

City special

Ruzhou rejuvenates ceramic industry

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The 2015 China Skills Competition, which included the first Ceramics Molding Skills Competition's Henan arena and the final of the Henan provincial competition for ceramic hand molding, opened on Aug 28 in Ruzhou, in western Henan.

More than 100 ceramists from regions including Henan and Shaanxi provinces competed in the three-day event.

The competition included theoretical tests, onsite hand crafting and evaluation of the finished pieces. Contestants demonstrated their skills in painting on ceramic bases, sculpting, hand throwing and ceramic design.

Six national-level ceramics experts judged the candidates' works.

The competition hoped to discover talented artists and boost the inheritance and innovation of ceramic art.

"The event can serve as a platform for ceramists to improve their skills through competition, and create a healthy development environment for the ceramic industry," said Wang Aichun, chairman of Henan provincial administrative committee of ceramic and glass industries.

"The competition is meaningful in enhancing the development of Ruzhou and even Henan's ceramic industry."

According to Wang, Ruzhou used to be a hub for ceramic production and ceramics made in the region are known as Ru Ceramic.

Now the city intends to rejuvenate its ceramic industry, which could play a key role in upgrading its industrial structure and boosting the local economy, Wang said.

By promoting the inheritance of the craft, hosting cultural demonstrations and conserving its history, Ruzhou has made great efforts to maintain the brand of Ru Ceramic, according to Wang.

According to Gao, Party chief of Ruzhou city, who addressed the opening ceremony, the event will further enhance Ruzhou's ceramic industry and facilitate economical and cultural exchanges between the city and other regions.

Gao said Ruzhou has put emphasis on boosting its ceramic industry since the beginning of the year. Taking advantage of its good foundations and leading position in the production of Ru Ceramic, the city has made modern ceramics the leading sector to upgrade its industries.

The city has planned a Ru Ceramic e-commerce industrial park near its Yanhedian Ru Ceramic Heritage site. The local government reached agreements with several enterprises to speed up the development of the park through Build-Operate-Transfer and Public-Private-Partnership modes.

A ceramic identification center, a tourist service center, a Ru Ceramic masters garden, a museum and an e-commerce center are under construction in the park.

The park is expected to attract local Ru Ceramic factories, producers of other ceramics and national-level ceramics experts. The park is expected to produce two types of Ru Ceramic, high-end art pieces and artistic pieces for daily use.

More than 80 Ru Ceramic enterprises in the city have agreed to move into the park so far. The city plans to organize special promotions in Tai-

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wan to attract local ceramic enterprises to establish factories in Ruzhou, according to Gao.

As the mainland and the island intend to boost the development of the Internet Plus and e-commerce industries, the city is seeking opportunities to strengthen cooperation with major Internet platforms including Alibaba and JD.com.

Ruzhou will explore international trading and online auctions to boost the integration of ceramic-related tourist and cultural industries and e-commerce to turn the modern ceramic sector into Ruzhou's pillar and brand industry, according to Gao.



A song and dance show at the competition recalls the history of Ruzhou's ceramics industry. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Henan's once vital base for Chinese ceramics

Ruzhou, Henan province, has a rich history, myriad cultural resources and many scenic attractions.

According to historians, people lived in Ruzhou as far back as 500,000 or 600,000 years ago. It is one of the birthplaces of the famous Yangshao and Longshan cultures.

A pottery jar unearthed in Ruzhou and painted with the pattern of a stork holding a fish in its mouth is the earliest and most complete painted

earthenware in China. More than 6,000 years old, it was included in the first list of 64 relics forbidden to be taken outside China by the nation's top cultural authority.

The Zhanggongxiang Kiln site in Ruzhou is the official kiln site of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) and at the time an important production base of Ru Ceramics.

Ru Ceramics were made from a type of porcelain favored by the Song Dynasty imperial family. Its

development is important to the historic development of ceramics in China. The firing techniques to make Ru ceramics are a national intangible cultural heritage.

Ruzhou's Ru Porcelain Museum is the only professional venue in China to collect and exhibit Ru porcelain. Many important and rare cultural relics reflecting the Yangshao and Longshan culture are on display here.

Ruzhou has many scenic and historic sites, including

Fengxue Temple, Faxingsi Pagoda and Ruzhou Confucian Temple, all of which are national cultural heritage units under State protection.

Fengxue Temple, located at the southern foot of Songshan Mountain, has a history of more than 1,500 years. It is named among the four famous temples of the Central Plains, along with the White Horse Temple, Shaolin Temple and Xiangguo Temple.

The temple has the third largest pagoda group in China,

with its Qizu Pagoda being the best preserved among the seven brick pagodas of the Tang Dynasty (618-907).

Ruzhou has unique geothermal resources, including hot springs characterized by high water quality and temperatures as well as rich minerals.

The fabulous landscape and picturesque scenery of Ruzhou make it a renowned tourist resort city.