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# Admission to IAEE signals expo industry's growing professionalism

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The Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Expositions signed a framework agreement with the International Association of Exhibitions and Events last week, which means the bureau is now an IAEE member.

This is the first international exhibition organization that Chengdu has taken part in.

The success of the 2013 Fortune Global Forum and the 12th World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention held in Chengdu last year showed that the city has an excellent environment for holding exhibitions and conventions, said IAEE chairman Skip Cox.

IAEE is confident about the prospects of Chengdu's exhibition and convention industry, he said.

IAEE is the world's largest exhibition industry association, with 6,000 members. After joining the international organization, Chengdu can further boost international cooperation and development in the industry by using channels and resources of the association, said officials at the local exhibition bureau.

This year is already shaping up to be a successful one for Chengdu's convention and exhibition industry, with three events taking place almost simultaneously, officials said.

The events reflect the local government's call on the industry to become more market-driven, professional, internationalized, brand-oriented and regulated.

Among the events is the 18th China Sichuan New Year Shopping Festival, which kicked off at the Chengdu Century City New International Convention and Exhibition Center on Jan 11.

With the theme of "spending during Chinese New Year, buying international commodities", this event lasts 15 days. More than 200,000 commodities from 47 countries and regions are on display at its almost 80,000-square-meter exhibition area.

Organizers anticipate that some 500,000 people will visit over the course of the exposition.

The organizing committee told reporters that this year's shopping festival is more internationalized and professional, featuring a wider variety of world-renowned brands. International commodities account for nearly 20,000 sq m of exhibition space.

Companies from such countries as Japan, South Korea and the Philippines will hold promotions during the festival, according to the committee.

The shopping festival also established nine specialized venues featuring organic agricultural products, selected food, clothes, pearls and jewels, just to name a few.

Almost at the same time, the Chengdu Convention and Exhibition Economy Development Research Institute was established on Jan 11 at Chengdu University.

"This is Chengdu's innovation in the theoretical research of the exhibition and convention industry and will promote the sector's more professional and internationalized development," said Yuan Zaiqing, director at the China Convention and Exhibition Society.

The gains expected in the coming year will be made by carrying forward the momentum built in 2013, which was the most important year to date for Chengdu's exhibition and convention industry, said officials.

In 2013, the city hosted 502 large exhibitions, among which 53 are international, 15 more than the year previous. And 104 international meetings and forums were held, 28 more than in the previous year.

Exhibitions area surpassed 3 million sq m, while international ones accounted for about half and increased by 16.7 percent over 2012.

Figures also showed that all the exhibitions and conventions in 2013 had generated direct income of 6.05 billion yuan (about \$ 1 billion), up 20.5 percent year-on-year. Indirect income reached some 51 billion yuan, increasing 21.1 percent.

The first city in central and West China to host the Fortune Forum, Chengdu attracted more than 100 top 500 enterprises and 600 political and business leaders from around the globe to the event last year.

During the forum, Chengdu signed 74 investment projects with Fortune 500 companies and renowned multinationals, totaling more than 112 billion yuan.

Chengdu's achievements in its exhibition and convention industry have won wide acclaim. The city received four awards in the 2013 China Exhibition and Convention Industry Annual Seminar held in mid-December.

According to the Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Exposition, the city will organize more events in 2014 to promote the industry.

The events include the 2014 China-Germany Dialogue Forum, 2014-2016 X Games, Michelin Challenge Bibendum and the ninth China-ASEAN conference of the non-governmental friendship organiza-



PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Skip Cox (middle), chairman of the International Association of Exhibitions and Events, shakes hands with Wang Xin, deputy director of the Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Exposition, after they sign a framework agreement on behalf of the two parties to grant the bureau IAEE membership.

tion, as well as the third WeGO.

In addition to newly introduced exhibitions and conventions, the city will continue to hold some traditional programs, including the 90th China Food & Drinks Fair and China Soft 2014.

"In the next few years, Chengdu will introduce more international exhibitions and conventions," said Mu Tao, director at the Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Exposition. "It will strengthen cooperation with UNESCO and IAEE. It will also seek more support from various government departments to bid for international conventions."



It has been estimated that the ongoing shopping festival will draw more than 500,000 visitors.