

Ambitious plans both at home and next door over the next five years

By ZHANG ZHAO

China's Jilin province has had some real success in improving its economy, ecology, society, and culture over the last five years, so its Party committee has come up with plans to continue the economic and social development over the next five years.

"These are overall guidelines for Jilin's development under the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015) and beyond," said Li Fuchun, one of the drafters of the plans and director of the provincial development and reform commission.

Work on the document began last October as a joint

effort by provincial policy makers and local people.

Li said the document pointed to the many opportunities the province has over the next five years, by saying that it had "a preferential position, internationally, in the first place."

Jilin stands out because of its advantageous geographical location. And, closer business ties with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, next door, and greater cooperation with Russia's Far East "provide good conditions for the province to develop partnerships with neighboring countries."

At the same time, Jilin, which was one of China's

earliest industrial bases, has got a lot of attention from the central government, which is trying to help revive its infrastructure and major industrial sectors.

This is because, although Jilin has seen plenty of growth and development, there are still problems in many areas like economic and industrial structure, infrastructure, and commercialization of technologies.

In addition, people's incomes have failed to keep up with the growth in the economy.

So, the local government has set some goals for the next five years by pointing to possible areas of economic

growth, integrated industrial structures, and increased income.

The province has come up with a people-oriented developmental model that balances urbanization, industry, and agriculture and focuses on improving the standard of living in both urban and rural areas.

Its per capita GDP was above 40,000 yuan (\$6,000) last year, and that is expected to double over the next five years and, "make the cake bigger and better," according to Li.

Zhu Yongzheng, a provincial Party committee policy researcher, explained, "That is to say, we will be paying attention not only to GDP growth, but also to GDP structure."

High-tech industries, modern services, and emerging strategic sectors are expected to contribute a larger part of the province's GDP over the next five years, according to Zhu.

To do this, the government has a number of major projects in line to attract investment and help develop key industrial sectors. It will also push a green, circular economy, one with low-carbon emissions, low pollution, and more efficient energy use.

It also plans to look for more innovative management methods, while encouraging the development of the culture industry.

The local government also believes that they need more modern agriculture, since agriculture is at Jilin's very foundation.



Workers restore the exterior of old residential buildings in Changchun, Jilin.

Leaders look locally for ideas in their decision-making

By LIU MINGTAI AND ZHANG ZHAO

When the Jilin provincial government began work on its own 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015), it decided to let the people have their own say, because it obviously needed to brainstorm on a much larger scale.

So, it began a 10-day campaign on Dec 13 seeking advice from the locals, who could make mail in their suggestions or send them by e-mail.

The idea was to improve the guidelines by making them closer to ordinary folks' interests, explained Chang Xiaochun, the deputy director of the provincial development and reform commission.

The local media also got involved, with newspapers and websites setting up special columns and programs over the 10-day period, and soliciting comments that the legislators could use in their decisions.

The people actually contributed quite a lot, many of the comments obviously focused on current problems and things that needed to be dealt with over the next five years.

One example of these was a web user with the name "Zhubao Mama" who said that more innovative education methods were needed as well as better handling of education funds.

Two other web users "Currency War" and "Heng Dao", had some things to say about environmental problems. "Currency War" said that they needed large methane gas tanks near towns so they could make bio-gas out of household, restaurant, and grocery store waste.

"Heng Dao" said the government needed to encourage the use of electrically powered buses and taxis as part of any new energy policy.

"This will help develop clean energy vehicles," the

person said, "and will help cut carbon dioxide emissions."

Another web user, "Wenxinniao", said the government needed to try harder to improve the public transportation system and put limit on the number of private cars. Wenxinniao also pointed to environmental problems in the countryside, including untreated sewage and garbage.

"Feng Zhu" and "Hong Xingzhe" said that the elderly needed to be given greater attention.

"I'm looking forward to more community services, because my children are always busy with work and they don't live with me," said Feng, a pensioner in his seventies, who added, "I hope a nurse can come to my home every week. And it'd be great if there were a psychologist to talk with."

Other topics include resource planning, housing, employment, and government services.



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Jilin Party Secretary Sun Zhengcai (center) talking with local residents to learn more about their worries and difficulties.