



Located at the intersection of the Yangtze and Hanjing rivers, Wuhan serves as a central link among all of China's regions.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Hubei's capital poised to grow

Innovation, industry drive GDP in provincial seat

By LI FUSHENG
lifusheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Wuhan, capital city of Hubei province, is a rising star among cities in Central China due to its rapid economic development in recent years.

Local officials said the city, which has a population of around 10 million, has

seen its economy grow at an average annual rate of 12.5 percent over the past several years, making it one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation.

Official statistics show that the city's GDP hit 675.62 billion yuan (\$107.42 billion) in 2011, more than double the 2006 figure. Its economy topped the list



The Tianhe International Airport has more than 20 air routes to overseas regions.

of all cities in central China and ranked fifth among 15 major cities nationwide.

Wuhan's good economic performance is partly attributed to its industrial strength, a senior city official said.

In 2011, four major industries — auto and auto parts, information and electronics, steel production, and equipment manufacturing — each generated an economic output of more than 100 billion yuan.

The performance of the city's optoelectronics industry was even more outstanding, with Wuhan companies capturing a 55 percent share of China's optical fiber market and 25 percent of the market worldwide in 2011.

Other industries, such as petroleum engineering, food processing, alternative energy, environmental protection, and services outsourcing, are also forging ahead rapidly.

Innovation capacity

Its capacity for innovation is another element that has contributed to Wuhan's rapid growth, local officials said.

Wuhan ranked first among China's top 10 most innovative cities in the year 2011, according to a list released in January that was compiled by Guangming Daily, the Chinese Academy of Science and Tsinghua University.

This honor is the result of the efforts the city government has made to promote innovation since the State Council approved the Wuhan East Lake High-Tech Zone to establish a national demonstration zone of independent innovation in 2009.

As of January, the innovation zone had established 13 technology business startup parks, 11 industrial technology alliances as well as more than a dozen technical centers and other service agencies to help new companies get off the ground.

"All of these qualities are helping attract investors," a city official said.

As of the end of 2011, nearly 6,000 foreign enterprises had established their operations in the city.

According to figures released in August, 93 of the world's top

500 companies have invested in 124 projects in Wuhan, with the number expected to exceed 100 within the year, the official said.

In order to sharpen its competitive edge in attracting investment, the city government also launched an effort to streamline administrative procedures in 2011.

Better service

The government has done away with a large chunk of procedures that enterprises must go through and made some services free. It is even grouping relevant government departments to offer one-stop services to enterprises, local officials said.

As a result, the time span for enterprises to finish administrative procedures for starting business in the city's high-tech zone has been reduced to 15 working days on average, with the longest no more than 60 working days.

The city's appeal to investors also lies in its sound infrastructure, local officials said.

A key transport hub in China, Wuhan has dozens of rail-



The Wuhan Future Science City is an important part of the East Lake National Innovation Demonstration Zone, focusing on such industries as optoelectronics, biomedicine, energy and environmental protection, modern equipment manufacturing and high-tech agriculture.

ways, roads and expressways.

The city has 138 financial institutions, including banks, insurance companies, and securities companies, making it the fifth financial center after Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

Wuhan International Expo Center, which has a total floor space of 180,000 square meters, is the fourth largest exhibition center across the country.

The city's bonded logistics area is also among the first batch in China.

Economic powerhouse rising in Central China

By ZHANG ZHAO
zhangzhao@chinadaily.com.cn

Hubei's capital Wuhan and its neighboring areas form one of China's fastest-growing regions, and this area is rapidly starting to rival the Yangtze River and Pearl River deltas and the Bohai Economic Rim.

Home to many world-class industrial clusters, including automotive, iron and steel manufacturing as well as petrochemicals and shipbuilding, Wuhan was actually one of China's earliest centers of industrial development in modern history.

When New China was founded six decades ago, a number of the central government's most important industry and transportation projects were planned in the city.

Wuhan Iron and Steel Corp, the first mega-scale iron and steel enterprise established after 1949, now has an annual production capacity of 40 million tons, ranking the fourth largest worldwide. It entered the Fortune 500 list in 2009.

A number of national development zones have contributed greatly to the city's economic growth, attracting investors from China and abroad.

The Wuhan Economic and Technological Development Zone is home to the city's first industry with annual output value exceeding 100 billion yuan — auto manufacturing.

With the goal of building "China's Motor City", the local authorities expect the production capacity to reach 3 million vehicles this year. Officials hope to achieve 5 million by 2016, and revenue of this industry is expected to hit 400 billion yuan at the same time, according to development plans.

