



Qinxen Energy is among Shanxi's brands to feature at a marketing roadshow in Shanghai in August. GUO XUEYUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Marketing campaign spreads word about Shanxi products



Local brands win more recognition across the nation

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Local Shanxi brands have won increasing recognition among consumers nationwide thanks in part to an eight-year-long promotional campaign.

The province in North China began a marketing campaign for its local brands in 2013, with the first roadshow held at Beijing's Jinyuan Lufthansa Shopping Mall on June 21 that year.

With the COVID-19 outbreak brought under control in China, Shanxi has held three roadshows for its branded products across the country this year, with the first show in Shanghai in August, the second in Qingdao, Shandong province in September and the third in Shenzhen, Guangdong province in October.

Through the promotions, Shanxi's brands in a variety of industries, including herbal tea, tourism and handicrafts, as well as manufactured products, have become better known to domestic buyers.

During the most recent show in Shenzhen, Huang Jiaqi, a resident from Guangzhou, capital city of Guangdong province, sampled several varieties of herbal tea produced in Yicheng county, Shanxi province.



A worker from a company in Yicheng county makes herbal tea at the Shenzhen roadshow. HU BO / FOR CHINA DAILY

"When I was served a cup of herbal tea, I mistook it for a fermented variety made of normal tea leaves," Huang said.

"I was amazed when I was told it was made of medicinal herbs. It didn't taste bitter as you would expect from herbs. I can tell that there is a long-lasting sweetness."

Wang Yuan, Party secretary of Yicheng, who headed the county's delegation to Shenzhen, said he was happy with the visitors' response to the local herbal tea products.

"I noticed that our herbal tea products attracted the attention of many visitors. I hope our branded products can reach more customers as the marketing campaign goes to more regions in China," Wang said.

During the roadshow in Shanghai, Sang Yingzi, general manager of

Jin Popo, a Pingding county-based company selling agricultural products, said the marketing campaign is a good opportunity for enterprises to build a connection with potential clients and customers.

"Thanks to the campaign, we have seen steady growth in new clients and stabilized ties with old partners over the years," Sang said.

Also at the Shanghai show, Changzhi-based Jinxin Energy Group displayed the company's coke products used for casting.

"It's no surprise that our products attract a great many professional visitors. Shanxi is known for its high-quality coke and we are a representative of quality coke producers in the province," said Song Xinyuan, an executive in charge of marketing at the company.

Shanxi Sanlian Group, a casting manufacturing company based in Hejin city, sees the market campaign as an opportunity to learn about the latest information and developing trends in the industry.

Sanlian Group used to just be a producer of castings for automotive engine cylinders. It is now expanding to cover more sections in the industrial chain, according to Zhang Xuejun, board chairman of the company.

"Based on the information obtained during the previous sessions of the campaign, we are adjusting our products to meet the emerging needs of clients," Zhang said. "We are producing more castings for many automotive components other than engine cylinders."

Zhang Yanbo, general manager of Shanxi Zhineng Technology, another casting producer from Shanxi, said he expects to cooperate with high-

tech companies to promote smart manufacturing in his company.

He said one of the technological breakthroughs resulting from its partnerships forged in the previous sessions of the campaign is using three-dimensional printing to produce various sand molds to meet clients' tailored demands for castings.

The company has invested in a 3D-printing project with a total investment of 150 million yuan (\$22.8 million). The first phase of the project became operational earlier this year.

The branding campaign has also highlighted cooperation with businesses in the hosting cities and regions, according to the events' organizers.

"The host cities have been selected according to their advantageous resources, for instance, their market potential and their strength in technology and manufacturing," said Chen He, chairman of the Shanxi subcouncil of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, one of the organizers of the campaign.

"We stress collaboration with the host cities for sharing resources of both sides," Chen added.

During the Qingdao show in September, a number of business matchmaking events were held between representatives from Shanxi and their counterparts in Qingdao.

For instance, Beizhengnong Biology, an agricultural technology company based in Changzhi city, signed 15 letters of intent and two agreements for cooperation with businesses from Qingdao and the rest of Shandong province.

Guo Yanjie contributed to this story.

Strategic move to diversify operations leaves Jinneng in a stronger position

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Jinneng Holding Group, China's leading anthracite producer based in Jincheng city in the southeast of Shanxi province, has diversified its operations to meet the province's industrial upgrading and environmental protection standards.

Anthracite is the densest and purest form of coal and contains a high concentration of carbon and few impurities. The relative purity of anthracite means that it burns cleanly and has a high energy density compared with other types of coal.

In addition to its function as fuel for civil use and various industries including metallurgy, anthracite is an important raw material for making agricultural chemicals like synthetic ammonia and urea.

Jincheng has a proven anthracite reserve of 80.8 billion metric tons, accounting for about a quarter of the nation's total.

With a history of more than six decades, Jinneng Holding Group is one of the nation's leading enterprises in



Jinneng Holding Group uses high-tech furnaces to produce gas from anthracite. WANG CHUNHUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

the areas of anthracite, coal-based chemicals, coal-bed methane and anthracite-fired power generation.

Its annual output of synthetic ammonia reached 41 million tons in its peak years, accounting for about

61 percent of the nation's total.

Responding to Shanxi's strategies for industrial upgrading and tightened regulations in environmental protection, the company began to diversify in 2003. It expanded its operations to new areas, such as research and development and coal liquefaction and gasification.

According to Feng Zhen, the group's vice-president responsible for coal-based chemicals, the shrinking market of coal-based chemicals was another reason leading to the company's operational adjustment.

