

Economic transformation a driving force for province



Former industrial area converted into a park is one example of Shanxi leaving its coal mining behind

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Dong Lin, a miner at Du'erping Coal Mine, likes to spend weekends in an ecological park near the mine with his family.

Dong, who has been working for decades at the coal mine in the western suburb of Shanxi's capital, Taiyuan, can remember what the park looked like three years ago.

"The site of the park used to be a part of Du'erping Coal Mine, serving as the dumping ground for waste coal," Dong recalled. "We called it 'flaming hill' because of the spontaneous combustion of waste coal for about 60 years."

The spontaneous fires had caused a severe challenge to the environment, with emissions of toxic gases and dust, Dong said.

The worker said Xishan Coal Electricity Group, the company operating the mine, began to take action to clean up the environment three years ago. As a result, the fire was extinguished and the "flaming hill" was turned into a public park with lush trees and grasses as well as human-made features like pavilions, ponds and streams.

"The Du'erping Mine Ecological Park is now an ideal place for locals to relax," Dong said.

The park is just one example of how Shanxi is applying an economic



Cars are assembled at an automobile plant in Shanxi. Automaking is one of the key emerging industries in the province. LIU TONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

transformation. It features a shift from coal-reliant heavy industries to high-quality development that balances both industrial growth and environmental protection.

According to the Shanxi government, the province has substantially reduced its reliance on coal mining. It phased out an outdated coal production capacity of 157 million metric tons during the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20).

At the same time, Shanxi fostered 14 emerging and high-tech industries to take the place of coal mining and other heavy industries to become the new drivers of local economic growth.

The 14 industries have grown at an average annual rate of 7.8 percent over the past five years. This is 3.2 percentage points higher than overall industrial growth in Shanxi, according to the provincial government.

Among the new industries, the digital technology sector is the major force helping with Shanxi's transformation.

Trust 100, a computer manufacturer based in the Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone, is among the fastest-growing companies in the sector.

According to Wang Xianchao, board chairman of Trust 100, the company has achieved an "exponential increase" since it settled in the zone in 2020.

"As a new company, we secured our first order of five computers in 2016, with a sales revenue of only 30,000 yuan (\$4,630)," Wang said. "In 2020, we have completed production for more than 300 orders, with sales revenue amounting to 400 million yuan."

The entrepreneur said Shanxi's

information technology market used to be dominated by big-name multinational suppliers. But now local players like Trust 100 are beginning to increase their share of the market.

"Based on our Kumpeng central processing unit-powered computers and servers, Trust 100 is now in a better position to offer digital solutions to Shanxi's economic transformation," Wang said.

The Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone is home to more than 160 digital and smart manufacturing companies. Their combined output value reached 107 billion yuan in 2020.

The zone was rated as one of the State-level intelligent manufacturing bases by the Ministry of Science and Technology last year.

Guo Yanjie contributed to this story.

Targeted measures lift villages out of poverty

By YUAN SHENGGAO

As one of the least-developed cities in Shanxi, Xinzhou has been a major battlefield for poverty reduction in province.

Thanks to the targeted poverty-alleviation measures implemented by the local authorities, the city has achieved an all-around victory in this mission over the past few years.

Six counties in Xinzhou — Fanshi, Shenchi, Wuzhai, Kelan, Hequ and Baode — were removed from the poverty list in 2018. With another five delisted in 2019, all the 11 counties in the city were lifted out of their poverty status.

The city further announced the eradication of absolute poverty in 2020 with its last group of 4,203 impoverished residents taken off the poverty list.

Hao Runmei, a resident in the village of Nongfa in Fanshi county, is one of the beneficiaries of the government's targeted poverty alleviation measures.

Hao's family was identified as a poverty-affected family because her husband and daughter developed chronic diseases and she herself was the only member able to support the family.

The family used to rely on farming but the limited output and revenue due to lack of labor force could hardly support their livelihoods, according to Hao.

Hao was recommended by the local officials to attend a training course on growing edible fungi in 2016.

After she completed the training, the villagers' committee in Nongfa helped to build a fungi greenhouse for her. She had initial success in fungi farming in 2017, earning an income much higher than if she grew grain.

Building on the success, Hao established a fungi farming cooperative in 2018.

With 34 local families becoming members, the cooperative was

expanded to cover 10 greenhouses in 2020.

"My family earned a net income of 2 million yuan (\$310,000) last year," Hao said.

And other members of the cooperative have also seen a substantial increase in revenues.

In addition to dividends, each family earned about 18,000 yuan from their labor in the greenhouses last year.

A similar approach to increasing residents' incomes was adopted in the village of Caocun in Xinzhou's Xinfu district.

Shi Zhenyu, a local expert farmer in vegetable seedling cultivation, founded a cooperative several years ago.

Since 2018, the cooperative extended its membership to more than 500 local families.

"For the families engaged in our vegetable seedling cooperative, the income per hectare is more than 105,000 yuan, five times the income from corn farming," Shi said.

Shi began to modernize his farms in 2018, with automatic temperature monitoring, irrigating and fertilizing devices installed in the greenhouses.

In addition to efforts to revitalize the rural economy, Xinzhou has also stepped up the development of new industries to offer more business and job opportunities to locals.

One such emerging sector is the semiconductor industry.

The Xinzhou Semiconductor Industry Park is now home to a number of high-tech enterprises with investment totaling 1.4 billion yuan.

The city's GDP stood at 28.09 billion yuan in the first quarter of this year, growing 23.3 percent year-on-year. The rate ranked it first in Shanxi, according to the local government.