Many of the world's leading automakers, including

Peugeot, Citroen, Nissan, Honda and General Motors, have opened joint ventures in Wuhan, giving the city a full lineup of US, Japanese, French and domestically developed auto brands and models.

Last year, enterprises in the Wuhan Economic and Technological Development Zone generated 168.3 billion yuan (\$26.7 billion) worth of gross domestic product.

The zone's administrative committee is planning to build another three 100-billion-yuan industries during the 12th Five-Year Plan period (2011-2015) — electronic appliances, modern service and new energy and new materials.

Wuhan East Lake High-tech Development Zone, also known as the Optics Valley of China, became a national independent innovation demonstration zone in 2009, the nation's second after Zhongguancun in Beijing.

Along with a number of national leading universities and research institutions, the area includes many industrial parks, which mainly focus on optoelectronic industries, environmental protection, biomedicine and software development.

It has attracted around 2,000 high-tech companies, and achieved a GDP of 13 billion yuan last year, increasing more than 30 percent from 2010.

There is also the Wujiashan Science and Technology Industrial Development Zone, which is the most attractive destination in Central China for investors from Taiwan.

This area focuses on food processing and household electrical appliances manufacturing. Leaders hope the area will become a logistics and trading hub in central China.



Dubbed "the city with hundreds of lakes", Wuhan tops the nation in terms of per capita urban freshwater resources.

Wuhan's development picking up steam

By HAO NAN
haonan@chinadaily.com.cn

Wuhan, capital of Central China's Hubei province, is emerging as an attractive investment destination due to its extensive transportation infrastructure, abundant resources and rich talent pool.

The city has been the largest transportation hub in the Chinese hinterland for centuries.

Located at the intersection of the Yangtze and Hanjing rivers, Wuhan serves as a cen-

tral link among all of China's regions. About 85 percent of China's population lives within a radius of 1,000 kilometers from the city.

Its importance as a transportation hub has been further enhanced in modern times.

The city is now at the hub of China's railway and highway systems.

With the opening of the Wuhan-Guangzhou high-speed railway, travel time between the two cities — about 1,000 km away — has been reduced to about three

hours. And another high-speed railway, scheduled to be completed at the end of this year, will shorten the travel time to Beijing — about 1,200 km away — to four hours.

The city's air hub is the fourth largest in the nation, behind only Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Its Tianhe International Airport has more than 20 air routes to overseas regions.

Human resources

Wuhan also boasts high-quality human resources as well as a strong research and development capacity.

It has about 80 universities, where around 1.18 million students were registered last year.

As of the end of 2011, the city was home to 100 high-tech research institutions, which include 80,000 researchers and technicians.

Moreover, it has 20 national laboratories and 20 national R&D centers.

A total of 59 academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chinese Academy of Engineering are now working at these universities and institutions in Wuhan.

The city's high-tech industries have shown strong growth in recent years.

For instance, the Wuhan East Lake High-tech Development Zone — dubbed the Optics Valley of China — is one of the nation's leaders in the research of technologies related to optical communications, biology, laser, microelectronics and new materials.

Another thing attractive to investors is that the city has rich land resources. Its land area is about 8,500 sq km, with urban area accounting for less than one-fourth of its total, meaning there is ample space for industrial development.

Dubbed "the city with hundreds of lakes", Wuhan also has plentiful water resources. It tops the nation in terms of per capita fresh water resources.

Among the 200-odd lakes in Wuhan, the 33 sq km East Lake is China's largest urban freshwater lake.

Surrounded by forests, rivers and hills, the city provides a magnificent landscape as well as a healthy living environment.

Life is easy for investors, employees and residents as well.

Wuhan has comprehensive medical facilities, including many well-equipped hospitals.

Foreign residents can enroll their children in one of Wuhan's many international schools.

The city has 14 five-star luxury hotels and a lot of shopping malls selling both domestically and internationally renowned brands.

"Life in Wuhan is pleasant, with less cost and less pressure, which is very attractive to young talent," said an employee of McQuay Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (Wuhan) Co.

Thanks to its strategic location and advantages in transportation and human resources, the city is becoming a popular destination for foreign and domestic investment.

The city government has set up a special office for investment affairs last year to provide more efficient, convenient and professional services.

It also plans to organize a series of high-profile trade fairs this year, trying to introduce large projects that have great influence over the city's industrial upgrades.



People crowd a Wuhan shopping hub, where domestic and international branded products are on offer.