



Tourism facilities in Taolingou village in Yangquan city are developed according to standardized processes. HAN JICHUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

World Standards Day celebrated in Shanxi



Province first outside Beijing to host international event

By YUAN SHENGGAO

World Standards Day in China was held in Taiyuan, Shanxi province on Oct 14, marking the first time the event was celebrated in a province outside the capital city of Beijing.

The event, sponsored by the International Organization for Standardization and other international organizations, is held in ISO member countries and regions in cooperation with local industrial authorities to highlight the importance of standardization in industrial development.

A development research center of the China National Institute of Standardization was established in Taiyuan on the same day.

The moves show that Shanxi has made great achievements in standardization in its process to transform from an energy resource-reliant province into an economy with diversified sectors, according to local officials.

Shanxi began its pilot practice for industrial standardization in 2018, becoming the first province in China's central and western regions to go in this direction.

During the past three years, Shanxi has taken charge of or got involved in the formulation of 10 international standards, 149 national standards, 191 industrywide stan-



Taolingou village uses a standardized approach to develop its residential facilities. HAN JICHUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

dards and 631 local standards, covering areas such as agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, mining and social administration, according to local authorities.

Tian Shihong, vice-minister of the State Administration for Market Regulation and chief of the Standardization Administration of China, praised Shanxi's efforts in promoting regional development with standardization.

"Over the past three years, Shanxi has accumulated rich experience that is conducive to promoting standardization throughout the country by exploring and presenting its innovative practices, especially in the area of using standardization to help economic transformation," Tian said.

During the celebration, many local entrepreneurs shared their examples of best practices in standardization.

Ren Cuiying is a senior engineer from Taiyuan Iron and Steel Group. She told visitors who were on a tour of the company, which was a part of the celebration, that the group's

stainless steel branch has set more than 70 percent of the standards for China's stainless steel sheet products.

The executive also introduced the company's famed "hand-torn steel" to the visitors. With a thickness of 0.02 millimeters, or one-third of the diameter of a human hair, the product can be easily torn apart by hand.

"The formal name of the product is broadsheet super-thin stainless steel foil. It is a high-end and standard-setting product in the industry," Ren said, adding the product can be used in the fields of aerospace, electronics, petrochemicals and automobiles.

"Most of the steel foil products made in China are more than 0.038 mm in thickness. We are among the few companies in the world capable of producing soft steel foil of 0.02 mm," Ren said.

In Yangquan city in the east of Shanxi province, there is a village using standardization to develop its tourism industry.

The village of Taolingou, which literally means peach forest valley,

got its name because it is home to wide expanse of peach trees. It is an attractive destination to tourists when the peach flowers bloom in spring and the peaches mature in summer.

According to Li Naizhu, Party secretary of the village, the local residents are not satisfied with the inflow of tourists only in the blossoming and harvest seasons.

"We want to make Taolingou a year-round attraction. So we have hired an expert team to plan our tourism development," Li said, adding that their suggestion is to explore a new growth model with standardization.

"We have used a standardized approach for designing tourist routes, products, services and facilities.

"We have built a water amusement park, a horse racing track and other amusement facilities according to the industry's standards," Li said.

With these facilities in place, plus standardized services, the village welcomed more than 200,000 visits in 2019, a 30 percent increase from the previous year. Per capita net income of the villagers surpassed 20,000 yuan (\$3,000), according to Li.

"Tourism has become the largest industry in our village," Li said.

In addition to upgrading tourism, the village also uses standardized processes to improve the living environment for local residents.

For instance, the village's school, kindergarten, elderly care center, clinic and roads have all been built or renovated according to related standards, Li said. He added that there are also training courses to help public service workers standardize their services.

Guo Yanjie contributed to this story.

Preserved village reflects legacy of ancient China

By YUAN SHENGGAO

A village at the foot of Taihang Mountains and by the Danhe River has attracted the attention of cultural heritage researchers, who have hailed it as a living fossil of ancient China.

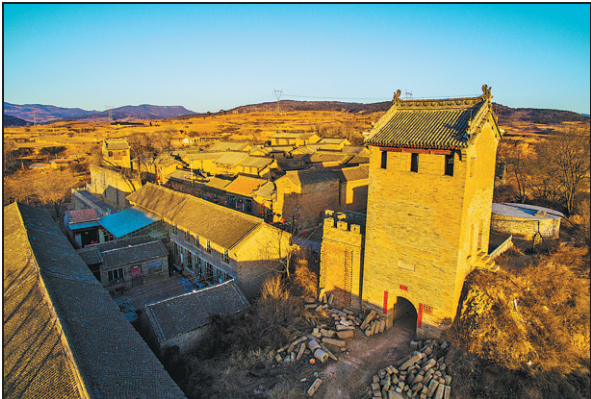
Chen Zhihua, a professor at Beijing-based Tsinghua University, deemed the village of Lianghu, located in Gaoping city in Shanxi province, a representative of well-preserved ancient villages built in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties.

However, local documents and legends show the village has a history of more than two millennia, dating back to the late Warring States Period (475-221 BC).

For locals, they can tell the exact history of the village should be more than 1,000 years, based on records from their family history books.

Shao Linlin, a village official and tour guide, told visitors about the beginning of the village's history.

"The first settlers in the village are two families with the surnames of Guo and Tian, who came here during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). Because of this, the settlement was called Lianghu — or two households — village," Shao said, adding the community became larger as other families moved in the following periods.



The village of Lianghu in Gaoping city is hailed by researchers as a living fossil of ancient China. GUO GUOWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Most of the village's buildings, including a residence of a high-ranking general, were built in the Ming and Qing dynasties, according to Shao.

"But the Yuxu Guan Taoist temple was built at least 800 years ago," the official said.