"The demand for anthracite-based synthetic ammonia has decreased substantially in recent years," Feng said. "Our output of synthetic ammonia dropped to 22.2 million tons in 2019, a 33.5 percent decrease from the previous year."

To overcome the challenge, Jinneng Holding Group has shifted its focus to coal gasification to meet the country's growing demand for gas.

Feng, who is also the president of the research institute of Jinneng

Holding, said the company now owns equipment and technologies for coal gasification.

The company has cooperated with the country's leading research institutions in this area. As a result, Jinneng has developed three kinds of furnaces for gasifying different varieties of coal and anthracite.

"Using such furnaces, the production of gas features higher coal-to-gas transformation efficiency, better quality and lower emissions," Feng said. He added that the environmental benefit is most remarkable as the emissions are much lower.

The company has made huge investments in gas liquefaction for better transportation and storage, according to Zhang Jinqiao, assistant to the board chairman of the group.

He said the company has invested about 33 billion yuan (\$5.03 billion) in building nine large liquefied gas storage facilities in the rest of the country.

Jinneng Holding has also extended its operations to such fields as equipment manufacturing, gas-fired power generation and using anthracite to produce new materials including graphene, hydrogen and chemical fibers, according to Zhang.

Li Yali contributed to this story.

Construction group aims to generate prosperity in Central African Republic

By YUAN SHENGGAO

A group of workers from Shanxi province are busy constructing a solar power plant in Danzy village in the Central African Republic, which is to supply electricity to the country's capital of Bangui some 18 kilometers away.

The project is being built by the International Cooperation Corp of Shanxi Construction Investment Group, or SCIG International Cooperation, a major overseas construction company based in Taiyuan city.

"The Danzy voltaic plant is another milestone project that SCIG International Cooperation built in the Central African Republic, after the regional headquarters of the Bank of States of Central Africa in Bangui and Bimbo Hospital," said Wang Chongjun, board chairman of SCIG International Cooperation.

The executive added that the Danzy plant is also the first solar power plant in the Central African country.

SCIG International Cooperation is Shanxi Construction Investment Group's subsidiary for overseas operations.

It has been active in overseas markets since the 1980s, with operations covering such areas as construction project contracting, cross-border finance, international trade and labor services.

Over the past few decades, the company has completed more than 100 projects in 53 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and Oceania.

The company sees the Central African Republic as its major market.

"The Central African Republic is one of the least-developed countries in the world after decades of wars and conflicts. We regard it our social responsibility to help the country recover and grow," Wang said.

The executive noted that a lack of electricity is a major bottleneck for the country's development. "Many of the towns and villages have no access to electricity and power failure happens frequently even in the national capital of Bangui."

He said the voltaic power plant in Danzy is expected to help solve this problem.

"We are trying to introduce clean energy like solar and hydraulic power to this country, helping improve the living environment for locals while addressing their pressing demand for electricity," Wang said.

He predicted that the plant could supply 38.35 million kilowatt-hours of electricity in the first three years after its completion.

Wang said SCIG International Cooperation is now a highly recognized company in the Central African Republic.

The regional headquarters project of the Bank of States of Central Africa was ranked as one of "the world's best projects in 2020" by the Engineering News-Record magazine based in the United States in August this year.

Guo Yanjie contributed to this story.



Hotel Libya in Bangui is among those built by SCIG International Cooperation. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Village museum holding clues to earliest humans

By YUAN SHENGGAO

In a museum in Xihoudu, a village by the Yellow River in Ruicheng county of Shanxi province, local tour guide Liu Xixi leads tourist groups to exhibits that may just point to the earliest history of human activities in China.

On display are a variety of tools made of stone, which Liu explains are no different to the prehistoric exhibits found in any other museum.

"The stone tools, including cutting and grinding tools, as well as deer horns and other animal bones with cutting marks, were discovered during an archaeological excavation in the early 1960s," Liu said. "Carbon-14 dating reveals that they were made by humans 1.8 million years ago."

Fan Wenqian, an archaeologist and deputy dean of Shanxi Museum, wrote in an essay that they might be the earliest man-made tools discovered in the world.

But this is not the only potential "world first" at this archaeological site. Fan went on to say that another significant discovery is scorch marks of fire on animal bones, which might also be another world first in terms of discovery.

Tour guide Liu leads visitors to exhibits of mammoth tusks and

the bones of other animals, describing each's distinguishing features and characteristics.

"The colors on the bones are not tints of minerals — they are evidence of the intentional use of fire 1.8 million years ago," Liu said.

At an exhibition hall in the village, visitors are able to experience life in prehistoric times via the use of modern technology such as multimedia and augmented reality.

The exhibition features a number of top Chinese archaeologists, including Jia Lanpo, Wang Jian and Wang Yiren, who contributed to the discovery of the site.

Liu said a special tribute should be paid to Xue Junhu, an ordinary villager in Xihoudu.

Xue was an accountant in the village in the early 1960s and was entrusted by the archaeologists to protect the precious site.

Xue shouldered the responsibility as a guardian for the archaeological site for about six decades, without asking for a penny for payment.

"In addition to those discovered by archaeologists, a great number of the exhibits here in the museum have been collected by Xue from the sandy valleys and neighboring hills," Liu said.

Li Yali contributed to this story.



Volunteers light a torch at the Xihoudu site for the second National Youth Games held in Shanxi in 2019. SHI XIAOBO / FOR CHINA DAILY