

Sichuan capital seeks to lead expo industry

By PENG CHAO and LIYU

As it becomes "a famous convention and exhibition city with international influence", Chengdu is consolidating its reputation by hosting the ongoing 12th World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention, said local officials.

City planners have set a target of holding more than 500 high-level events annually by 2015 and create more than 10 world-class expo brands.

Revenue from the city's convention and exhibition industry is expected to reach 10 billion yuan (\$1.6 billion) by 2015 and generate indirect income of 80 billion yuan.

The city will increase its indoor exhibition area to 300,000 square meters and introduce three to five well-known convention and exhibition enterprises from home and abroad.

To realize the goals, the Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Expositions has formulated a "five-point strategy" focused on marketing, quality, internationalization, branding and standardization, said Mu Tao, director of the bureau.

Mu said Chengdu will change its development model from "government dominant to government guided and foster the growth of leading enterprises".

"Gathering strength from the 2013 Fortune Global Forum in June, the city will strive to host more major events with international influence," said Mu.

"While bringing in global events, Chengdu will strive to nurture its own brands such as the Western China International Fair, the Chengdu International Furniture Fair and the Chengdu Motor Show."

The city has improved its infrastructure to meet the increasing demand.

One example is the Chengdu Century City New International Convention & Exhibition Center built in 2005, which covers an exhibition area of 110,000 square meters, and a convention area of 30,000 square meters.

Another is the New Century Global Center, a large multiplex that officially opened earlier this month.

It has a 12,000-square-meter art center, a convention center covering 8,000 square meters and two five-star hotels with over 1,000 rooms.

The largest in central and western China, the Western China International Expo Center will cover an exhibition area of 500,000 square meters and have a 200,000-square-meter convention space when completed.

It will be the host venue of the Western China International Fair and the Western China International Cooperation Forum.

Apart from improving infrastructure, the city also creates its unique service mode, which highlights "one-stop, professional and people-oriented services", and has won highly praise from a large number of organizers, according to local officials.

Last year, Chengdu attracted a total of 84 million visitors and had 456 conventions, exhibitions and festivals.

The industry contributed 5 billion yuan to the city's economy in 2012, some 5 percent of its GDP, Mu said.

According to the bureau, the city held 247 conventions, exhibitions and festivals from January to July this year, including 41 international meetings and 21 international exhibitions.

"The local government views this year as the breakthrough for Chengdu's exhibition and convention industry, which is of vital importance

\$1.6

billion
projected annual revenue from the exhibition industry in 2015

84

million
visitors last year

247

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to building the city into the nation's famous place to host events," said Mu.

The Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Expositions has set a goal of holding 500 conventions, exhibitions and festivals this year, including 80 major programs.

The city's total exhibition space is expected to total 2.8 million square meters, with indirect income from the industry reaching 6 billion yuan.

The rapid development of its convention and exhibition industry has enabled Chengdu to attract more major events and win the favor of organizations from home and abroad.

Last year, the National Sugar & Wine Trade Fair announced it will locate in Chengdu permanently.

The 13th Western China International Fair attracted 78,000 visitors from 105 countries and regions around the world.

The 21st International Conference on nuclear engineering, which is honored as "the Olympics in Nuclear Engineering", was hosted by



Visitors at the 68th China International Medical Equipment Fair last year in Chengdu.

PHOTOS BY ZHANG ZHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Chengdu in July. In September, the 35th IAHR (International Association for Hydro-Environment Engineering and Research) World Congress was also held in Chengdu, making it the second city (after Beijing) in the Chinese mainland to host one of the most important events in the field of hydraulic engineering and research.

On May 27, the International Congress and Convention Association agreed to accept the Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Exposition as a member, making the bureau the first governmental organization in central and western China to join the internationally renowned organization.

Since 2008, Chengdu has been given awards as among China's top 10 cities for conventions, exhibitions, charm-



The opening ceremony of the 21st UNIMA Congress and World Puppetry Festival in Chengdu.

ing conference destinations, green conferences and festivals.

