

A unique recipe for real happiness

By XIE CHUANJIAO
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Qingdao is a port city in Shandong province with beautiful vistas, a laid-back atmosphere, and a robust business climate, and it is well on its way to becoming a more modern metropolis.

One reflection of that is the government's statement that it wants a city that "makes everyone in it proud and satisfied".

"Not only is this unique city one of the happiest places to live, it also has some great career opportunities, a first-class public transportation system, top education and healthcare facilities, and a wealth of cultural attractions," said the city's Party Secretary Li Qun.

"We don't just want our people to be happy with the local conditions, we want them to feel proud to call Qingdao home," Li expounded.

"When a city cares for its people and the people care for their city, it's a recipe for real happiness."

This East China port city covers an 11,000-square-kilometer area and is home to around 8.5 million people. For many years, it has ranked among the top 10 Chinese cities in economic strength, and it was listed as one of China's most livable cities in 2009.

It not only has great natural beauty, but also a social security system that covers housing, education, health-care, and retirement.

As far back as the early 1890s, Qingdao was one of the most important trading centers in China. It now has the country's largest cargo container berth and does business with about 150 countries and regions.

Last year, it handled 350 million tons of cargo and 12 million containers, putting it among the top 10 ports in the world.

Liuting International Airport handles nearly 100 domestic and 12 international airlines, with connections to Tokyo, Seoul, Paris, Hong Kong and Taiwan. It handled 11.1 million passengers last year, and 164,000 tons of cargo.

In the area of telecommunications, the city is the terminus of the China-US and China-Korea submarine optical cables.

Around 30 percent of China's marine research institutes are in Qingdao, including Ocean University of China and the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Marine Studies Institute. These organizations are home to 40 percent of China's top ocean sciences researchers and scholars.

Half of China's key ocean technology projects are developed in the city.

Sailing capital

Qingdao hosted the sailing events of the 2008 Olympics and Paralympics, and has some of the world's top water sports facilities.

In the past two years, many international sailing competitions have been held here, such as the Volvo Ocean



Music Square lets people enjoy their entertainment with a comfortable sea breeze.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

NUMBERS

30

percent

of the nation's marine sciences and research institutes are in Qingdao.

\$56

billion

was the amount of the city's total imports and exports for 2010.

45

million

visitors from China and abroad visited Qingdao in 2010, generating 58 billion yuan in tourism revenues.

\$32

billion

worth of foreign direct investment came to the city in 2009.

94

corporations from the world's top 500 have projects in Qingdao.

19

cities in various countries and regions have relations with Qingdao.

Race, the Clipper Round the World Race, and the Extreme Sailing Series.

Other major sailing events include International Sailing Week, held every August, since 2009.

And, there is the Olympic Sailing Museum, which opened in August, 2009, the first museum of its kind in the world.

Blue economy

Over the next five years, the city government plans to turn the city into a leading center of "blue economy" development, focusing on maritime industries.

It is also trying to improve its fishing industry, marine equipment manufacturing and engineering, and related

chemical industries. It sees new energy and ocean ecology as emerging sectors.

The city and its surrounding areas are major aquaculture bases, contributing 10 percent of China's total fish exports, leading all coastal cities for nearly 20 consecutive years.

Qingdao was one of the first 14 selected cities to benefit from the central government's opening up and reform policy. It now contains a State-level economic and technological development zone, a high-tech development zone, and a bonded zone, which have preferential policies to attract foreign investors.

Qingdao also has relations with various cities in 17 countries and regions, while more than 2,000 foreign business

associations and enterprises have offices here.

Several dozen corporations from the world's top 500 also have projects here. One example of this is the Pakistan Haier-Ruba Economic Zone, China's first overseas economic and trade cooperation area, a joint operation involving the Haier Group and Pakistan's Ruba Group.

The city's total import and export volume for 2010 was \$56 billion. It also has \$36 billion worth of direct foreign investment.

City of noted brands

A number of prominent international brands got their start in Qingdao, including Haier, Hisense and Tsingtao beer. The Tsingtao Brewery,

founded in 1903, is now one of the world's top 10 brewers.

The city's service business includes port logistics and tourism, which are considered a major part of Qingdao's future development plans.

The city has been a tourist destination and health resort since at least the 1920s. And its beaches, century-old European-style buildings, and Laoshan Mountain, which overlooks the sea, are some of the most popular tourist attractions.

Last year, the city had 45 million tourists, 1 million of them from overseas. Tourism-related revenues amounted to 58 billion yuan (\$8.9 billion), or more than 10 percent of the city's GDP.

Next five years are crucial for developing a better society



Laoshan Mountain, a prominent feature of the landscape.



One of the more popular historic landmarks.

By ZHANG ZHAO

Qingdao has a global vision and strategy and has come up with plans for its population, industries and resource management over the next three to five decades.

For the past several years, the city government has spent a lot of time improving its infrastructure, and built roads, bridges, tunnels, railroads, a subway system, and a new airport.

Now, thanks to its marine research advantages, the city's blue economy — focused on maritime industries — has become a part of the national strategy, with emphasis on manufacturing, services, and emerging sectors.

The government has plans for 14 major industrial parks in six key industrial zones. It also has close ties with other economically advanced parts of China, such as the Yangtze River Delta, for mutual benefits.

The government says that the next five years are "a cru-

cial period" for developing a well-off, energy-saving, eco-friendly society.

The city's GDP is expected to grow at a rate of 11 percent over the period, to 1 trillion yuan (\$154.1 billion) by 2015. And service industries will contribute 57 percent of that.

The coastal city wants to increase its cargo handling capacity to 18 million containers during the same period and its airport so that it can handle 18 million passengers a year.

The city is involved in a pilot project to integrate the Internet and TV and telecom networks.

Meanwhile, its industries will get involved in recycling, while local officials work to reduce pollution, and cut energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions.

They plan to give equal attention to countryside and urban development, so that about 55 percent of urban GDP comes from rural production.

The city is working on a people-oriented development model that integrates the urban and the rural to produce a city that "its people are happy to live in".

The net income of urban and rural people will grow by more than 11 percent over the next five years and the city will find 750,000 new jobs, while holding unemployment to below 4 percent.

The heating and water system along with public transportation will need to be improved. Social security, which used to cover only urbanites, also needs to be expanded.

At the same time, education is getting greater attention from the government, which wants more than half of school-aged young people to enter college.

Qingdao will host the World Horticulture Expo in 2014, and the government sees this as a good opportunity to project its image globally, while increasing its reputation.

SNAPSHOTS OF QINGDAO

Location: southeastern tip of Shandong Peninsula
Area: 10,654 square kilometers
Population: 8.5 million
Economic position: One of the top 10 cities on the mainland

OUTSTANDING POINTS AND DOMESTIC AWARDS:

- Host City for the 2008 Olympic Sailing Regatta
- China's 'Sailing City'
- One of China's top Dynamic Economy Cities
- City of Brands
- Gold Medal Investment City
- Most Worth Recommending to the Rest of the World
- Best City for Attracting Overseas Chinese Investment
- Most Satisfying Entrepreneurial City
- Culturally Advanced City
- City of Chinese History and Culture
- Outstanding Tourism City
- Hygienic City Award
- Outstanding Environmental Protection Award
- Residence Award
- Urban Garden Award
- Most Beautiful City
- Safest City
- Happiest City

Qingdao welcomes visitors with warmth and hospitality

