

xuchengspecial

Farm town finds new path to growth

By PENG YUEFEI

A township that survived on agriculture down through its history, Xucheng in Xuyi county of Jiangsu province now has a plan to benefit from its lack of industrialization.

With its livelihood long dominated by crops and livestock, the natural environment is intact in Xucheng, offering possibilities in eco-friendly modern agriculture and tourism, say local authorities.

Tourism

Recent moves to promote tourism are closely related to agriculture, with farmlands and daily rural life offering a novel rustic experience to urban dwellers.

The township's major tourism attractions include Sishan Lake Ecological Park, the Qingniushan Agriculture Sightseeing Park and Shagang Ecological Park.

This year Xucheng began to develop the Tianlong Mountains Resort and Sannongle Garden, a joint venture between a local enterprise and investors from Macao.

The sites now offer a wide range of experiences including wine tasting, fruit picking, fishing and sightseeing, as well as leisure and recreation tours.

The Sannongle Garden combines eco-agriculture and tourism with visitors experiencing farm life by harvesting fruits and vegetables.

The Tianlong Mountains Resort is a leisure tour facility composed of villa, barbeque and outdoor adventure area.

The Shagang Ecological Park, having 200 hectares of water including the Swan Lake, is a renowned fishing resort in Xucheng.

An increasing number of investors from home and overseas have now funded agriculture projects such as high-yield grapes, medical herbs, aquatic vegetables and high-quality paddy rice grown in Xucheng.

Large agricultural developments this year include the Xinhuaacun grape farm and a Xuyi medical herb garden.

The new farms have not only changed the township's agricultural model, but also

helped increase the income of farmers.

Infrastructure

While protecting its ecology, the local government has also increased investment in infrastructure and services, to provide a good business environment for investors.

The Xucheng township government has invested more than 5 million yuan this year in roads and other public facilities.

To ensure a clean working and living environment, the government has also formulated regulations calling for better sanitary conditions in both urban and rural areas.

As well, the government is encouraging residents to

start their own businesses by implementing new preferential policies.

The town has also standard facilities available for lease to enable rapid operation of newly founded businesses.

There are also a number of wholesale markets already in place for selling farm products.

The township authorities expect 1,350 new businesses to start this year with registered capital of about 1.2 billion yuan.

The government has also invested in building or improving educational facilities such as vocational and community schools to help local residents find better jobs and enterprises find better qualified employees.



Xucheng town, situated by the east side of the Huaihe River, is the county seat of Xuyi.



The intact ecology is now a wealth helping Xucheng development such environmental-friendly industries including modern agriculture and tourism.

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