

Local leaders shooting for a GDP of more than 600 billion yuan, by 2015



The coastal city of Nantong's advantageous location, dynamic private sector and strong high-tech industry, mean that it is emerging as a popular investment spot.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Even with its achievements, Nantong aims high

By ZHANG ZHAO

Nantong, in Jiangsu province, has seen some impressive growth over the past year, especially in the private sectors, with GDP expected to grow 12 percent, this year, according to the mayor.

While that may sound really good, local authorities have their sights set on something higher.

The city's GDP for 2010 was 341.8 billion yuan (\$52 billion), a 13 percent rise from the 2009 figure, Ding Dawei, the mayor, has reported.

Around 60 percent of that came from the private sector, a dynamic force, with 24 local companies among the nation's top 500.

The high-tech sector, which includes some companies in the private sector, brought in about 242.4 billion yuan, or about 71 percent of the GDP.

Another contributor was the city's 13 development zones, which also are home to some of the sectors mentioned above, accounting for 48 percent of the GDP.

But that is not enough for local authorities, who are aiming higher. Their goal is to have a GDP of more



Mayor Ding Dawei

than 600 billion yuan by 2015.

Tourism is expected to contribute 41 percent of that, and per capita GDP is projected to exceed 80,000 yuan.

To this end, the city government will keep its eye on industrial restructuring and increase spending on infrastructure in 2011, Ding said.

The authorities plan to put 20 billion yuan into railroads, either building or upgrading them, as well as highways, bridges, ports, and an airport.

This is expected to help even well established local industries.

The city's key traditional industries are shipbuilding and related businesses, whose output was valued at 96.7 billion yuan in 2010, a 21.3 percent increase from 2009.

Meanwhile, production in the textile and garment sector was worth 169.4 billion yuan, a 16.7 percent increase.

More than 1,000 companies in emerging sectors like clean energy, new materials and ocean engineering also saw a sharp rise last year. The major companies had an output valued at 161.6 billion yuan.

Nantong is a leader in the ocean engineering business and a high-tech shipbuilding center.

Shipbuilding, along with textiles and energy are expected to have an output of 100 billion yuan this year.

Many other industries saw higher than 25 percent growth, such as IT and precision chemicals, whose products range from soaps to perfume.

The industrial value of the service sector rose 13.6 percent, to 124.7 billion. Out of that, tourism showed strong performance, with income

of 23 billion yuan, an increase of 27.9 percent over 2009. Tourism outsourcing generated more than 810 million yuan in revenues, up 70 percent.

Talent program

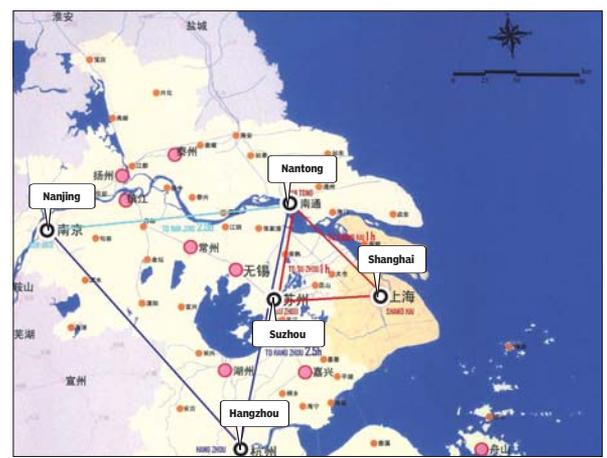
To make sure that these industries will continue to grow, local government has a special plan to attract more experts and specialists in various fields.

It has put 220 million yuan into a program that already has pulled in 185 business and technology experts.

As it tries to improve the city's investment climate and market access, it is welcoming overseas investors to emerging sectors like modern services for the coastal area, the mayor said.

It has favorable policies to encourage multinationals to establish regional headquarters and research centers in Nantong and bring in technology and talent.

But, imported human resources and technology are not the only answer, so the city is working on its own homegrown brands and proprietary technology as a way to sharpen



the competitive edge of local industries, Ding said.

Green moves

The city has an intensive development plan for more efficient energy use, and has a wind power capacity of 642 megawatts, with another 523 megawatts from photovoltaic batteries.

Wind power capacity is expected

to grow to 900 megawatts, and photovoltaic battery output to more than 1,300 megawatts.

