



From left: Flowerly buns, or sculptures made from flour, attract the interest of children and adults during the sixth Shanxi Cultural Industries Fair. A replica of Yingxian wooden pagoda is on display. Visitors experience the art of wooden block printing at the fair. PHOTOS BY LI ZHAOMIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Shanxi's cultural heritage wows fair visitors

Biennial event held in Taiyuan to showcase 5,000 years of province's civilization



By YUAN SHENGGAO

The abundance of cultural heritage and tourism resources in North China's Shanxi province was showcased at a high-profile event in the provincial capital of Taiyuan last week, once again attracting the attention of tourists and industry insiders throughout the country and in the rest of the world.

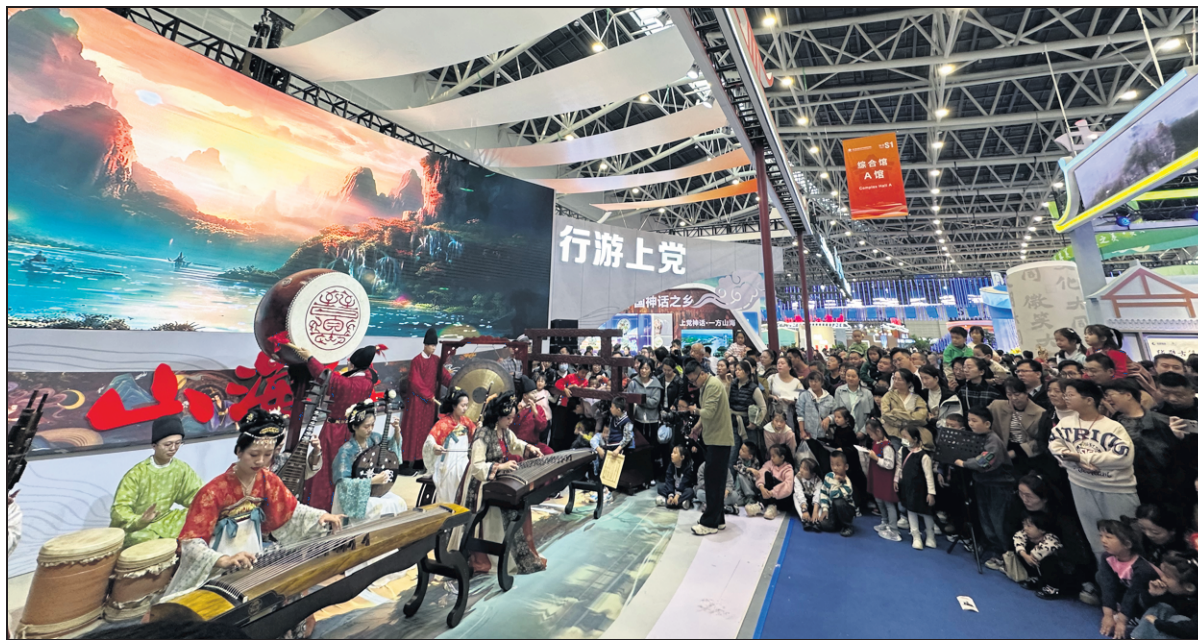
The sixth Shanxi Cultural Industries Fair opened on Oct 19 at the Xiaohu International Convention and Exhibition Center in Taiyuan.

With a history of more than 5,000 years, Shanxi is one of the cradles of Chinese culture. The province is one of the national leaders in terms of historical and cultural assets.

The Shanxi Cultural Industries Fair, which was launched in 2013, is a biennial event. Over the past decade, the fair has developed into an important venue to showcase Shanxi's cultural assets, tourism resources and the latest achievements in its cultural industry. It has also witnessed a growing level of globalization, becoming a crucial platform for opening up Shanxi's cultural industry, according to organizers of the event.

This year's event was held both offline and online, building on the success of the fifth session that went online in December 2022 and January 2023.

The fifth offline fair was originally scheduled to open in 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was post-



Folk musicians from the city of Changzhi play traditional Chinese instruments during the sixth Shanxi Cultural Industries Fair.

poned and became an online event. However, with the use of big data, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and virtual reality panorama technologies, organizers said that the "fair on cloud" was a big success, especially when it came to allowing wider participation, enabling visitor interaction, offering immersive experiences and extending the period of exhibition.

