

Province prioritizes greater innovation in IT



More cooperation among universities, govt and enterprises key to success

By YUAN SHENGGAO

One of China's pioneering colleges specializing in the information technology application innovation industry was founded at the North University of China in Shanxi province in April thanks to the close cooperation between the university and prominent IT products developer 100 Trust.

The college will support the local IT application innovation industry, covering training and scientific research, local officials said.

The IT application innovation industry is one of 14 strategic emerging sectors in the province. Others include big data, semiconductors and the photovoltaic industry.

The 14 emerging industries are becoming a core driving force for Shanxi's high-quality development and transformation, according to the province's development plan for



From left: Ma Lifeng (center), a professor from the School of Mechanical Engineering at Taiyuan University of Science and Technology, instructs his team members in research on flexible rolling sheet metal technology. Zhao Jianguo (center), director of a key national lab for graphene applications in forestry at Shanxi Datong University, conducts an experiment with his associates.

PHOTOS BY WANG PEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

emerging industries released in June.

Strategic emerging industries in Shanxi are expected to generate revenue of more than 1 trillion yuan (\$154.35 billion) by 2025. The number of industrial enterprises above designated size — those with annual revenue of 20 million yuan or more — will reach 10,000, the plan said.

During the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20), Shanxi saw remarkable progress in its science and technology sector partially due to the government's commitment to its science and education-driven development strategy, according to officials from the Shanxi Department of Science and Technology.

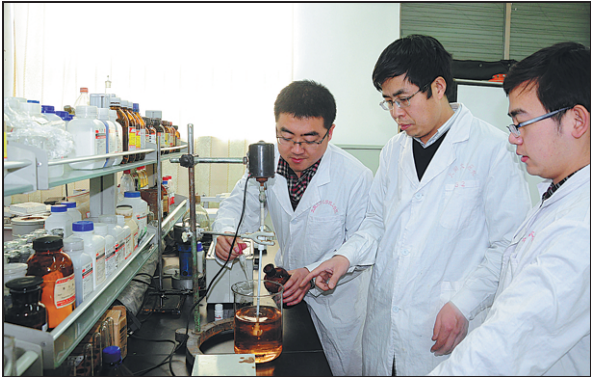
3,368 research projects

undertaken by commissioned universities in Shanxi in 2020

Last year, the number of high-tech companies grew by 3.5 times from that of 2015.

Old growth drivers are gradually being replaced by new ones, with the added value of strategic emerging industries growing by 7.8 percent on average annually between 2016-20, local officials said.

Shanxi now boasts 69 industry development zones at provincial



and national levels, including six at the national level.

Traditional industries such as mining and metallurgy are striving to advance green transformation and digitalization.

In addition, a batch of high-tech industry giants such as Huawei and Shanghai Electric have chosen Shanxi to establish regional branches or offices, according to local officials.

Shanxi is building itself into a popular destination for high-tech startups, they said.

The provincial government has placed great emphasis on talent cultivation and education.

Compared with 2016, local admis-

sions for doctoral and master's degrees expanded by 55.37 percent and 76.70 percent respectively in 2020, and the recruitment of undergraduate students increased by 13.01 percent last year. Meanwhile, universities and colleges have stepped up their collaboration with governments and enterprises.

For example, Shanxi University has cooperated with the Xiangyuan county government in the city of Changzhi for the better utilization of solid waste, injecting impetus into the local environmental industry.

The Jinzhong city government and North University of China have set up a basil research center, aiming to not only enhance farmers' income

but promote local agricultural development.

Official data shows local universities were commissioned to undertake 3,368 research projects last year, with a combined investment totaling 664 million yuan.

Zhang Kejun, deputy chief of the Shanxi Department of Science and Technology, said that during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), Shanxi plans to accomplish its initial transformation, so this year is a crucial start.

Innovation will continue to be central to the province's development this year, Zhang said.

Local authorities will focus on key areas of industrial and innovation chains, gathering eminent talents, building high-level innovation platforms and making considerable achievements, he said.

"We are also poised to help industrial enterprises above designated size improve their innovation capabilities and encourage small and medium-sized enterprises to carry out innovative activities," Zhang added.

Shanxi's major economic indicators have so far registered double-digit growth this year, according to the provincial government.

In the first quarter, its GDP increased by 17.3 percent year-on-year to nearly 446.41 billion yuan.

The province achieved a "good start" for the beginning of the year based on the stable economic growth of 2020, local officials said.

