

# Economic recovery in Shanxi back on track



Investments in modernization and clean energy among reasons why province has achieved growth

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The North China province of Shanxi maintained steady growth in almost all socioeconomic fronts in the first 11 months of this year, showing it is on track to recovery and high-quality development.

Data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Dec 11 showed that Shanxi's total grain output for this year reached 14.78 million metric tons and its per-hectare yield hit 4.68 tons. Both figures are provincial records.

Local officials said the steady growth in agriculture is the result of priorities placed on the sector by the province, with a string of moves to push forward upgrades toward modernization and continuous investment in rural infrastructure.

Statistics for the industrial sectors, which were released by the Shanxi Statistics Bureau on Dec 20, added encouragement.

During the 11 months, the combined incremental value of industrial enterprises above designated size — those with annual revenue of 20 million yuan (\$2.8 million) or more — in Shanxi increased 4.5 percent year-on-year.

Officials said the province's economic transformation campaigns —



**Left:** Workers of Shanxi-based Victory Auto assemble automotive parts on an automatic production line. ZHANG GUOPING / FOR CHINA DAILY  
**Right:** A staff member of Gaoke Huaxing Electronics, a high-tech company in Changzhi city, checks a product's quality at the company's manufacturing plant. LI NING / FOR CHINA DAILY



which aim to reduce reliance on coal mining and other traditional heavy industries, cultivate strategic emerging industries as new growth engines and promote industrial digitalization — have contributed to the stable industrial growth.

Longcheng Malleable Iron, based in the central Shanxi city of Jinzhong, is an example of how industrial enterprises are using digital technologies to upgrade their operations.

On Dec 24, the company announced that all the conventional ball grinders at its product plants had been replaced by digital ball-grinding machines.

A company executive said such an upgrade can greatly save labor costs, improve work efficiency and make production more environmentally friendly. "This is only the beginning of our large-scale technological upgrade," the executive said. "We will have more new equipment, technologies and techniques applied in the near future."

He added that Longcheng's trans-

formation is in line with a province-wide intelligent manufacturing campaign launched by the provincial government several years ago, which calls for the use of digital technologies to increase operational efficiency and improve product quality.

While manufacturing industries in Shanxi are becoming smarter, the energy industry there is going both smarter and greener.

The province is implementing an energy revolution program, which highlights developing new and renewable energy resources and upgrading the coal mining industries toward the directions of cleaner, more efficient and safer operations with the use of smart, digital technologies.

Shanxi now has nearly 30 percent of its electricity generated by facilities powered by new energy resources like wind and solar power.

Since the operation of China's first 5G intelligent coal mine — the Xinyuan Coal Mine in the city of Yangquan — in 2020, Shanxi has

developed a total of 48 intelligent coal mines and built 1,200 smart coal-mining shafts to date. These achievements have made the province one of the national leaders in coal mining digitalization.

Digital technologies and smart equipment are also used in other heavy industries like steelmaking. Taiyuan Iron and Steel Group, the leading steelmaker in Shanxi, for instance, has completed the digital renovation of its key production facilities. The digitalized upgrade of its plant for the production of steel plates with a width of 4,300 millimeters was finished recently.

"The upgrade has yielded great efficiency," said an executive of the company. "Production of such a steel plate can be finished in only five minutes."

Backing the digitalized and intelligent development of industries are a growing number of high-tech enterprises, research entities and innovation platforms in Shanxi.

The province is now home to 32 national-level corporate technology

centers and 469 such entities at provincial level.

Local officials said these centers have established close cooperative ties with research institutions and universities throughout the country, allowing the sharing of resources nationwide.

Some traditional manufacturing enterprises have transformed themselves into high-tech businesses, becoming a major force supporting Shanxi's industrial digitalization.

Taiyuan Heavy Machinery Group, for instance, has been a major supplier of mining machines in Shanxi. Its enhanced investment in research and development now makes it a leading supplier of intelligent machines and solutions for mining and related industries.

According to an executive of the company, its offerings include 5G-connected and remote-controlled intelligent coal-cutting machines, smart solutions for coking and smart cranes.

"We are stepping up the construc-

tion of a smart equipment manufacturing industrial park in Taiyuan," the executive said. "When it is operational, it will offer further technological support to the mining industry in China and in the world."

While devoting energy to advancing its manufacturing industries, Shanxi has also stressed developing a dual-circulation pattern to boost domestic consumption and international trade.