It is the only city in central

and western China named "China's Famous Convention and Exhibition City", according to officials.

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Chengdu gaining fame as place for entrepreneurs



Picture shows a bird's eye view of the Chengdu High-Tech Zone.

By LI YU
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What comes to mind when you ask any random Chinese person about Chengdu, capital of southwest China's Sichuan province?

You may receive a list of answers that includes hot and spicy food, giant pandas and a laidback lifestyle.

A few years ago, entrepreneurship would not be on that list, but times are changing.

In addition to the aforementioned things for which it was reputed in the past, Chengdu is now known for the entrepreneurial spirit of its citizens as well as the city's sound

environment for startups.

The Chengdu High-Tech Zone, comprising the South Park and the West Park, lies in the southern and western parts of the city. It is a microcosm of China's burgeoning business world.

With the goal of making Chengdu the growth engine of the national "Go West strategy", the local government is building the zone into the core of urban development.

The zone has entered the third phase of its enterprising journey, said Liu Chao, the Party chief responsible for the zone. It has gone through two stages of building and development since it was founded

in 1988, and it is now a base of modern advanced manufacturing industry in Chengdu.

Liu said the task at hand is to turn the zone into a world-class high-tech area through technology innovation and industrial development. The zone will increase the competitiveness and innovative capacity of Chengdu and the entire province as a whole, Liu said.

The industrial added value of the zone in the first half of this year grew by 19 percent to reach 48.82 billion yuan (\$8 billion). Its total industrial output in 2012 was 223 billion yuan (\$36 billion), making it the first industrial zone in all of Sichuan province to pass the

200-billion-yuan mark.

It is home to the biggest tax-free zone in central and western China. With a trade volume totaling \$26 billion, making a 41.1 percent increase in 2012, the Chengdu High-Tech Comprehensive Bonded Zone ranked the third in the country and accounted for 44 percent of Sichuan's total trade, according to official statistics.

The zone is taking advantage of new opportunities being created by the restructuring of the global economy and the relocation of industries from the nation's coast to the central and western regions.

The leadership of the high-tech industrial park is com-

mitted to developing high-end manufacturing and building a base for IT, biomedicine and precision engineering manufacturing.

To achieve the goal, Liu hoped the zone could attract more leading firms and major projects in advanced sectors, including integrated circuitry, photo electric displays, software and service outsourcing and electronic terminal products.

The zone is home to 515 high-tech firms, accounting for 52 percent of all the high-tech firms in Chengdu.

It has also attracted operations of more than 120 Fortune Global 500 and other interna-

tionally well known companies, including big names in IT industry like Intel, Foxconn and Dell, etc.

A total of 245 Fortune Global 500 companies now have operations in Chengdu.

The zone is also trying to develop emerging new industries, including cloud computing, digital media and Mobile Internet.

A 1 billion yuan (\$16 million) funding was set up last year to support Mobile Internet development, with a plan for establishing a special zone for this industry.

Talent Pool

Thanks to rapid industrial

progress, the zone has also become a talent pool.

According to official statistics, by the end of 2012, the total population of professionals working in the zone had reached 228,000.

Nearly 500 Mobile Internet enterprises employing a combined total of over 20,000 professionals were based in the zone at the end of 2012.

Official statistics also showed that the zone has attracted 14 top professionals from the "1,000 talent plan", the country's master plan to recruit global experts. It accounts for 64 percent of the experts from the plan currently working in the city.

KEY FACTS

Chengdu High-Tech Zone

Founding Year: 1988

Location: Southwestern Chengdu

Size: 130 sq km

- The State Council approved the Chengdu High-Tech Zone as one of the first State-level high-tech zones in 1991.

- The Ministry of Science and Technology listed Chengdu High-Tech Zone as one of the country's first six pilot zones to build "world-class high-tech zones".

- Chengdu High-Tech Zone is the first model zone for intellectual property rights protection in western China.

36

billion dollar
total industrial output value of the Chengdu High-Tech Zone in 2012

228k

professionals
total population of professionals working in the Chengdu High-Tech Zone as of the end of 2012