Wu Jia contributed to this story.

Shanxi's foreign trade roars back with strong figures over first five months

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Shanxi's foreign trade has registered robust growth momentum in the first five months of this year, with its year-on-year growth ranking top among provincial regions in China during the period.

Data from Taiyuan Customs shows the import and export volume of the province in North China reached 90.46 billion yuan (\$13.99 billion) from January to May, a 110.3 percent jump from the same period last year.

Its export value surged 125.8 percent year-on-year to 56.11 billion yuan while its imports stood at 34.35 billion yuan, up 89 percent year-on-year.

The Belt and Road Initiative, which promotes global connectivity and exchanges, has brought Shanxi new development opportunities and helped with its export expansion.

From January to May, the trade between Shanxi and BRI-involved countries and regions reached 21.6 billion yuan, accounting for 23.9 percent of the province's total.

Major trading partners, including the United States, Japan, the European Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations members and other BRICS countries — Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa — all reported an upswing in trade with Shanxi. They together contributed nearly 60 percent to the province's total foreign trade.

During the period, the province's exports to the EU rocketed by 124.9 percent to 8.93 billion yuan, after the other two major export destina-



A worker at Taiyuan Heavy Industry Transit Equipment helps to hoist high-speed train wheels before being exported.

LI ZHAOMIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

tions — the US, which posted a 96.7 percent year-on-year increase to 16.16 billion yuan, and Japan, which recorded 10.43 billion yuan, up 206.2 percent.

Qixian county, one of the home-towns of Jinshang — traditional merchants originating from Shanxi — was once a key stop on an ancient tea trading route spanning China, Mongolia and Russia.

Hundreds of years ago, merchants from Shanxi shipped tea to Qixian after their purchase from Fujian province in East China. Then their shipments went all the way northward to Kyakhta, a border city in Russia, where the tea would be distributed to different parts of Europe.

Nowadays, the ancient county, which has been given a new lease on life by the BRI, has become a key

glassware production and export center.

Home to 47 glassware manufacturers, Qixian produces about half of the country's total output of hand-blown glass products. Approximately 70 percent of Qixian-made hand-blown glassware is shipped overseas, said Hu Xiaofeng, director of the county's glassware industry development center.

The flourishing industry provides steady jobs for more than 20,000 local residents, with their per capita annual income surpassing 50,000 yuan.

Honghai, a glassware manufacturer in Qixian, recorded an average annual increase of 20 percent in exports over the past few years.

The company has set up an office in Dubai, a trading hub in the Mid-

dle East, to expand its sales, said Li Jiansheng, its founder, adding that some 60 percent of Honghai's glass products are exported to Arab countries involved in the BRI.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology approved the establishment of a BRI-focused characteristic industries cooperation zone for small and medium-sized enterprises in Qixian in 2019.

The county will initiate construction on a new town focusing on the cooperation with BRI-involved countries and regions in the glass industry during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), according to the local government. The project will cover 5 square kilometers and involve 5 billion yuan in investment.

In addition to glass products, smartphones, integrated circuit components, solar cells and medical supplies also gained export momentum in Shanxi during the first five months.

Mechanical and electrical products accounted for the lion's share of the exports. Their overseas sales amounted to 45.04 billion yuan during the five-month period, accounting for 80.3 percent of the province's total exports and representing a rise of 171.1 percent year-on-year.

Shanxi exported more than 3.48 million solar cells worth 750 million yuan from January to May, a year-on-year increase of 99.9 percent and 125.3 percent, respectively.

Shanxi Lu'an Photovoltaics Technology, a subsidiary of Jinneng Holding Power Group, ranks the fourth-largest solar cell provider worldwide in terms of shipment, according to rankings released by PV InfoLink, a market research company, in February. The largest exporter in Changzhi city, the company has expanded its sales to more than 20 countries and regions.

Li Shu contributed to this story.

City looks to build on growth via upgrading, transforming industry

By YUAN SHENGGAO

On the back of progress made in innovation and industrial transformation over the past five years, the city of Yangquan is continuing in the same direction for the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), seeking out new areas of growth.

The mountainous city in North China's Shanxi province is known for its coal production and traditional industries. But today efforts are being made to boost new industries such as big data and foster industrial clusters for new materials such as aerogels and advanced synthetic graphite.

