 tons of cargo, with a combined value amounting to 10.67 billion yuan.

The international train services have contributed greatly to promoting international business

cooperation for Shanxi, local officials and industry insiders said. They added that developing international logistics passageways through China's railway facilities can push the boundaries of the inland province.

Shanxi has developed a number of land ports and logistics parks to serve international freight trains. These include Zhongding in Jinzhong and Fanglue in Houma, as well as others in the cities of Datong, Yangquan, Changzhi, Jiexiu and Xiaoyi.

Liu Ruiqiang contributed to this story.



The arrival marks the first freight train from Shanxi to Spain on the province's China-Europe freight train service.

## Awards pay tribute to charitable efforts by individuals, companies

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Shanxi province celebrated the eighth Charity Day of China on Sept 5 by honoring a number of local individuals and social and business entities with awards for their contributions.

Charity Day was launched in September 2016 to coincide with the establishment of the Charity Law of China, and local officials said Shanxi has made great efforts to promote charity undertakings in the ensuing years. In 2022 the standing committee of the Shanxi Provincial People's Congress, the local legislative body, issued a specific regulation to promote development of charitable undertakings, protect the legal interest of all social stakeholders and spark enthusiasm among residents.

Shanxi's charity efforts have played a crucial in such areas as poverty alleviation, assistance for the elderly, rural vitalization, disease prevention and control, and education.

During this year's celebration in the provincial capital of Taiyuan, the first winners of the Shanxi Charity Awards were announced, with prizes given to 30 role models, 20 charity projects, 25 outstanding business entities and 20 outstanding individuals. The winners were selected from a list of 218 candidates who were nominated for

their laudable practices over the past five years, according to local officials.

Among the role model award winners, the Shanxi Tianlong Rescue Team has attracted a high public profile. The team of volunteers was founded in 2010 and now has more than 3,300 members. In rescue situations, either in Shanxi or elsewhere in the country, the Tianlong team members, noted for their courage, enthusiasm and professionalism, are always among the first to respond.

One much cited example was the team's engagement in the rescue of residents of Yixian county, Hebei province, who were stranded in a heavy flood in early August. Tianlong's innovative and skillful use of technology greatly assisted the rescue of residents from a flood-sieged village — including using drones to deliver communications equipment to local officials and to drop ropes to establish a makeshift ferry crossing on a torrential river.

Other role models earning Shanxi Charity Awards included Jia Liujin, an expert in traditional Chinese medicine who made great contributions to the fight against COVID-19, and Zhang Ancai, a rural official from Lyuliang city who has assembled a 1,000-member team of volunteers to help students from impoverished families complete their schooling.



Members of a volunteer group in a charity program to help the disabled. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Employees of Shanxi-based Zhendong Health Industry Group line up to donate cash.

The list of corporate award winners included Xinghuacun Fenjiu Group in Fenyang city, which since 2018 has donated more than 100 million yuan (\$13.7 million) to various charity undertakings, and Liaoning province-based Fangda

Group, which donated 100 million yuan in cash and supplies to underprivileged families in Shanxi in 2021.

Gao Jianhua contributed to this story.

## Energy revolution pays dividends in province

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Shanxi's energy revolution campaign is expected to continue to make major progress as a number of significant construction projects for new energy development are underway across the province.

The campaign, which reinforces Shanxi's standing as a flagship province in China's energy revolution strategy, is aimed at promoting industry transformation toward the direction of cleaner and more efficient operations, ensuring national energy supply and contributing solutions to global climate change.

One recent move saw local new energy giant Jinko Solar hold a groundbreaking ceremony on Sept 26 to kick-start construction of the company's mega-sized comprehensive new energy project that will be capable of producing photovoltaic — or solar power — components with an annual capacity of 56 gigawatts. Located in the Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone, the project is scheduled to take two years to complete.

Another significant project under construction is a pumped storage hydropower facility in the county of Hunyuan, which is being built by China Railway No 18 Bureau Group. On Sept 28, construction of the tunnel leading to the upstream reservoir was completed, signifying a major breakthrough for the control part of the project.

Pumped storage is a common practice around the world. It involves pumping water to an upstream reservoir during off-peak times when there is redundant electricity. When more power is needed, the stored capacity is released to the lower reservoir the same way a conventional hydro station generates electricity. Such projects have

strong flexibility and an enhanced capacity for stabilizing grid operations.

The Jinko and Hunyuan projects are just two of 66 key projects relating to the energy revolution campaign planned by Shanxi province this year, with an combined investment of 50.65 billion yuan (\$6.92 billion) planned for this year's construction. In addition, Shanxi has another 397 energy revolution-related projects planned for the years to come, with a combined investment totaling 554.5 billion yuan.

As a pioneer in China's energy revolution, Shanxi shoulders its role in ensuring the national power supply and safeguarding national energy security, with a number of projects launched for that mission. In May, a 1,000-kilovolt substation project became operational in Yushe county to help the existing 500-kV grid linking neighboring regions lift its capacity to the ultrahigh voltage range. Ultrahigh voltage grids feature less electricity loss and greater efficiency.

At present, Shanxi has launched seven projects to upgrade the existing interprovincial electricity transmission lines into ultrahigh voltage grids. In addition to the upgrades, a 1,000-kV ultrahigh voltage transmission line is being built to connect the Shanxi city of Datong, the Hebei county of Huailai and Tianjin municipality.

"These projects for expanding Shanxi's electricity transmission capacity can make better use of the province's rich resources in coal, gas, wind and solar power and meet the increasing demand from regions in the rest of the country," said Zhang Xiang, deputy chief of the Shanxi Commission of Development and Reform.

Zhang Yi contributed to this story.



A worker installs cables on top of a pylon as part of a grid upgrading project in the city of Jinzhong. WANG HAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Baijiu promoted overseas with theatrical flourish

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Xiangsheng — the crosstalk art featuring comic dialogues or monologues — and baijiu — white liquor — are both unique elements of Chinese culture.

Despite belonging to separate sectors, the two recently combined in an overseas promotion.

Xinghuacun Fenjiu, a famed baijiu company from Shanxi province, sponsored tours across Australia and New Zealand for Deyunshe, a prestigious xiangsheng performance group based in Beijing, in September.

Xiangsheng is a centuries-old art

in China which has been revitalized in recent years thanks to the efforts of performance groups like Deyunshe. They have made innovative attempts to adapt the art to the tastes of a younger generation while preserving its traditional form.

Leveraging its success in China, Deyunshe is planning to promote the Chinese art overseas. Its performances in Australia and New Zealand were successful, garnering applause and laughter from full crowds, both overseas Chinese and natives.

Also winning fans was the baijiu brand of Fenjiu. Varieties of the drink were present in the perform-

ing venues, allowing the audience a taste.

During intervals of the performances, Deyunshe members introduced this time-honored brand, elaborating on its history and culture.

Xinghuacun Fenjiu is a baijiu brand with a deep association with ancient poetry. Its brand name comes from a household poem written by Tang Dynasty (618-907) poet Du Mu. He described a heartbreaking trip on Tomb Sweeping Day and said he wanted to drown his sorrows in a wine shop in Xinghuacun, which literally means apricot village.

Xinghuacun Fenjiu is one of the first baijiu companies in China to go global. It began volume exports after it won a gold prize at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, the United States, in 1915.

To date, Xinghuacun Fenjiu has developed presence in more than 200 cities across 80-plus foreign countries.

Like Deyunshe, Xinghuacun Fenjiu has made constant efforts to innovate, trying to develop varieties that meet the tastes of young people and customers overseas.

Wu Jia contributed to this story.