

Introduction

In order to improve the English literacy and reading skills of the general readership, and to enable more people, especially foreign friends, to understand Weifang's historical culture, cultural relics, intangible heritage skills, famous mountains, and beautiful waters, Weifang Evening News is launching the English version of *Weifang Insights* in the *Education Weekly* from today. This section will introduce readers to Weifang kites, woodblock New Year paintings, and other intangible cultural heritage projects as well as Weifang's local customs, natural landscapes, and high-quality cultural and tourism resources. Please stay tuned.

Thriving Weifang

Weifang inherits the traditions of Qilu and connects the sea and the mountains. Covering a land area of 15,700 square kilometers and with a permanent population of 9.418 million, it is known as the World Kite Capital, International Power City, National Civilized City, City of Crafts and Folk Arts, International City of Peace, and Culture City of East Asia. Weifang's development in Shandong can be summarized as "4321": fourth in economic size, with regional GDP reaching 760.6 billion yuan, ranking 25th among second-tier cities on the List of National Top 100 Cities; third in deposit and loan balances, making it the 12th prefecture-level city in China to exceed one trillion yuan in both; second in industrial scale, as has been enlisted in the first batch of pilot cities for manufacturing new technology transformation and first in agricultural level, evidenced by the largest sales of vegetables nationwide and with Chinese President Xi Jinping twice affirming our paradigms for rural reform and development, namely the Zhucheng Model, Weifang Model, and Shouguang Model.

Weifang is a time-honored city

with thousands of years of history and deep cultural heritage. Six thousand years of brilliant civilization and two thousand years as a renowned county of Beihai have endowed Weifang with a profound cultural foundation. This land has nurtured ancient sages such as Cang Jie, the founder of Chinese characters; Yu Shun, a legendary ancient emperor; Zheng Xuan, a master of Confucian classics; and Jia Sixie, the saint of agriculture. It has also been home to literary figures like Su Dongpo, Li Qingzhao, Zhang Zeduan, and Zheng Banqiao, and has given birth to famous works such as *Qi Min Yao Shu* (*Comprehensive Review of Agriculture*) and *Jin Shi Lu* (*Monograph of Epigraphy*).

Weifang is a transportation hub with a superior location. Located at the geometric center of the Shandong Peninsula, it is a national comprehensive transportation hub city with an interconnected transportation network that reaches all directions. Nine expressways and four high-speed railways traverse the city. Weifang Port is a national first-class open port, and Weifang Airport has routes to 18 cities. It takes only 28 minutes by high-

speed rail to reach Jiaodong International Airport, and the construction of the Tianjin-Weifang section of the auxiliary channel of the Beijing-Shanghai High-Speed Railway has started. Once completed, it will take 1.5 hours to Beijing and 2.5 hours to Shanghai.

Weifang is an industrial powerhouse with a solid foundation. Its modern agriculture leads the nation, with the total output value of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishery ranking first in Shandong Province. Vegetable exports and poultry meat export value account for 1/8 and 1/6 of the national total, respectively. The scale of its manufacturing industry ranks second in Shandong, accounting for 10% of the province and 1% of the country. Its power equipment cluster has been selected as a national advanced manufacturing cluster.

Weifang is an open city that embraces diversity. It is one of the starting points of the ancient Maritime Silk Road and one of the earliest cities in modern China to open up to the external world. By far, it has established economic and trade ties with 218 countries and regions worldwide.

News Highlights of the Week

■ On the morning of June 2, the 2024 Shandong Province June 5 Environment Day publicity event was held in Weifang City, themed on "Comprehensively Promote the Construction of a Beautiful China-Build a Beautiful Shandong with Green, Low-Carbon, High-Quality Development."

■ On June 7, the performance evaluation and results exhibition conference was held in Weifang for towns, streets (development zones), and villages, aiming to comprehensively improve the overall efficiency of their work and lay a solid foundation for the development of Better Weifang.

■ On June 7, the main event for the Shandong (Weifang) World Oceans Day and National Ocean Publicity Day 2024 was held in Weifang.

Famous Historical and Cultural Figures

Ouyang Xiu and His Governance of Qingzhou



Figure of Ouyang Xiu

The great literary figure Ouyang Xiu served as the Minister of War and Governor of Qingzhou in the first year of the Song Dynasty's Xining era (A.D. 1068). Ouyang Xiu stayed in Qingzhou for two years, and nearly a thousand years later, his anecdotes and stories are still widely circulated among the people of Qingzhou, who deeply cherish his memory.

After simplifying government affairs, Ouyang Xiu had time to enjoy nature and write poems. He loved the beautiful scenery of Qingzhou, was enchanted by its mountains and waters, and found great joy in them. Mountains, waters, wine, flowers, and springs all found their way into his poetic imagery. He created many poems and essays in Qingzhou, with representative works including "Biao Hai Pavilion", "Two Poems Left on the South Tower", "Traveling in Shizi Gorge", "Writing About Qingzhou", and "Inscription on the Mountain Studio in Qingzhou".

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Art on Fingertips

Weifang and Weifang Kites

The origin of Weifang kites can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods when Mo Di created the first "wooden kite", which has a history of over 2,400 years. Weifang kites began to be popular among the people during the Song Dynasty, became more widespread during the Ming Dynasty, and were prevalent in villages during the Qing Dynasty's Qianlong and Jiaqing periods. Zheng Banqiao, who once served as the county magistrate of Weixian, wrote in his poem "Nostalgia for Weixian", "Paper flowers fly like snowflakes in the sky, the young girl swings surrounded by flowers. Her colorful skirt flutters in the wind, competing with butterflies for the beauty of spring." This describes the lively scene of Weifang people flying kites along the Bailang River in the sunny and breezy spring of March.

Weifang kites are a combination of local and artistic traditions, as well as practicality and beauty, rich in local life atmosphere and lively charm. The craftsmanship of making these kites absorbs the strengths of various techniques, forming a unique style characterized by beautiful shapes, delicate structure, and bright



2024 Weifang International Kite Festival

colors, making them an important school of Chinese kites.

On April 1, 1984, Weifang held its first International Kite Festival, which has been held annually since then, successfully hosting 41 festivals to date. In April 1988, Weifang was designated as the "World Kite Capital" by the Presidium of the Fifth International Kite Festival. In April 1989, the International

Kite Federation was established, and Weifang was chosen as its headquarters. In May 2006, Weifang kites were included in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage lists.

Today, kites have become a symbol of Weifang. Riding the east wind of the Kite Festival, the ancient yet youthful Weifang kites are soaring higher and higher in the spring breeze...