

Qingdao keeping its Green Olympics promise

By ZHAO RUIXUE

QINGDAO: The local government has for years been working hard to fulfill its promise to build an environmentally friendly city — and its efforts are now bearing fruit.

"The environment in Qingdao meets the requirement of a green Olympics — blue skies, clean water and harmonious city that all present a comfortable environment for the Olympic sailing competition and the life of residents," said Xia Geng, mayor of Qingdao.

"The Olympic sailing center gives full presentation to the environmentally friendly concept," Xia noted. "We built the first seawater source heat pump air conditioning system in China and the world's most advanced pontoon system."

"Hydro, solar and wind power, as well as recycled

water, all make the sailing center a modern venue combining the concepts of a recycling economy and a green Olympics."

Five years of effort have improved the city's environment, while projects around Jiaozhou Bay to stop sources of pollution along the coastline have been implemented.

Urban green space now covers 39.5 percent of the city. Some 64 percent of sewage is treated and the disposal rate of household refuse is almost 100 percent. Ninety-seven percent of industrial solid waste is utilized or disposed of.

The city is famous for its "red tiles and green trees, blue sea and azure sky", a harmonious

blend of mountains, sea and a historic city. The sailing course with its mountain backdrop follows 20 km of green coastline.

Olympics projects were required to meet national environmental protection laws by adopting "green construction" while pollution treatment is strictly supervised and build-

ings are designed to save energy.

The natural environment has long attracted overseas tourists to Qingdao. Augmented by green Olympics development — including a water canal and newly planted forest — the city is now a showcase of eco-construction and development.

Qingdao is the first among 15 cities designated by State planners as model for environment protection, a challenge it met through the use of seawater for cooling and harnessing wind and solar power to produce energy.

A campaign launched last October strengthened protection of the sailing venue to

ensure water quality meets required standards. Air pollution is strictly controlled so that it meets at least a Level II standard. Information on air, water and noise pollution is regularly released.

"Qingdao will welcome sailing racers and tourists with a healthy environment," Xia said.

The environment in Qingdao meets the requirement of a green Olympics — blue skies, clean water and a harmonious city.

XIA GENG
Mayor of Qingdao



Water quality is monitored — and meets international standards for sailing competition. Qing Xuan

Emissions effort brings more blue skies

By ZHANG YING

QINGDAO: The Qingdao municipal government began to implement regulations on

vehicle emissions from March 1 this year to reduce pollution through local legislation.

"At present, all the vehicles running in the city have met the requirements, which is a

step further toward our aim to present the world a green and healthy environment for the Olympics," said Gao Yan, head of Qingdao Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau.

The number of vehicles in Qingdao has been increasing by 300 to 400 a day, totaling 1.36 million by the end of 2007, according to official statistics. Vehicle emissions have brought serious pollution to the city, so the city government mandated a sharp reduction of car emissions in preparation for the coming Olympics sailing competition to ensure clear skies for the event.

Regulations on vehicle emissions were passed in 2004 that gradually reduce the levels of pollutants permitted. Monitoring departments in the city then began to measure air quality along main roads and publicize their findings.

Periodic checks and repair of vehicles to reduce pollutants are also part of the plan that complies with new emission standards set by the central government.

Seven vehicle emission monitoring stations and 18 testing lines have been built in seven districts in Qingdao. All vehicles in the city are required to be inspected to ensure they meet standards.

The concerted effort by the Vehicle Emission Control

Center of the Qingdao Environmental Protection Bureau and the Qingdao Traffic Management Committee improved air quality by requiring both commercial and passenger vehicles that fail tests to be repaired or replaced.

The Qingdao municipal government also invested 240 million yuan over the past two years to replace 1,200 buses with those that meet European Union II and III standards, while adding 48 trolleys and retrofitting 520 vehicles to use natural gas.

During the Qingdao International Beer Festival and regatta last year, a test event for the 2008 Olympics sailing competition, 18 auto monitoring stations were placed in key areas such as the airport, railway station, long-distance bus station and the sailing venue itself to measure air quality.

For the coming Olympics this summer, the local government says it will enforce strict measures, intensify law enforcement and further eliminate vehicle pollution to improve the environmental quality of the whole city.



Ecologically healthy urban area

Qing Xuan



Workers treat abandoned electronic appliances to prevent pollution. Huan Bao

Garden city grows to welcome racers in the 2008 Games

By XUE XIAOYING

QINGDAO: "We will welcome the athletes in the coming Olympics sailing regatta from around the world to an ecological city," said Wu Yong, the director of Qingdao Bureau of Parks and Woods, noting that several years of large-scale reforestation have increased the charm and vitality of the city.

In 2000, the ecology of Qingdao was fragile, with forest covering only 20.51 percent of its total area. To prepare for the Olympic Games, the plan of making it an ecological garden city was formulated by the municipal government, Wu said.

Reforestation in urban areas is expected to reach 120,000 mu (8,000 hectares) with a forest coverage rate of up to 30 percent by the end of 2010.

