

# World's top special effects factory to open base in Wuhan

Blockbuster *King Kong*, fantasy film *The Lord of the Rings*, and science fiction film *Avatar* all stormed the world with their awesome visual effects. The man behind all these films is Richard Taylor.

On April 9, Richard Taylor came to Wuhan and shared his plan to set up an animation experience center and build a visual industry research center, CG film production center, and video production center here.

Richard Taylor is from New Zealand. He has won five Academy Awards and is said to be the top film special effects master in the

world. In recent years, his Weta Workshop has conducted many exchanges and cooperative projects with China.

At the China (Hubei)-New Zealand Investment and Trade Promotion Fair, held last month, Weta Workshop, Zishuijing Media Co., Ltd., Hubei Duobaoqing Media Co., Ltd., and Shambala Cultural Industry Investment Co., Ltd. signed a cultural industry projects agreement. An animation experience center themed *Wotwots Kiddets* and a visual industry center will open in Wuhan. On April 9, Richard Taylor's trip with company executives

and cooperative representatives in China came to Hubei for further discussions with cultural departments and enterprises in Hubei.

Wuhan visual industry (digital image industrialized production) base project is planned to cover an area of 500,000 square meters. The base primarily includes enterprise headquarters, a training center, an R&D center for the visual industry, a CG film production center, a video production center, and a theme park operation center with an estimated investment of RMB 3 billion.

## French delegation visits Wuhan

By Shao Lan

Gérard Wolf, France's sustainable city representative and the coordinator of the Sino-French Wuhan Ecological Demonstration City project, and his delegation visited Wuhan on April 13.

The preparatory work for the eco-city project has been put in place and infrastructure construction has begun. For the planned industrial projects, investment is being sought and projects related to living facilities will soon be started. Both sides hope to reach consensus on and prioritize this year's work.

Wolf says his visit featuring many French enterprises is expected to promote the comprehensive cooperation for the Sino-French Wuhan Ecological Demonstration City project and actively engage in the development of Wuhan.

## Air route to Auckland launches

A new air route from Wuhan to Oceania is now ready for travelers. At the New Zealand Tourism Promotion Fair held on April 12 in Wuhan, the Wuhan-Shanghai-Auckland flight was announced. It is the third flight to a destination in Oceania starting from Wuhan, with the other two destinations being the Gold Coast and Sydney.

China Eastern Airlines (CEA) announced the daily flight MU779/MU780 to Auckland will be operated with Airbus 330 planes. The flight leaves Shanghai at 1:15 A.M. Beijing time and arrives at 4:55 P.M. local time, with the whole journey lasting 11 hours 40 minutes. The return flight leaves at 9:00 P.M. local time and arrives in Shanghai at 5:40 A.M. Beijing time the next day, lasting 12 hours 40 minutes.

There are six CEA flight options for passengers to take from Wuhan to Shanghai and then connect to the Shanghai-Auckland air route. For promotion, CEA is currently providing a special offer of RMB 800 for a round trip ticket.

## Azaleas blooming in Dongxihu

The Second Azalea Flower Festival kicked off recently in the Tulip Theme Park of Dongxihu District, with over 8 million wild alpine azaleas in full bloom on 5,000 bushes.

The flowers have created a dazzling red ocean and attracted many locals for a weekend visit. The park has also become the first suburban spot for azalea appreciation. Admission tickets for the park are priced at RMB 60; and children, students, and the elderly over 60 can enjoy a 50% discount.

Azaleas attracting many tourists in the Tulip Theme Park of Dongxihu District

Photos by Chen Yongquan

