

Biomaterial congress set for Chengdu

Emerging science, devices that aid in human health

By ZHANG ZHAO AND LI YU

New economic force

More than 3,000 scholars, government officials and company executives from nearly 60 countries and regions around the world are expected for the ninth World Biomaterials Congress that opens today in Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan province.

A family of high-tech new materials developed over the last four decades, biomaterials are used to replace or augment human tissue, bones or organs.

Delegates to the congress are involved in biomaterials research, production, testing and education. The five-day event includes more than 100 lectures, forums and seminars. The congress also has received more than 2,900 academic abstracts.

With the theme "innovative biomaterials and crossing frontiers in biomaterials and regenerative medicine", this year's WBC will focus on medical applications, artificial organs, testing, evaluation methods, management and ethics in biomaterials.

The congress will serve as a forum for delegates to share the latest concepts and achievements in the field over the past four years as well as future developments.

It will provide booths for more than 100 companies and research institutes to display their products and research.

Participants include Instron, Zimmer and Bose from the United States, Invisio from the United Kingdom, Purac Biomaterials from the Netherlands, Evonik from Germany, Taihei Chemical Industrial from Japan and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization from Australia.

Some globally leading companies in the field will also organize technical forums to promote their products during the congress.

A number of lectures and forums designed to encourage commercialization of biomaterials research will include moderators from the Chinese Academy of Engineering and the US National Academy of Engineering and talks by government officials and executives of international companies.

With low energy consumption and pollution combined with high value, the biomaterials industry is rapidly emerging as an economic force.

The Chinese government said it views biomaterials as a key industry that they can make a great contribution to an affordable national healthcare system that covers the nation's entire population.

China's biomaterials science and engineering technologies have advanced from following other countries' research to proprietary innovation over the past 10 years. It now leads the world in tissue engineering and nano-materials research.

Growing at an average annual rate of more than 20 percent over the last decade, China is the third-largest market for medical appliances. It is expected to become the second in the next 10 years.

World-class center

Starting biomaterials studies in the 1970s, the city of Chengdu is a national center of the bio-industry and biomaterials R&D.

The National Engineering Research Center for Biomaterials at Sichuan University in Chengdu is China's first national R&D organization in the emerging field and one of the most important institutes for biomaterials testing, education and commercialization.

The center also serves as a hub of international technology exchange with cooperative programs with universities and research institutes in many countries.

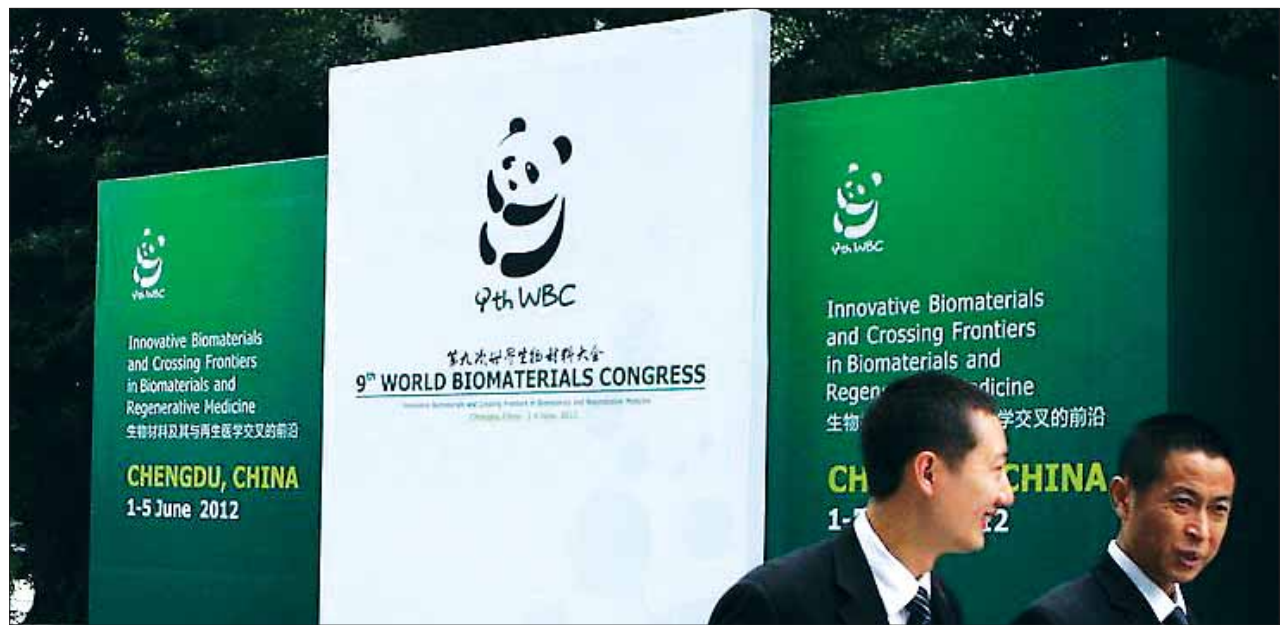
In the recent years, the center has focused on biomaterials and medical implants for tissue engineering and regeneration, a cutting-edge area in the world's biomaterials research, and has made some major breakthroughs.