In addition to renewable energy, the authorities have turned their attention to pollution controls, shutting down or moving 50 small chemical factories, last year. It also built or expanded 32 water treatment plants, adding 202,000 tons to its daily water treatment capacity.



Suzhou-Nantong Bridge

Coordinated urban-rural development for five years

By HAO NAN

The city of Nantong hopes to strike a balance between its urban and rural development over the next five years, according to the mayor.

In agricultural modernization, it already saw considerable growth in the past five years, adding 26,600 hectares of high-yield farmland and 7,533 hectares of aquatic farms, Ding Dawei, the mayor said.

Spending on related projects increased 37 percent in 2010.

Two provincial modern-agriculture parks and 46 ecological projects were built as well.

The government also improved rural infrastructure, reworking 1,350 kilometers of roads, adding 15 urban-rural bus lines, improving 845 bridges and building four garbage incineration power plants.

Major projects involved improved drinking water quality and river dredging.

The mayor said that the financial condition of urbanites also improved in 2010, with income rising 12 percent to more than 21,800 yuan (\$3,315). Per capita income in rural areas rose to 9,914 yuan, an increase of 14 percent from 2009.

"Nantong expects to see significant improvements in more

coordinated urban-rural development under the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015)," Ding said.

"Our urbanization and modernization will also accelerate and, in five years, urbanization will reach 64 percent."

One other major goal is to improve the lives of 8 million local people, Ding said.

They expect to double average income of urbanites to 40,000 yuan and that of rural people to 19,000 yuan.

The city government is considering some major projects in coordinated urban-rural development, he added. One of these involves reclaiming 12,000 hectares of prime farmland and setting up eight agricultural parks and bases.

The government wants to commercialize its farm produce oriented toward exports, and develop some proprietary brands.

Other rural infrastructure projects underway include adding 1,200 kilometers of roads and 650 bridges.

One rural environmental project has the goal of coming up with a better management system for rivers, streets, forestation, and household waste. The idea is to treat 100 percent of rural household waste.

Govt focuses on improving local people's lives

By XU XIAO

The city of Nantong's booming economy has benefited its people substantially, thanks mainly to local government policies, the mayor has said.

The GDP for 2010 was 2.3 times that of 2004 and ranked 26th among Chinese cities. Five years ago, it was in 29th place.

And average annual incomes last year grew more than 10 percent, from 2009, according to Ding Dawei, the mayor.

Per capita annual income of urbanites reached 21,825 yuan (\$3,322) in 2010, up 12.1 percent, while that of rural people reached 9,914 yuan, up 14 percent from 2009.

The government spent 16.85 billion yuan on improving the lives of its people, or 31.4 percent more than for 2009. This accounted for more than half of its entire expenditures. Spending in this area was more than 55 billion yuan, over the past five years.

Much of that was spent on major concerns like food, medicines, old-age pensions, and housing, the mayor said.

Another area of concern has been education and cultural development. More than 1 million square meters of school buildings were renovated and a new library, international bookstore, and media center are under construction.

The major projects that were completed under the 11th Five-Year-Plan (2006-2010) included bridges and ports. Also, a railway bridge that connects Nantong with the nearby commercial hub of Shanghai is set to open.

Urban development has picked up speed and accounted for 55 percent of Nantong's total area by the end of 2010.



Chinese manufactured oil drilling platform at Nantong Port, where the booming economy has benefited locals.

"We'll continue to improve our services and work better for our people," said Ding.

Authorities have set up a mailbox and hotline to open direct communications with the people, and the mayor, and other officials have met with common folk to discuss their worries and hear their complaints.

This has helped to provide a friendlier, politer environment, and the city ranked second in Jiangsu province, for its friendly, safe envi-

ronment in 2010.

It was also at the top of the provincial scale in social security, and is the nation's only social security pilot city in Jiangsu.

But, Nantong still has a lot to do over the next five years. The leaders want to give the economy a boost by making it an economic center for the Yangtze River Delta's northern part.

The city government plans to increase spending to improve peo-

ple's lives, this year, and they plan to increase the green coverage to 21 percent and lower the emissions of major polluters.

In addition, they want to stop housing prices from growing so rapidly and provide more housing for low-income people, Ding said.

In their longer-term thinking, they plan to raise average annual incomes of urbanites to 40,000 yuan, by the end of 2015, and those of rural folk to 19,000 yuan.