The province has grasped the opportunity of a tourism boom to promote the development of its consumer market.

During the first 10 months of this year, Shanxi's major tourist destinations received more than 75.9 million visits, increasing 156.23 percent from the same period of 2022.

To meet this surge in tourism, Shanxi has designed a number of characteristic streets in various cities. Featuring services like sightseeing, shopping and dining, these spots have proved a magnet for both tourists and local residents, garnering unexpected revenues, according to a tourism official in Shanxi.

During the first three quarters of this year, Shanxi's sales volume of consumer goods reached 583.62 billion yuan, increasing 3.7 percent from the same period of 2022, according to local statistics.

To promote high-quality opening-up and assist international trade and investment, Shanxi organized a series of trade and investment promotion shows, like the China International Import Expo in Shanghai and the China Import and Export Fair in Guangzhou to promote its trade and investment ties with the world.

He Kai and Zhang Yi contributed to this story.

## Rural vitalization powers county's development

By LI YOU

liyou@chinadaily.com.cn

Xiaxian, a county in the southwestern Shanxi city of Yuncheng, has renewed efforts to promote rural vitalization and improve its rural environment in recent years, aiming to bring concrete benefits to its residents.

Over the years, Xiaxian has leveraged its advantages in modern agriculture, wellness tourism and long-standing cultural resources to cultivate characteristic industries.

By continuously developing characteristic towns with differentiated urban and rural landscapes, Xiaxian has accumulated plenty of experience in promoting rural vitalization, providing a development path that can be duplicable throughout the province. Its practices were showcased at a provincial meeting on rural vitalization on Nov 27.

An excellent example is the Baisha River Wetland Park in southern Xiaxian. With the improvement of surrounding facilities, it has become an ecological haven that integrates ecological landscapes and cultural endowment.

Just two or three years ago, the area presented a completely different sight, with rugged rocks and flowing sewage. With a water course improvement project, and related projects for greening and developing a bronze sculpture cultural park, the Baisha

River wetland has grown into one of the top scenic attractions in Xiaxian.

Centered around the Baisha River and relying on the hot spring resources of Yaotai Mountain and Chunyan Mountain, the county government is introducing social investment into local tourism development and the construction of a characteristic town for wellness tourism. There are plans for developing a hot spring resort town, a town of local culture and arts and a town of modern agriculture.

Like most rural areas in northern China, Xiaxian, which used to base its economy on agriculture, had suffered from widespread problems such as unauthorized construction, random littering of garbage, and untreated sewage, making it challenging to improve the living environment.

The township of Sijiao is a tourist destination in Xiaxian, thanks to being in the vicinity of a section of the Zhongtiao Mountains, which feature forest coverage of 88 percent that earning it the title of a "natural oxygen bar." However, the tourism industry's development had been hindered by the unpleasant environment for years.

At the end of October 2022, the township began to implement a living environment improvement project around the area of the township government, completing the clearance of illegal constructions along 1.8 kilometers of streets in eight days. Moreover, comprehensive reno-



Women pick tea leaves at a farm in Sijiao township, Xiaxian County. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

vation campaigns were carried out for 460 households along the tourist roads and more than 100 households in the town's commercial and residential areas.

Now, a cultural square covering an area of 12,000 square meters has been developed near the township government. Supporting facilities such as an ecological tourism exhibition center, a tourist service center, and a number of homestays and hotels have been constructed in Sijiao, providing tourists with diverse services such as shopping, dining and accommodation.

The Yinxili Resort — a complex of homestays — located in the Xigou village in Sijiao, for instance, offers well-designed and fully equipped comfortable suites. Outside the houses, with beautiful mountains, lush forests, the chirping of birds and the murmuring of creeks, it attracts visitors in pursuit of a sense of tranquility.

"The first phase of the resort had an investment of 30 million yuan (\$4.2 million), with 58 rooms and 118 beds. The project also includes the Wangshan Organic Farm and a 300-sq-m restaurant," said Zhang Peng, an official at the village who takes charge of the resort's operation.

In addition to the Yinxili Resort, the planned Qingluo Town project — an establishment for modern farming with an investment of 80 million yuan — is underway in the village.

"Relying on homestay tourism, the village's specialty produce, such as chestnuts, shiitake mushrooms, vegetables and medicinal herbs, is seeing booming development. The per capita annual income of villagers has surpassed 13,000 yuan," Zhang said.

Zhang Haiying contributed to this story.

