Chengdu aspires to be nation's expo capital

By LI YU in Chengdu and **YANG CHENG** in Beijing

The ninth World Biomaterials Congress will be staged in Chengdu, capital of Southwest China's Sichuan province in

During the event, more than 3,000 experts, scholars and government officials around the world will take part, making WBC the largest international academic conference ever held in the city's history.

Chengdu was named as one of the "Next Decade's Fastest-Growing Cities Globally", "World's Best Emerging Business Cities", and the "Benchmark City for Investment Environment in Inland China" by magazines of Forbes and Fortune and World Bank respectively.

The city was also crowned as Asia's first "City of Gastronomy" by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2010.

Chengdu has witnessed economic take-off in recent years and offered top living and investment environment.

Currently, Chengdu's exhibition sector is among the best in China.

The city hopes to become China's exhibition capital by 2015 and Asia's exhibition hub by 2030, said a senior city official.

The city plans to achieve 10 billion yuan (\$1.5 billion) in annual revenue from the exhibition sector by 2015.

"Compared to Asia's other expo hubs, such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai, Chengdu still has a long way to go, but the city will beef up efforts to internationalize and close the gaps with those cosmopolitan areas," said Chen Lin, director of the Chengdu



Municipal Bureau of Exhibition and chairman of the Chengdu Sub-council of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

The city has set ambitious targets for its exhibition sector and expects the sector to yield 5 billion yuan in revenue this

It hopes the industry will drive the city's overall economic growth and generate a combined turnover of 42 billion yuan this year, up 23 percent from the year previous.

In 2012, the city will host a total of 450 festivals, exhibitions and meetings, Chen said.

The area available for holding exhibitions will total 270 million square meters by the year's end, up 20 percent from the previous year.

Three large international conferences will come to the city this year, allowing it to maintain momentum from last year, during which the city hosted the ninth East Asia Forum, the 2011 APEC SME Summit and the 12th Western China International Fair.

Other prominent expos this year include the UBM Aviation-sponsored 10th Asia Routes, the Euromoney Chengdu Global Investment Summit 2012 in April and the ninth WBC in June.

Joining the lineup will be a total of 60 top domestic exhibitions and expos will arrive in the city over the course of the year, up 15 percent from the previous year.

And the government already has major events lined up for 2013, such as the World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention and the International Festival of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Advantages

Chengdu has witnessed tremendous development in the exhibition sector in recent vears.

Its great progress in openingup, fast economic growth and thriving tourism sector have endowed the city with advantageous development conditions, industry commentators said.

Chengdu has ample development potential in its exhibition sector, Chen said.

"It has launched savvy development strategies and bold development targets, which are set to push the sector's take-off," he said.

Statistics indicate that the city has attracted 207 of the world's top 500 firms, 13 out of the top 20 leading global software companies, 40 delivery centers of multinationals, nine consulates and branches of 13 foreign banks.

It has also inked 16 sister city agreements with foreign counterparts.

A total of 33 international cargo and passenger air routes now link the city to the outside world as well

The city's aviation industry has ranked the fourth in China in terms of overall strength. Its handling capacity and passenger volume only trail after Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

In addition, last year the city hosted a total of 398 festivals, conferences and exhibition events.

The exhibition area for the events hit 2.33 million sq m in 2011, up 22.26 percent from the previous year.

A total of 96 million visitors, exhibitors and tourists arrived to join the events, up 19.61 percent from the previous year.

These figures give weight to a blue paper made by the China Conference and Hotel Alliance last year that ranked Chengdu among the top cities in China's exhibition sector.

"Chengdu's soft power is also a key aspect that raises eyebrows among international exhibition giants," he added, noting its history, culture, gourmet food and scenery.

Challenges

"Compared with internationally renowned exhibition hubs, such as New York, Munich, Singapore, Beijing and Shanghai, Chengdu's challenges are obvious," Chen said.

Fewer events designated by the UFI, or the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, have come to the city compared with Beijing, Shanghai and Hong

Chen said the exhibition sector is a barometer of a city's overall socioeconomic strength, so it will strive to internationalize the living and working environment through such measures as bilingual road signs.

"The English proficiency of taxi drivers is also in urgent need of improvement," he acknowledged.

Expansion

ID: 6765 250sgm, 3bedrooms - Y 35, 000 RMH

ID: 5761 550sqm, 4bedrooms Y 60,000RMB

type N, detached, big garden, big balcony

Yosemite - 世山雅地

48r. B1 498sqm detac

high floor, south facing, big balcony

To cope with the challenges, the city has mapped out a blueprint to speed up the construction of exhibition facilities.

The Tianfu New Town in



The 12th Western China International Fair in October last year gathered senior officials from various levels of government.

An illustration of a new exhibition hub in Chengdu called the New **Century Global** Center, which will be completed in





PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY The Global Automotive Forum 2011 was held in Chengdu.

southern Chengdu has been approved as a permanent venue for the Western China International Fair.

A grand venue covering 600,000 sq m is now underway and will be completed by 2015.

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The second phase of the

Century City Exhibition Center, the city's largest venue, is also in progress.

The New Century Global Center with a planned construction area of 1.5 million sq m will be completed in 2012.

The first phase of the New

reach 8,000 sq m and host a meeting of 3,000 people.

Century Modern Art Center is

due to be finished soon. A non-

pillared banquet room could

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hase III, high floor, garden viev



type C, phase I, detached, big garden

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detached, big garden, high ceiling





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