Shao said he is proud of the village's status as a renowned historical and cultural village in China.

"We have 17 Buddhist and Taoist temples built in various periods, as well as more than 30 well-preserved

courtyards built in the Ming and Qing dynasties," Shao said.

He said the high level of craftsmanship that local builders used to build the houses is one of the reasons why the ancient village has remained so intact to this date.

"Lianghu had been one of the most prosperous villages in the region. Locals accumulated their wealth through farming, commerce and handicraft. The wealthy people highlighted the quality of their residences, hoping the properties could

be passed down to as many generations as possible," Shao explained.

Among all the ancient buildings, the most imposing is the former residence of Qing Dynasty official Tian Fengji.

Starting from a scholar, Tian later served as a civil official and a high-ranking general. After he retired, he returned to his birthplace in Lianghu to live a secluded life, according to Shao.

Being fond of education, Tian donated part of the residence as a school for local children and he himself was an instructor at the school.

"The school, now called Lianghu Academy, is still a venue for local educational and cultural activities," Shao said.

In modern days, the local residents have devoted much energy to protecting these centuries-old legacies, according to Shao.

The village has repaired more than 30 courtyards and nearly 400 rooms, and implemented a tourism development plan highlighting both preservation and industrial growth.

The village's tourism revenue surpassed 2 million yuan (\$300,000) in 2019 and the tourism industry has offered at least one job to each family, according to Shao.

Li Yali contributed to this story.

Pre-pandemic demand returns for LED maker

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Trucks from various regions of China lined the road toward Shanxi High-Tech Huaye Group's production plant in Changzhi city on Oct 18 to receive deliveries of LED products from the company.

"There is zero inventory in our warehouse. Buyers have to wait for products freshly rolling off the production line," said Zhao Kaibo, a sales manager of Shanxi High-Tech Huaye.

"In 2019, the company produced and sold 2.26 billion yuan (\$340 million) in products. In the first three quarters of this year, the figure was 1.7 billion yuan, an increase of 10 percent from the same period last year," Zhao said.

The executive said the company's full-year revenue will surpass 3 billion yuan, as demand has made a strong recovery after the COVID-19 epidemic was brought under control in China.

"Sales rose 50 percent year-on-year in the third quarter and we have to work at full capacity to meet the demand from buyers," Zhao said.

The company's current business boom represents a sharp contrast to where it was seven years ago.

Before 2013, it was a subsidiary of coal-mining company Nanyang Industry based in Changzhi.

As Nanyang planned to diversify

its operations, Shanxi High-Tech Huaye was designated to develop in the LED industry.

After seven years, Shanxi High-Tech Huaye has grown into one of the major LED producers in the country.

According to Lu Jianhong, Party secretary of the company, "it was not easy for a coal mining enterprise to tap into an industry like LED".

"We started production by buying patents from others. The LED industry advanced so fast that we found our products had already become outdated before we could put the patented technologies into production," Lu said.

The executive said the company later decided to develop its own patents, which helped it to grow its own niche market.

To support its research and development, it attracted a number of high-caliber professionals from elsewhere in the country.

"With a strong force in R&D, we have expanded from a niche to the mainstream market, grabbing an increasing share," Lu said.

He said Shanxi High-Tech Huaye has been recognized by Shanxi's authorities as a role model in the province's pilot reform to reduce reliance on energy resources and diversify operations.

Guo Yanjie contributed to this story.



A worker at Shanxi High-Tech Huaye operates machines producing LED products. GONG JIANGWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Three cultural treasures impress at craft expo

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Ren Qi, a resident in Hejin city in the southwest of Shanxi, drove nearly four hours to the provincial capital of Taiyuan to attend the Shanxi Handicraft Expo that opened on Oct 15.

Ren brought his son with him, expecting to show him the three precious cultural treasures of Shanxi and other art forms and explain to him the cultural value embodied in the handicrafts on display.

The "three treasures of Shanxi" refers to *fahua* ware, hand-polished lacquerware and *chengni* ink slab.

Fahua ware, which is mostly made in the south of Shanxi, is the porcelain version of cloisonne, where the design elements are separated by copper wires. Porcelain featuring these techniques is fired at lower temperatures with the different colored glazes and enamels applied to individual areas created by the slip lines.

Known as one of the top four lacquerwares in China, the lacquerware in Pingyao county, especially the hand-polished variety, is a brilliant representation of the craft in China.

The hand-polished lacquerware of Pingyao is made of a natural raw lacquer and varnished by hand using a special technique.

Through embedding, sculpting, carving and colored painting, the lacquerware is decorated with pat-

terns of mountains and rivers, flowers and birds, figures and pavilions.

As one of the top four ink slabs in China, *chengni* ink slabs produced in Jiangxian county, are a favorite of Chinese enthusiasts in calligraphy and traditional painting.

Unlike other ink slabs that are made from natural stone, *chengni* is produced by firing silt-rich clay collected from riverbeds. The ink slabs also feature elegant shapes and delicate engravings, which make them valuable pieces of art.

At the exhibition hall, Ren told his son that the production techniques of two of the treasures, *fahua* ware and *chengni* ink slab, had been lost for more than a century. But contemporary craftsmen have revived the techniques over the past three decades.

There were also a raft of other handicrafts on display, including brick, stone and wood carvings, and Buddha statues.

But Ren and his son, as well as other visitors, were mostly impressed by the handicrafts and folk arts commonly seen in daily life.

The exhibition areas for paper-cutting, flour sculpture and clay sculpture were crowded with people. Ren and his son closely watched the artists at work and bought one or two items as souvenirs of a fun day out learning about the handicrafts of Shanxi province.

Li Yali contributed to this story.



Visitors take pictures of clay sculptures at the Shanxi Handicraft Expo. ZHONG QING / FOR CHINA DAILY