Building on the success of previous sessions, this year's fair saw expanded scale and wider participation.

More than 1,000 businesses and cultural entities from China's 26 pro-

vincial-level regions, as well as from 12 other countries and regions, displayed more than 100,000 exhibits in an area of about 30,000 square meters.

In addition to the physical shows, the fair was again held online. Organizers said online shows will become a norm of the fair, aimed at creating a "long-lasting event."

During the event, the host province of Shanxi arranged exhibitions for its various cities.

The city of Shuozhou, for instance, attracted the attention of many visitors by exhibiting its landmark

attractions with the help of advanced technologies. A 4.5-meter-high replica of the Yingxian wooden pagoda was the most eye-catching exhibit at the city's pavilion.

The Yingxian wooden pagoda, also known as Sakyamuni Pagoda, is an ancient structure standing some 67 meters high in the Fogong Buddhist Temple in Shuozhou's Yingxian county. Boasting a history of nearly 1,000 years, it is the world's oldest preserved wooden pagoda. In 2016, the Guinness Book of World Records listed it as the tallest wooden pagoda.

To attract attention, the Shuozhou pavilion organizers hired female musicians to play ceramic instruments near the pagoda. Once visitors approached the pagoda, they found they could observe details of the pagoda, even those inside, with the help of virtual reality glasses.

Shuozhou, especially the county of Huairen in its northeast, is renowned for its ceramics industry. Six ceramic producers from Huairen exhibited products at the fair.

In addition to the exhibition of cultural assets and tourist attractions, the cultural creativity industry

was another highlight at the fair.

Shiyuan Cultural Development, a company from Shanxi's Jincheng city, displayed its creative products inspired by the 28 constellations in Chinese mythology.

Products made by the company such as handbags, cups, scarfs and umbrellas featured patents and images of the 28 constellations, legends and legendary figures. In Chinese mythology, each of the constellations is governed by a god.

Ge Qing, a senior executive of Shiyuan, said that the creative products borrowed inspiration from the Jade Emperor Temple in Jincheng.

"The 28 constellation figures are everywhere in the temple," Ge said. "The most prominent are the 28 human-sized statues standing in the western hall in the rear courtyard."

These colored statues were created during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). Researchers said they are representatives of sculptural art in that period.

"Now we are incorporating legends and ancient arts in our product design, aiming to make Shanxi's unique cultural assets better known to people in China and in the world," Ge said. "And these cultural elements also make our products unique and more appealing."

The Shanxi Cultural Industries Fair is also an opportunity for business cooperation.

During this year's event, agreements on 92 key cultural industry projects were signed, which involved a total investment of 23.26 billion yuan (\$3.18 billion). These projects covered such sectors as cultural industry parks, performing, digital-empowered creativity, new media and the preservation of cultural relics.

Sun Rui contributed to this story.



The Innovation Annual Conference of the 2023 Yabuli China Entrepreneurs Forum held in June is one of the major investment promotion events in Shanxi this year. RUAN YANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Investment projects to raise economic growth

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Attracting investment to drive local growth remains a priority for authorities in Shanxi province. And their efforts in this area were justified when investment figures from the first three quarters were released recently.

Data released at a news conference hosted by the Information Office of the Shanxi provincial government show that the province saw the signing of agreements on 1,793 projects, with a combined pledged investment totaling 1.02 trillion yuan (\$139.43 billion), during the first nine months.

Wang Hongjin, chief of the Shanxi Department of Commerce, said at the news conference that Shanxi is focusing on "long-term effort" to draw investments from across the country and the rest of the world.

He added that investment promotion is one of the major efforts for Shanxi to accelerate industrial transformation and drive economic growth.

"We are satisfied with the performance to date this year," Wang said.

He explained that Shanxi's target for investment attraction for this year is 1.2 trillion yuan. "The combined investment of these signed projects now accounts for about 85 percent of the planned annual total, surpassing our expectations," Wang said.

He estimated that the number of projects beginning construction this year will exceed 1,100, involving a total paid-in investment of about 300 billion yuan.

Wang said the success in investment attraction is partly attributed to the promotional efforts by government institutions.

The Shanxi Department of Commerce, for instance, compiled and published a guidebook for key investment projects in Shanxi early this year, to help investors effectively identify potential industries, destinations and partners for investment cooperation.