Millions of volunteers have taken part in activities to plant trees. The city says 90 percent of its citizens have joined in efforts to make Qingdao green.

Parkland increased by 106 hectares to 12.19 sq m per capita by the end of 2007. Green expanses in hills increased by 12.39 hectares and by 63.13 hectares in courtyards. Total green coverage exceeded 40 percent last year.

Qingdao has won the titles of national environmental protection model city, nationally advanced clean city, national garden city and "China Human Habitat Award".

It was one of the first 11 cities selected by the Ministry of Construction as ecological garden cities in 2007.

At present, more than 30 urban parks and wetlands on Jiaozhou Bay and the Dagu

River are being restored and reshaped, including Fushan ecological garden, Baiguoshan garden and Taipingshan central garden. The city continues to landscape around the main routes of transportation and plant more flowers and trees in the city, Wu added.

Qingdao has the objective to become a national ecological garden city by 2010, which requires green coverage of over 45 percent and some 15 sq m of green land per capita.

Many approaches will be used to make it an ecological garden city, Wu said. The coastal garden belt will be increased to 116 km at an average width of 100 meters for a total forest area of 1,160 hectares.

To grow "a green passage" more than 4,600 hectares of forest will be planted along major freeways, railways and other transport routes in the city this year.

The new greenbelt along roads will reach 1,556 km this year. Of more than 4,573 hectares of new forest, 2,113 hectares will be planted along rivers.

The city will continue to landscape hills, gardens, airports and open space to develop an eco-city to welcome the Olympics.

To expand the forest, enhance local scenery and strengthen the ecology's ability to withstand natural disasters, Qingdao will return 7,980 hectares farmland to forests, with 15,866 hectares of land closed off for forest conservation.

The project of greening villages is also on the list. Some 1,275 villages will turn green in the process of planting village gardens, parks and forests.

Municipality reaches its own finish line

By DU SHU

QINGDAO: Qingdao, the host city of 2008 Olympics sailing competition, has reached its own finish line set when Beijing sealed the bid for the Games seven years ago — to make the city an environmental showcase in China.

The city's environment has improved a lot over the past five years. From 2003 to 2007, the total investment on environmental protection was 32.8 billion yuan, the highest amount in the history.

"As the pollution index declines, the city's gross domestic product continues to increase 16 percent annually," Gao Yan, director general of Qingdao Environmental Protection Bureau told China Daily.

"The rapid development of Qingdao's environmental protection promoted by the Olympic Games enables locals and tourists to enjoy such a high-quality environ-

The rapid development of Qingdao's environmental protection promoted by the Olympic Games enables locals and tourists to enjoy such a high-quality environment several years ahead of schedule.

GAO YAN
Director general of Qingdao Environmental Protection Bureau

ment several years ahead of schedule," he added.

To guarantee environmental quality the city implemented 281 pollution control projects over the past five years, closing down 605 coal-burning boilers, and installing 66 sets of desulfurization equipment.

Combined with more stringent auto emission standards, the efforts have paid off — the number of days with good air quality rose by six days to 91.2 percent in 2007, up 1.9 percentage points over 2003.

The city also improved disposal and utilization of solid wastes like chromium, calcium carbide and alkaline slag produced by Qingdao chemical factories. They are now raw materials for the Qingdao and Huangdao Power Plants. Recycling and disposal of those byproducts solved a problem that has plagued the city for nearly 50 years.

Almost 6 million tons of industrial solid waste is produced in Qingdao annually, 97 percent of which is now reused or disposed of without polluting the environment. The safe disposal rate for medical waste is now 100 percent, compared to 40.4 percent in 2003.

Centralizing thousands of electroplating enterprises in an industrial park in Chengyang district now makes control and central disposal of their pollutants possible.

From 2003 to 2007, 127 key enterprises were forced to implement clean production technologies. Some 377 companies received ISO14001 certification on environmental management, while 50 enterprises began pilot recycling projects. The Qingdao Economic and Technological Development Area, which has the greatest number of industrial companies, has been listed as a ISO14000

national pilot zone.

The city also imposed barriers to new polluting companies, rejecting 730 projects between 2003 and 2007. A total of 647 cases of violating environmental laws were checked and administered.

More than 7 million yuan was invested to build an environmental monitoring and information system with 154 automated sampling sites in key districts and enterprises. Samples found that 33 reservoirs and six drinking water supplies met potable water quality standards.

Offshore monitoring stations showed that seawater in 62.5 percent of stations met national Grade II qual-

ity standards, with marine stations at the Olympic sailing sites meeting the Grade I standard.

In the past five years, the city completed 13,300 hectares of new reforestation, increasing forest cover to 35 percent, while 133 hectares of green space cover 40 percent of the city's jurisdiction.

The average noise level was sampled at 53.3 decibels, which meets Grade I standards for urban areas.

As well, 166 potential sources of radiation were safely moved out of Qingdao last year. Qingdao and its five county-level cities are all now listed as national model cities for environmental protection.



Seawater desalination system in Qingdao

Huan Bao

This special supplement is co-published by the Information Office of Qingdao Municipal government and China Daily