

Emerging industries boost zone's growth

Local government devoted to bringing benefits to all

BY ZHANG XIAOMIN

The Huayuankou Economic Zone, in the picturesque coastal city of Dalian, was plagued by salt water, when the local government, starting from scratch, had the idea of developing it and bringing benefits to all, according to its Party chief.

And the 268-square-kilometer area is building itself into an ecologically friendly, livable town.

The zone saw its GDP increase 59 percent, year-on-year, in 2010, Dong Chengfa, the Party chief and head of the administrative committee said, while fixed-assets investment jumped 94 percent and utilized foreign capital doubled.

Its main economic indexes have continued to grow in the first half of the year, the administration's statistics show.

Of all the factors contributing to its increased strength, emerging industries have been an important one. It is a national new materials base and has been focusing on new materials.

In the past year, it started more than 100 projects, with a total investment of 30 billion yuan (\$4.7 billion). It is home to more than 500 investment projects that cover a wide range of industries — aviation

materials, new-energy battery, bio-technology, health-care electronics, energy conservation, and environmental protection.

Some of its enterprises already have an international name, such as Dalian BHN Special Materials Co Ltd, one of the leading aeronautic materials developers in the world. Its metal testing method has the support of the Liaoning government, the province where Dalian is located.

According to Dong, the zone's administrators have a goal turning the zone into an ecologically friendly new town on the Yellow Sea coast. It will be improved to the utmost, with land reclamation along the coast. And it has added 3 million square meters of green area in recent years.

Work on infrastructure will be speeded and a new central



Dong Chengfa

business district development project has begun.

Everyone benefits

But, the ultimate development goal is to bring benefits to all the area's people so the administrators are focusing on education, healthcare, employment, and social security.

In 2010, spending on education jumped 121 percent, year-on-year and the zone has a top primary school at its core area that is the aggregate of 17 village schools. A new kindergarten that cost more than 10 million yuan will open soon and work has begun on a middle school that boards students this month.

And healthcare facilities have been improved by cooperating with the Dalian Friendship Hospital, to set up a new hospital that gives residents access to the best healthcare services.

Another administration priority has been employment. Senior zone officials have been told to encourage enterprises to hire more people so that all residents who are willing to work and have some basic skills can get a job.

Increased employment means more benefits. Statistics show that per-capita incomes have rose 55 percent in 2010, over the previous year.

In the area of social security, the zone became Dalian's first with a new rural social security program, in April, whereby all 9,699 of the people above 60 in rural areas get a monthly pension.

The administration has



Wang Min (center), Party chief of Liaoning province, visits a high-tech company in Huayuankou.

also increased spending on cultural and sports facilities, and organizing sports teams.

Top-notch services

Huayuankou is also known for its excellent treatment of investors, with China's first administrative approval bureau so that it can accelerate the approval process and provide more efficient services for its enterprises.

The bureau has said that the project approval process can be practically completed within five working days after submission of the required documents.

In the case of procedures that cannot be completed within five working days, departments will have a pre-approval process and give the project a preliminary go-ahead, while seeing to it that the remaining procedures are completed in a short period of time.

The authorities are trying to improve living conditions for investors, as well as local people and last year spent double the amount of 2008 on projects related to living conditions.

Over the past three years, spending on education, healthcare, and health and social insurance has grown with the economy.

Major projects built this year include a top middle school at a cost of 100 million yuan, a top hospital with the best environment in Northeast China, improvements on a retirement home, and a service center for people in the central business district at a cost of 500 million yuan.

Land reclamation

The zone was the forerunner in its land reclamation work, as a way to find more room for development, while ensuring that the environment and ecology preserved or even improved.



Tang Jun (second right), Party chief of Dalian, inspects a new materials company in the zone.

It has added up to five square kilometers along the shallow shoreline and will add a total of 50 square kilometers after a 7-billion-yuan project is completed in three years.

In fact, the zone employs a reclamation method that

differs from the commonly used method in other parts of China, where it goes from the coast to sea, reducing coastline and damaging the ecology. Here, the method is to get land from sea by creating artificial islands, an approach that

preserves the ecology.

Five artificial islands will emerge along the 200 square kilometers of sea off Huayuankou when the project is completed, according to Dong, the head of the administrative committee.



With continuing efforts in environmental protection, the local government aims to make the zone an ecologically-friendly livable new town.



A residential community surrounded by trees and flowers.



With a number of projects under construction or planned, the zone is always changing to the better.

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