The department also planned 95 major investment promotion events. To date 76 events on this task list have been completed.

The activities included promotions

in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, the Top 500 Enterprises in Dialogue with Shanxi forum, the Innovation Annual Conference of the 2023 Yabuli China Entrepreneurs Forum and a business networking event during the Tianjin Summer Davos Forum.

In addition, the department has also organized investment promotional events in countries like Germany, Austria, France and Japan, as well as in China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Shanxi's authorities also highlighted the development of industry chains in investment promotion.

To foster industry chains, the governments at various levels in Shanxi are cooperating with local industrial leaders to build industrial parks, aiming to attract more upstream and downstream resources.

During the first nine months, the move for expanding and extending industry chains resulted in the signing of 100 key projects, with investment totaling 138.5 billion yuan.

Among heavyweight projects docked in Shanxi, the most prominent is the one launched by Shanxi's Jinko Solar. This is a mega-sized comprehensive new energy project with a planned investment of 56 billion yuan.

The agreement on the project was signed in May and its construction started on Sept 26 in the Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone. Scheduled to take two years to complete, it will be capable of producing photovoltaic — or solar power — components with an annual capacity of 56 gigawatts.

"The Jinko project will lead to the extension of the solar power industry chain and help to form an industrial park in its vicinity, attracting more upstream and downstream enterprises," said an official at the Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone.

Yan Jie contributed to this story.

Campaign brings in country's best talents to boost tech development

By YUAN SHENGGAO

In an era of technology-powered development, the shortage of well-educated and well-trained professionals is often a major bottleneck hindering the local development of many lower-tier cities in China, especially in the country's central and western regions.

To tackle this challenge, the Organization Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Communist Youth League initiated the Doctoral Service Group, a major campaign to boost the development of central and western regions, as early as 1999.

Since then, thousands of professionals bearing PhD or higher degrees and specializing in technologies and management have been assigned to the targeted regions.

North China's Shanxi province became a recipient of the service in 2021. Since then it has welcomed 18 professionals from the nation's top universities and prestigious research institutions.

A number of cities in the province have been the beneficiaries of this campaign over the two years, as these high-profile professionals have brought in cutting-edge sciences and technologies, innovative ideas on business or government operations, and a channel for networking with a broader base of talents.

Zhou Bin, for instance, is a researcher holding a PhD degree at the No 5 Research Institution of the Ministry of Industry and

18 professionals

have been assigned to Shanxi since 2021 as members of the Doctoral Service Group

Information Technology. He has been engaged in research on the digitalized transformation of traditional industries for many years.

He was assigned to the Shanxi Transformation and Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Zone in February. Over the past eight months, he helped to found a promotional center for digitalized transformation at the zone and proposed detailed plans to engage businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, in this transformation.

Liu Wei from Hubei province-based Wuhan University is a specialist in integrated circuits. He was assigned to a post in charge of high-tech development in the city of Xinzhou.

Over the past months, Liu has made extensive research tours of local enterprises to study their development status and get informed of their demands.

Xinzhou is an emerging hub of Shanxi's semiconductor industry. Recognizing this industry in the city needs extraordinary support in terms of technology and professionals, Liu arranged several tours of Wuhan, capital city of Hubei province, for business delegations from Xinzhou.

In Wuhan, the delegations reached agreements with Wuhan University for establishing joint research facilities and platforms for personnel training. They have also talked on building cooperative ties with local businesses.

Using digital technologies to upgrade coal mines is an important part of the economic transformation and energy revolution campaigns in Shanxi. With this mission in mind, Shi Lei from Northwestern Polytechnical University based in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, was assigned to Shuozhou, a major coal-mining city in Shanxi province.

During his stay of less than one year, Shi helped to draft a digital-empowered development plan for the city. The plan highlights the upgrading of coal mines with new information technologies. To date, the city saw 44 coal-mining shafts complete 5G-connected and intelligent upgrades.

The national Doctoral Service Group campaign is also inspirational for Shanxi when it comes to allocating advantageous talent resources provincially.

In 2021, Shanxi launched its own doctoral service group program. Over the two years, a total of 115 high-profile professionals from the province's top universities and research institutions have been dispatched to cities and counties that need support of talent and technology.

Chen Junqi contributed to this story.