Yangquan's added value for new materials increased by 12.8 percent on average annually during the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20). The added value for new energy increased by an average of 16.7 percent and new-type modern services up by an average of 7 percent annually during the same period.

The information technology industry grew from virtually nothing during the period with its added value increasing by 11.7 percent annually on average.

Infrastructure construction has also been a highlight of Yangquan in recent years. Its museum, urban planning exhibition hall, cultural gallery and shooting and archery center have all opened to the public.

The first phase of Yangquan Avenue, Hongcheng North Road and Pingyang Street have opened to traffic and the Yangquanbei-Dazhai Railway has been put into operation.

The city has also taken measures to boost social welfare. Totally, 27,000 people classified as poor have been lifted out of pov-

erty with their net income per capita reaching 9,721 yuan (\$1,500) annually.

Zhai Liwei is responsible for a poverty-alleviation industrial park in Pingding county. He is also general manager of Shanxi Tianhong Jinteng Commercial and Trading, which produces customized furniture.

His company was asked to help the county's 1,147 impoverished households. Supported by departments from the county and Yangquan, Zhai led his company to develop a project comprising the poverty alleviation industrial park, a customized furniture production base, an agricultural product processing area and an operations center for branded agricultural products.

The poverty alleviation industrial park has attracted businesses to participate in the project which has promoted the local economy and created jobs for local residents.

"Starting a business in my hometown and leading folks to become rich has long been my wish," Zhai said.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan, the city government is emphasizing innovation and industrial transformation, advancing its digital economy and creating a new materials industrial cluster capable of producing 100 billion yuan in combined annual output value.

Two industrial parks focusing on new materials and information technologies are attracting resources from home and abroad to the city, helping to improve services for entrepreneurship and innovation, officials said.

Wang Pei contributed to this story.



Huayang New Material Technology Group in Yangquan, Shanxi province, boasts advanced production facilities and technologies. ZHANG YI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Student shows love for 'second home'

Many overseas students in Shanxi province have gained a better understanding of the province and China. This section named Shanxi in the Eyes of Foreign Students will tell their stories from the province and share what Shanxi looks like from their perspectives, giving accounts of the local environment, customs and culture, as well as their personal experiences.

By PASSY CHARIES RISEPH

My name is Passy Charies Riseiph. I'm an international student from the Republic of the Congo, and I've found my second home at Taiyuan, Shanxi's capital.

Shanxi has deeply impressed me with its culture, surroundings, scenery and especially its enthusiastic people — all these things have made me feel at home.

Majoring in business management, I am now studying for a master's degree at Shanxi University.

Studying in China has always been my dream.

The rapid development of China has aroused my curiosity. In addition to acquiring knowledge, I also want to learn about the country's authentic culture and customs, so as to better understand China.

I have been studying in Taiyuan for two years. At the beginning, I was worried about how to adapt to this new place. But I became attached to the city quickly, as if I had been living here for years. I was very surprised by the warm-hearted Shanxi people. No matter where I go, I feel welcomed, just like a movie star, which makes me feel the warmth of home.

Studying at Shanxi University is a pleasant experience, and the teachers and students are friendly. The school has given us opportunities to show our talent. I took part in an art performance and the *I Love You China* recitation held by the university and won awards in the activities.



Passy Charies Riseiph, a student at Shanxi University

To a foreign student like me, Shanxi's culture is unique. Here I visited Shanxi Museum, Shanxi Bronze Museum and the scenic Fenh River Park. I went to Jinci Temple, the imperial family temple of for the Jin Kingdom (1033 BC-AD 376) where I experienced the history and culture of different dynasties and learned about long-standing tales and cultural relics.

What is even more impressive to

me is Shanxi's mountains, rivers and beautiful natural scenery. In Shanxi, the nature and the city are mixed, and the climate is very pleasant. People can enjoy blue sky and white clouds every day in the city.

When it comes to Shanxi cuisine, it's a paradise for me because there are so many delicacies I like to try. The local characteristic food, like *daoxiaomian*, or knife-cut noodles, is something that represents Shanxi culture. And Shanxi people cook the best *daoxiaomian*.

I would like to show my sincere thanks to my teachers and classmates at Shanxi University for their love and help, for the joy and happiness Shanxi has given me, and for the hospitality and care that the warm-hearted Shanxi people have shown to me.

Wherever I go in the future, my heart will always be with Shanxi.

The author is a student from the Republic of the Congo, who studies at the School of International Education and Exchange at Shanxi University.