

Website, app open window to Chengdu tourism

By WANG XIAODONG and LI YU

After a yearlong trial, the official English-language website for visitors to Chengdu — Cometochengdu.com — was officially launched on Oct. 15 in the United States' Silicon Valley.

The website, created by the Chengdu Tourism Bureau and the Chengdu Culture and Tourism Group, has an international vision and is aimed at catering to overseas tourists' browsing habits and requirements. It provides information on attractions and services in Chengdu and surrounding areas.

It is the Chengdu government's first English-language website to promote tourism, marking major progress in the city's online promotion of tourism overseas.

According to the tourism bureau, a survey of 1,000 international tourists found that many foreigners are interested in visiting Chengdu, but they generally lack the means to conveniently access detailed information about the area.

The survey showed that most overseas travelers get the information they need from third-party websites, but these often fail to meet their requirements, which prompted the idea to create cometochengdu.com, the bureau said.

The website was built to help foreign tourists gain better knowledge of Chengdu, the capital of southwestern Sichuan province. Developers distributed



PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Cometochengdu.com, the Chengdu government's first English-language website to promote tourism, provides information on attractions and services in the city and in nearby areas.



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David Lane, a partner at Founder Space

questionnaires among tourists outside China to help design the layout, functions and content of the site. They also invited advisers and designers from other countries to participate in constructing the website to make it more accessible for foreigners rather than provide a mere translation from Chinese to English.

One strength of the website is that it is connected with the TripAdvisor database, one of the world's biggest websites for tourist reviews. Users of the website have access to comments posted on TripAdvisor so they can judge for themselves.

Cometochengdu.com is available in English and traditional Chinese. It consists of four major sections: Discover Chengdu, Event Calendar, Things to Do, and Traveler Information. These enable users to find the information they are looking for easily.

"We aim to turn cometochengdu.com

into an encyclopedia on tourism in Chengdu that includes every detail, so every foreign visitor can become a Chengdu expert," according to the Chengdu Culture and Tourism Group.

A mobile app for cometochengdu.com is also available for Apple and Android devices.

The website provides information services before and during trips, and encourages visitors to share their experiences on the Internet.

The website targets potential customers on media platforms such as TripAdvisor, Facebook and YouTube and directs them to cometochengdu.com content. Tourists can use the site to draw up a detailed travel plan using the information available.

During their trip, visitors can check for updated information on the app on mobile devices. They can also log on to Facebook and YouTube after their trip to share their experiences with others and interact with the Chengdu Tourism Bureau's official account.

"The website is very helpful and easy to operate. It made me feel as if I were in Chengdu," David Lane, a partner at Founder Space, said at the launch ceremony for the website. "I will definitely visit Chengdu to enjoy the hotpot there."

Many others from Silicon Valley also showed great interest in the website.

Video, 3-D pictures boost U.S. interest in the city

By WANG XIAODONG and LI YU

A promotional video for tourism in Chengdu has been playing on huge screens in New York's Times Square and at San Francisco International Airport since Oct. 14 to increase the city's popularity in the United States.

This is the second time a promotional video of Chengdu has been shown in the U.S. The first was in 2013 in Times Square.

The 30-second movie was on show for a week and presented an image of Chengdu that blends its natural environment, rich and diverse culture, and rapidly developing modern facilities.

The video, titled "Chengdu Brings You Every Success," includes elements that best represent the city, such as giant pandas; Dujiangyan Dam, a United Nations cultural heritage site and the world's oldest water resources project still in use today; Qingcheng Mountain, a holy mountain in Taoism; the Temple of Marquis Wu; Chengdu hotpot; urban leisure culture; and traditional practices, such as fire breathing and face-changing performances.

Another promotional initiative was two 3-D pictures displayed in Silicon Valley that received much attention from visitors.

The pictures were shown during a promotional tour when tourism officials from Chengdu visited the U.S. in October. One of the images displayed giant pandas in Chengdu and the other showcased Dujiangyan Dam.

The 3-D picture with five pandas was particularly popular, and many visitors posed on the swing in the picture next to the pandas.

Two painters completed the pictures in eight days. They were the first 3-D images used by Chengdu to promote tourism outside China and were aimed at giving foreigners more knowledge of the city, according to the Chengdu Culture and Tourism Group.

To attract American visitors, the tourism company also invited Web users to answer questions about the city for the chance to win return flights to Chengdu from San Francisco and two nights' accommodation at a top hotel.

Chengdu Tourism Bureau said the city has made great efforts to explore the U.S. tourism market, which is one of the most important sources of overseas tourists for the city.

In the past few years, Chengdu has enhanced its tourism image in the U.S., which has increased Americans' familiarity with the city. As a result, the number of American tourists to Chengdu has increased, according to the tourism bureau.



A 3-D picture of five giant pandas proves popular with visitors in October.