



After six years of development, Zhengdong New District is now the core business area in Zhengzhou.

## Ancient capital strides toward modern metropolis

By Te Kan

Zhengzhou, a historic city on banks of the Yellow River, has developed into a dynamic business hub in central China through booming trade, logistics and well-developed transport and communications links.

The capital of Henan province, Zhengzhou has been considered the "geographic center" of China throughout the nation's history. It covers nearly 7,500 sq km and has a population of 7.43 million.

One of the cradles of Chinese civilization, the city today retains the remnants of

the splendid culture from its status as one of the country's eight ancient capitals.

Zhengzhou was the capital of the Xia (2100 BC-1600 BC) and Shang (1600 BC-1100 BC) dynasties. Recent archaeological discoveries show that the city was settled 8,000 years ago, long before recorded history began.

It was also the birthplace of Huangdi, or the Yellow Emperor, who is recognized as the ancestor of Chinese people.

Its long history, culture and unique landscape combine to make Zhengzhou an attractive tourist destination.

Every year, millions of tourists travel to the city see its

many historical sites or visit Shaolin Temple—the birthplace of Chinese martial arts, or kungfu—and to venerate the Yellow Emperor in his hometown near the Yellow River.

Songshan Mountain, home to the Shaolin Temple, is also a world geopark recognized by UNESCO.

### Transportation

Today, the ancient city retains its central position on China's economic map as one of the most important transportation hubs in the nation.

Two of the country's most important railways—the Lanzhou-Lianyungang and Beijing-Guangzhou lines

—converge in the city.

At the heart of China's railway network, Zhengzhou North Railway Station is the largest switching yard in Asia, while Zhengzhou East Railway Station is the largest bulk cargo railway trans-shipment station in China.

The city is also the nexus of several important expressways linking to Beijing and Zhuhai, Lianyungang and Horgos.

The Zhengzhou Airport has flights to more than 30 cities in China.

The city is also one of the nation's key production bases for non-ferrous metals, food, coal, automobiles, building materials and textiles.

Its production of aluminum oxide accounts for more than half of the nation's total. The Zhengzhou Commodity Exchange is China's leading futures market for grains and cotton.

In recent years Zhengzhou has entered a new stage of economic and social development. In 2008, the city's gross domestic product exceeded 300 billion yuan, ranking it eighth among all provincial capitals.

The city has recently enhanced its international economic ties as businesses from more than 40 countries and regions have made investments in Zhengzhou.

The Zhengdong New District, founded in 2003, is the major investment destination for that investment. In the past six years, businesses from home and abroad started more than 3,000 enterprises in the area.

### Ambitious plan

In the next two decades,



City efforts in environmental protection have resulted in a marked improvement in the local ecology in recent years.

Zhengzhou is scheduled to become an internationalized modern city with good living and business environment, while continuing to showcase the splendid Chinese culture to the world, according to new growth plan for 2008-2020 released by the city government.

The plan said the new orientation for Zhengzhou is to become a modern manufacturing base as well as hubs for regional logistics and

financial services.

To reach those goals, the city government plan calls for development of new urban areas and development zones, including the Zhengdong New District, Zhengzhou Economic and Technological Zone, the Zhongmu Industrial Base and the Zhengzhou International Logistics Park.

The Zhengdong New District is designated as the central business district in Zhengzhou emphasizing

finance and other modern service industries. It also expected to become the site of regional headquarters of numerous domestic and international companies.

In the next two decades, Zhengzhou will highlight development of industries such as modern agriculture, food processing, logistics, automobiles and auto parts, non-ferrous metallurgy, electronic information, textiles, finance and tourism.



Sculptures in Dehua Street showing Zhengzhou's traditional lifestyle attract both locals and tourists. Dehua is the largest pedestrian street in central China.

## Historic locale, new landmarks

After six years of development, a modern and dynamic new urban area is now emerging in the east of Zhengzhou, capital of central China's Henan province.

The Zhengdong New District, now the central business district (CBD) of Zhengzhou, already has a number of landmark buildings that attract the attention

of both locals and tourists.

The most eye catching are the Zhengzhou International Convention and Exhibition Center and the Henan Art Center.

### Exhibition center

Construction of the Zhengzhou International Convention and Exhibition Center, designed in the shape of a sailing ship, started in January

2003, marking the inception of Zhengzhou New District.

Located at the core of the CBD, the center is a 227,600 sq m complex with separate convention and exhibition centers.

The convention center has a total floor space of 60,800 sq m, including the main conference hall—the Xuanyuan Hall—which can accommodate

3,160 people. It also has dozens of medium and small-sized conference rooms along with dining rooms and cafes.

The exhibition center is a 166,800 sq m facility with two exhibition halls that can hold 3,560 standard booths. With a roof span of 102 m, its design allows it to be further divided into six exhibition halls.

The site also has an adjacent 38,000 sq m outdoor exhibition area.

In 2007, the complex won the Lu Ban Award, the nation's highest award for construction.

### Art center

Another landmark in the area is the Henan Art Center.

Built at a cost of 1 billion yuan and covering 77,000 sq m of floor space, it is the largest cultural facility in Henan province.

The project broke ground in December 2003 and was completed in November 2007.

The appearance of the buildings in the complex resembles three ancient Chinese musical instruments—the ceramic xun, stone paixiao and stone flute. Such instruments, used as far back as 8,000 years ago, have been discovered in sites in or near Zhengzhou.

The art center has a 1,800-seat theater, an 800-seat concert hall, a smaller theater with 380 seats and two galleries.



Zhengzhou is now a transportation, logistics and financial hub for the central region of China.

## Zhengzhou: Quick look

■ Zhengzhou North Railway Station is the largest railway switching station in Asia.

■ Zhengzhou East Railway Station is the largest bulk cargo railway trans-shipment station in China.

■ Zhengzhou Railway Station is one of the largest passenger railway stations in China.

■ Zhengzhou Commodity Exchange is the first

futures exchange in China. The "Zhengzhou Price" has become the benchmark in trading grains and cotton.

■ Output of aluminum oxide by the Henan branch of China Aluminum Industry Co tops all Asia.

■ Zhengzhou Research Institute for Abrasives & Grinding Materials is the birthplace of the China's first

man-made diamond.

■ Yutong Bus Co Ltd is the largest and the most advanced bus manufacturer in Asia.

■ The Sanquan Foods Co Ltd pioneered production of frozen glutinous rice balls.

■ Zhengzhou International Convention and Exhibition Center is one of the largest and best-equipped exhibition halls in China.



Concert at the newly built Henan Art Center.