In addition to Sichuan University a number of other universities, research organizations and hospitals in Chengdu also have specialized research centers or groups for the study of biomaterials.

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The Chengdu Research Center for Giant Panda Breeding is in the north of the city.



The ninth World Biomaterials Congress opens today in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province.

LAI LI / CHINA DAILY

Long effort, many achievements, on road to becoming host city

By ZHANG ZHAO AND LI YU

In a field built on advanced science and medicine, the World Biomaterials Congress was held in developed countries in its first eight sessions over the past 36 years.

But when the ninth congress opens today in Chengdu in southwestern China, the influential congress will be held in a developing country for the first time.

The choice was made for good reasons, although China's route to becoming the host nation was not easy.

Held every four years, the time and place for the largest and most important international conference in the field is selected by the International Union of Societies for Biomaterials Science and Engineering eight years before it is finally underway.

The Chinese Society for Biomaterials, later known as the Chinese Committee for Biomaterials, applied in 1996 to host the seventh WBC in Beijing in 2004, but the bid failed. The 2004 congress was held in Sydney.

In 2000, the committee filed another application to the union to host the 2008 congress, but Amsterdam was selected as the host city.

In 2004, it applied again on the strength of rapidly developing biomaterials science in China. By then Chengdu had become an important center of education and R&D in biomaterials.

Many internationally influential breakthroughs had been made by the National Engineering Research Center for Biomaterials at Sichuan



PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chengdu is among the fastest growing cities in China, but retains a leisurely ambience.

University and a number of renowned biomaterials experts including professors Zhang Xingdong and Gu Weizhong.

At the international society's conference in 2004, a delegation led by Chengdu's deputy mayor Hao Kangli and leading Chinese scholars debated rivals and won the city the right to host this year's congress.

Hosting the event is seen as a symbol that China has become a nation with world-class competence in biomaterials research and engineering, while Chengdu has risen to rank among global centers of biomaterials study and exchanges.

Local officials said the congress will also "promote the city's modernization and internationalization" as it is the largest and most influential international event that the city has hosted in recent years.

Western growth

The capital city of Sichuan province, Chengdu is a regional hub for transportation, technology, trade and finance. It is also the most attractive

conference destination in the region. The Fortune Global Forum will be held in the city next year, becoming the fourth Chinese host city following Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong.

Andy Serwer, managing editor of Fortune, said, "Chengdu is the perfect city for us because it represents so many trends."

He explained that Chengdu has great economic potential and capacity for innovation as well as a compelling culture and rich experience in holding international conventions.

Following moves to restructure the economy and find new resources to cope with the global economic crisis, the city's GDP hit 680 billion yuan (\$107.2 billion) in 2011, among the top 10 cities in the nation.

It has also been named one of the best investment destinations on the Chinese mainland by the World Bank and one of the fastest-growing cities in the next 10 years by Forbes magazine.

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Jinli Street built during the Three Kingdoms period (AD 220-280) is now a tourist attraction featuring historic buildings and folk customs.



Broad and Narrow Alley built in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) has an array of traditional Chinese residences.

A glance of Chengdu