## Bonded area a tool to cut businesses' costs

By YUAN SHENGGAO

An A340-600 widebody aircraft landed at Taiyuan Wusu International Airport on Sunday, which was then transferred to a bonded warehouse at the Taiyuan Wusu Comprehensive Bonded Area near the airport.

The plane, imported from Thailand by Xiyoyuan Aviation Technology Group, was the first aircraft imported by a Shanxi company in the form of bonded logistics.

Bonded logistics refers to the business of warehousing, distribution, transportation, processing and other related operations conducted in customs supervision areas. These include bonded areas, bonded warehouses and customs supervision warehouses.

Business operations conducted in this form can be exempted from customs duties, according to the General Administration of Customs.

Xiyoyuan Aviation Technology Group is the only Chinese aviation maintenance and manufacturing enterprise located in a comprehensive bonded area.

Chen Jinpeng, deputy general manager of the company, said the import deal under the bonded logis-

tics scheme has helped the company save costs of about 2.8 million yuan (\$391,720) through duty exemption.

The aircraft import deal is an important move in the integration of the Wusu airport and the bonded area, which is an important part of Shanxi's plan to develop an airport economic zone and promote high-level opening-up.

Adjacent to Taiyuan Wusu International Airport, the Wusu Comprehensive Bonded Area began operations in December 2013, as the first and only comprehensive bonded area in Shanxi. It is also a part of the Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone, the largest development zone in the province.

By the end of 2022, a total of 632 enterprises were registered in the bonded area, with business operations ranging from transportation, logistics and cross-border e-commerce to advanced manufacturing and modern services.

In 2019, Xiyoyuan Aviation Technology Group launched two ventures for aviation bonded logistics and aircraft dismantling in the bonded area.

Ding Yuan contributed to this story.



**From top:** The A340-600 is transferred to a bonded warehouse after its arrival at Taiyuan Wusu International Airport on Dec 24. Customs officers inspect the aircraft upon its arrival.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Event promotes Fenjiu brand's launch in Spain

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Zhuyeqing, a white liquor brand owned by Shanxi's renowned distillery company Xinghuacun Fenjiu Group, was officially launched in the Spanish market, as the company hosted a dedicated promotional event in Spain's national capital of Madrid on Dec 18.

The event was held in cooperation with Huilong International Trading, the official dealer of Xinghuacun Fenjiu in Spain. More than 200 guests, including local business representatives, officials and overseas Chinese expatriates, attended the event. The event also featured the promotion of Fenjiu, another brand of the company that has already been in Spain for a couple of years.

Chen Hui, chairman of Huilong International Trading, said at the

event that both Zhuyeqing and Fenjiu are the representative of Chinese white liquor — or *baijiu* — made with traditional techniques.

Bearing great historical and cultural significance, Chen said he believes these two *baijiu* varieties can offer a unique option for consumers in Spain.

When talking about the history of the *baijiu* products, Li Xiaolong, general manager of Huilong International Trading, said both Zhuyeqing and Fenjiu are the inheritors of a long-standing tradition of alcoholic beverage production in Xinghuacun township in the Shanxi city of Fenyang.

He explained that an archaeological discovery in the distillery company's premises in Xinghuacun township in 1983 has offered material evidence for the long history of Chi-

na's alcoholic beverages, which might date back 6,000 years. "The dating proves that Xinghuacun might be the source of China's alcoholic beverage industry," Li said.

The first reference of Fenjiu — which literally means alcoholic beverage from Fenyang — can be found in correspondence between a North Qi Dynasty (550-577) emperor and one of his relatives, according to historical records.

Li added that the ancient techniques for making Xinghuacun Fenjiu's white liquor were included in China's national list of intangible cultural heritage items in 2006.

The company is also one of the pioneering white liquor companies in China to go global. After it won a first prize at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, the United States, in 1915, Fenjiu-

branded white liquor began to attract the attention of international buyers. Since then, Xinghuacun Fenjiu brands have become popular in overseas markets.

Xinghuacun Fenjiu is now among the top three exporters in China's white liquor industry. To date, its products have been sold to more than 80 countries and regions, through its dozens of overseas dealers and thousands of outlets in foreign countries.

Xu Songhua, a leader of the local Chinese expatriate community, was present at the event. He said that both Zhuyeqing and Fenjiu are examples of *baijiu* with rich cultural connotations.

"When we are here seeing the arrival of excellent Chinese *baijiu* varieties, we are also witnessing the exchange of cultures along with this commercial event," Xu said.