Wang Pei contributed to this story.

Intelligent technology renews manufacturing

By YUAN SHENGGAO

From industrial operations to public services, many aspects of socioeconomic development in Shanxi have become smart thanks to the promotion of next-generation information technologies.

In the manufacturing sector, many players in Shanxi have been upgrading their production with the use of digital, automatic and network-connected technologies.

Zhiqi Railway Equipment based in Taiyuan is a manufacturer of wheels, axles and other products for trains capable of speeds of 160-400 kilometers per hour.

The company began its intelligent manufacturing project in 2017, upgrading its production facilities with digital and automatic and network-connected technologies.

The company took about a year to complete the upgrades. Its smart manufacturing plant for high-speed train axles was rated by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology as a State-level demonstration project for intelligent manufacturing in 2018.

In the Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Zone, where Zhiqi Railway Equipment is located, there are more than 160 businesses engaged in the smart manufacturing industry. Their combined industrial output value reached 107 billion yuan (\$16.5 billion) in 2020.

The zone was assessed by the Ministry of Science and Technology as a State-level high-tech indus-

trial base for smart manufacturing last year.

Another sector that benefits from intelligent technologies is logistics. Zhongding Logistics Park in the city of Jinzhong, for instance, is one of the major logistics parks that became intelligent in Shanxi province.

Operating the China-Europe freight train services, Zhongding is the leading railway logistics park in Shanxi. It uses full automation in container handling, which represents a 50 percent increase in efficiency compared with conventional operations, according to executives of the park.

But for companies in the cargo transport business, improved efficiency is not the only benefit brought by intelligent and automatic technologies.

Li Baoxian, boss of a logistics company, said a great technological advancement in the industry is the use of online platforms powered by digital technologies.

By using big data technologies, the platforms can help logistics companies identify their potential clients, generate orders and complete transactions, Li said.

In addition to industries, public services are another sector that are becoming increasingly smart and efficient with the use of new digital technologies.

Through Shanxi's e-government platforms, residents are being offered greater convenience in services related to healthcare, foreign travel as well as pensions.

Wu Jia contributed to this story.



Ybike hubs are produced at a plant in Taiyuan-based Kangmei Technology. The company is the first in China to develop magnesium vacuum hubs for Ybikes. WANG RUIRUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Public celebrates CPC centennial



As the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China is celebrated in Beijing on July 1, a raft of activities take place in Shanxi. **Left:** In the township of Yaofeng in Xiaoxian county, CPC members watched a live TV show for the grand gathering in Beijing. ZHANG XIUFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** In the Shanxi provincial capital of Taiyuan, a photo exhibition illustrating the history of the CPC attracted dozens of visitors. RUAN YANG / FOR CHINA DAILY Throughout the province, the celebrations included studies of the Party's history, gatherings, awards to model Party members, Party history exhibitions, artistic performances, symposiums and forums.



Rural people make progress through modern farming and new industries

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Jing Liyi, a farmer in Baichi village in Pinglu county, finds his life has changed for the better since he began modernized apple farming several years ago with the help of the local government.

Pinglu is a part of the city of Yuncheng, which is known as the granary of Shanxi. Yuncheng produces more than a half of the province's wheat output.

In addition to wheat, Yuncheng has recently developed another agricultural sector to be proud of — a modernized apple farming industry.

Yuncheng is home to more than 100,000 hectares of apple orchards and is renowned throughout the country for its high-quality apples.

The city has implemented a campaign to modernize its apple farming in recent years. To date, Yuncheng has invested more than 9 billion yuan (\$1.39 billion) to upgrade the industry. About 4,000 hectares of apple orchards have been upgraded according to modern standards and about 100,000 farmers have been trained to master modern farming skills.

The village where Jing lives is one



Residents in Yuncheng's Wenxi county are trained in making handicraft at a vocational school. WANG PEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

of the beneficiaries of such a campaign.

According to Jing, the upgrades to orchards in Baichi include the use of modern technologies such as spray irrigation and seedling cultivation for the purpose of improving both quality and quantity, as well as new sales models like e-commerce.

Jing is the owner of a 0.4-hectare apple orchard.

"The use of new technologies can

lead to a 20 percent increase in output," Jing said. "And the quality improvement as a result of new seedling cultivation leads to an increase of 20 to 30 percent in prices compared with the ordinary varieties."

Jing was once an impoverished resident in the village. He said he was lifted out of poverty several years ago and now "lives in a well-off life".

In addition to modernizing farming, Yuncheng has also used industri-

al development to help improve the livelihoods of residents in both rural and urban areas.

Yang Shufang, a resident in Longyuan village in Pinglu county, is an example of those lifted out of poverty via industrial development.

Yang is now a packaging worker at plant near her village, which earns her a stable monthly pay.

The plant where she works was established specifically for the purpose of poverty alleviation.

Yuncheng has a total of 219 such plants, which offer jobs to more than 4,000 impoverished residents.

The city of Yuncheng has also placed livelihood improvement high on its agenda.

According to the city government, Yuncheng has invested more than 34.8 billion yuan in improving locals' livelihoods during the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20). It represents an annual increase of 13.6 percent on average.

Increasing government expenditures on livelihoods are a result of growing industrial strength in the city, local officials said.

Booster by the strong development of its emerging industries including new energy, advanced manufacturing and modern agriculture, Yuncheng's GDP reached 164.36 billion yuan in 2020, growing 5.2 percent year-on-year despite the COVID-19 outbreak, according to the local government.

Li Shu contributed to this story.