

2011

The International Awards

for Liveable Communities

Summary

Jeju City, Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, Republic of Korea

The "Whole City" category (E)

Jeju City is known as a treasure trove of natural assets, recognized as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Biosphere Reserve in 2002, a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site in 2007, and a UNESCO World Geopark in 2010. In addition, a cluster of human habitations (which are presumed to have been built around 150 B.C) were found in Jeju City. The city is steeped in history, with people living on the island long before the prehistoric age. According to mythology, a daughter of the King of Heaven named "Seol-moon-dae-hal-mang" is a goddess who created the wondrous Jeju Island. Jeju City used to be the capital of the kingdom of "Tamna guk" which was established 1,000 years ago. Jeju City is a place of tradition and culture, bearing the unique cultural identity commonly found on such islands.

The role model for low carbon emissions and green growth where nature and humans live harmoniously.

Based on this historical and cultural background, Jeju City has a long-term vision for becoming a role model of low carbon emissions and green growth until 2020. To meet this goal, Jeju City has already adopted a number of strategies for becoming a global hub for smart grid innovation and developing an engine for sustainable growth, including introducing green tourism and cutting-edge industries, establishing green governance, and creating a human-friendly green transportation environment. Based on these projects, Jeju City is implementing diverse policies for creating a carbon neutral, green city where nature and humans live in harmony. Jeju City is playing a leading role in promoting green growth – the city was even designated as a leader for green growth by the "Green Growth Committee" under the aegis of the Korean president.

Creating a greener environment for better quality of life.

Currently, Jeju City prioritizes creating green areas and beautiful urban spaces in terms of environment, ecology, and scenery. From 2000 to 2009, a Jeju City project completed the planting of one million trees. The city plans to complete another tree planting project from 2010 through 2016. If this project is implemented as scheduled, a total of three million trees will have been planted, consequently creating a greener heart of the city.

Ecologically restoring a stream.

"San-ji" stream, located in the center of Jeju City, is the first ecologically restored stream in South Korea. A part of the stream (600 meters long) running across the center of the city was covered with concrete to build a complex of commercial buildings in the late 1970s. However, "San-ji" stream was ecologically restored in the 1990s thanks to the coordinated efforts of the local government and residents. The restoration of "San-ji" stream was highly acclaimed in the 2003 "Second International Conference of Mayors Summit" held in Denver, Colorado, USA. "San-ji" stream serves as a role model when other local governments consider restoring streams in their areas, such as the "Chunggyechun" in Seoul.

Preserving Jeju's unique culture and perpetuating its preservation policy in the 21st century.

On the basis of three principles, Jeju City is systematically managing its cultural assets to enhance their historical vitality. First, the city is making great efforts to preserve and restore cultural relics based on historical research that aims to find the true value of cultural assets and re-interpret them.

To do so, it is important to systematically study both tangible and intangible cultural assets which have been neglected, and to instill meaning upon them. Second, Jeju City is creating a venue for communication with residents by running cultural festivals where long-standing agricultural rituals are reconstructed. The local history and culture should not only be displayed, but enjoyed interactively with local residents in the community. Third, the city is trying to use cultural assets for children's education by re-interpreting the history and traditional culture of Jeju Island in a modern way. Jeju City is also laying the foundation for using cultural assets as emotional tourism resources for first-time visitors to Jeju Island.

The campaign for preserving ecological treasures. Jeju City is systematically preserving and managing ecological areas, including six marshes, ponds, and seven fresh water springs. In addition, the city founded the "Jeju Olle Walk," a forest path along which people can enjoy fantastic scenery while walking for a few hours. The "Jeju Olle Walk" is the first eco-travel route in South Korea, and now serves as the key indicator of ecotourism. Another important ecological area is the "Gotjawal Forest" on Jeju Island, where underground water can be stored. To preserve the "Gotjawal" area, the National Trust campaign will allow this area to be purchased by residents' donations. The "Gotjawal" area has a size of 110 km². Approximately 6.6 km² (10 percent of the private land in that area) will be purchased from 2007 until 2016.

Playing a leading role in combating climate change. Jeju City has well-developed infrastructure for green industries, including the world's largest smart grid pilot complex and the high-tech science and technology complex. Jeju City also has strong potential to develop into a low carbon and green growth city due to its rich ecological resources. Jeju City is leading "The Low Carbon and Green Life Practice Campaign", and is also working closely together with residents to become the poster child for a low carbon and green growth city by attracting eco-friendly, high-tech industries, introducing eco-travel, expanding the infrastructure of "Green MICE", developing primary industries in an eco-friendly way using geothermal energy, and supplying power to public offices using solar and wind power.

Jeju City has already established an inventory system for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and also developed a model for climate change impact assessment and adaptation. In addition, Jeju City is now running a learning center for climate change, and plans to carry out the "Green Start Campaign" for reducing CO₂ emissions and the pilot project for carbon emission trading system. For the first time in South Korea, Jeju City is running the "Clean House System"; a garbage collection system. Thanks to this system, approximately 2.6 billion Won is saved on waste treatment every year and this money is used for job creation. In addition, Jeju City is making great efforts to reduce waste through environmental education.

A sustainable city is in harmony with nature. Jeju City aims to build a sustainable city in which people are able to live in harmony with nature. To do so, Jeju City has established three agendas - "Happy Residents, Livable Jeju City", "Sustainable Green City", and "Safe City". Jeju City focuses on preventing reckless urban development to provide pleasurable living conditions for residents.

Creating a brighter future through the coordinated efforts of residents and the local government. Residents are engaged in all policies for future development. The "Jeju City Development Forum" was organized in the form of private governance, which suggests mid and long-term development agendas. In addition, civil groups, such as "Jeju City Agenda 21", "Korea Federation for Environmental Movement of Jeju", and "The Jeju Branch of Bike 21 (Corp)", are leading the way in conducting the green campaign.

To phase out the "livable city" project, Jeju City has already established long-term development plans, such as "The 2025 Jeju Urban Development Plan" and "The Jeju Daily Living Sphere Development Plan". In addition, Jeju City has mapped out and pushed ahead with mid-term development plans by area on a three to five year basis. These mid- and long-term development plans are now taking place effectively.