

# SVEC Dishes from Chengdu/Sichuan

Alexander Wiese



*The Sichuan province is well known outside of China for its spicy cuisine. A national favorite is the "Hot Pot": in one pot with two separated sections a very spicy soup and a mild soup are heated up into which chopsticks are used to dunk in different types of food for a few minutes. This could be thinly sliced pieces of meat or vegetables. Along with that you drink sweetened Wong Lo Kat herbal tea to offset the spiciness of the Hot Pot. The company SVEC in Sichuan's capital city of Chengdu, a city with eight million inhabitants in southwestern China, has its own spicy menu. SVEC is looking for new challenges adding to their production of satellite dishes: they want to play a much bigger role in the world market with high quality products.*

■ An enormous satellite dish identifies SVEC's location in Chengdu from a distance. The administration building is in the foreground and in the back to the left is the satellite dish production facility.

The city of Chengdu itself has a long tradition for electronic communications in China. Its University of Electronic Science and Technology is very famous and has set up one of only two Antenna Science majors in all of China's universities. It is said that the best engineers in electronic communications can be found in Chengdu. About 30 factories are located in Chengdu.

In the High-Tech Development Park, West Zone, you will find SVEC's manufacturing facility. It's located well beyond Chengdu's third city ring but still within its city limits.

At the conference table in the bosses office, Wang Duo, SVEC's Board Director, explains to us the company's strategy and begins with its founding: "SVEC began in 1993 with the production of 1.5-meter aluminum antennas for the C-band", says Director Wang Duo, "in our first year our 50 employees produced 10,000 anten-



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■ Wang Duo is Board Director and Manager of the company SVEC



nas." 25 years later, those 50 employees grew to nearly 1000. Director Wang Duo explains: "They are divided into three different locations."

Becky is Manager of their Sales Teams and she tells us more about the three locations, "The fabrication plant here in Chengdu produces mostly for the domestic Chinese market. Our Suzhou location near Shanghai produces primarily for the export market, hence its location near the Pacific ocean. Our plant in Xinjiang in extreme northwestern China produces for the Russian export market." With all of these production facilities, it must be quite a large number of satellite dishes that are being manufactured. Director Wang duo gives us a number: "If we were to operate at full capacity it would be 180 million dishes a month." This enormous amount has been created by the big demand on the local China DTH market.

In reality though they don't produce that many antennas but Becky gave us some food for thought: "For the Chinese DTH project we have a contract to deliver 7 million dishes." Even though the domestic market is being supplied with millions of dishes, Becky and her sales team now want to focus more on the export market. "Right now our sales numbers are very good for

the Southeast Asian countries as well as for South America", explains Becky.

Becky continues: "Our key partners in the export market are the TV operators. 70% of our sales volume comes from TV operators. In 2009 we manufactured 3 million antennas. We are looking to increase deliveries to North America. The Middle East market is a FTA market, but there they don't care about quality, only about price, so sales volumes went down in 2009. Africa is yet a sleeping market for us." SVEC is actively taking part in all of the popular trade shows. "We are going to ANGA in Cologne, Cabsat in Dubai, IBC in Amsterdam, CSTB in Moscow, NAB in Las Vegas and of course CCBN in Beijing." You will find Becky or her colleagues at each of these trade shows.

But SVEC is not satisfied with just the production of satellite dishes. Their Master Chef, who is busy stirring up a new spicy antenna soup, is Wei Yun Han, head of the R&D team and at 73 years old is a real old timer who is loaded with new ideas. He has worked for military industrial enterprises for almost 60 years and has full experience in this industry. His team of 20 engineers are busy working on the completion of an automatic satellite system that is expected to be ready by the middle of 2010.

■ A look at the gigantic 9000 Sq-m production facility. A total of 15 press machines are installed here that are used to produce satellite dishes from as small as 35cm in diameter all the way up to large paneled 3-meter diameter antennas.

The designated driver of the company has the enviable task of driving around the company minivan in which is installed a prototype of this automatic system and testing the satellite reception while driving. As passengers in the minivan we were able to get a first hand look at how perfectly the prototype functioned and while our eyes were focused a little more on the chaotic traffic all around us than on the attached mini TV, with the driver it was the other



■ This is Li Peng. She is Production Manager and is seen here showing us a panel from an SVEC dish.



way around. Applications for such an automatic tracking system naturally include TV reception in moving vehicles such as in a car, in a truck, in an RV or even in a train.

But the Internet is the future, and therefore interest in receiving Internet-via-satellite using a system like this could reach completely new dimensions.

The subject of Internet-via-Satellite is not too far removed from VSAT. It's actually a separate business unit for SVEC and they would also like to strengthen their market position here as well.

This is a challenging technology and SVEC with its many years of production experience can bring a lot of know-how to the table. This covers the Ku-band as well as the Ka-band; most of the Internet-via-Satellite signals can be found in the Ka-band. These are technical challenges that are far beyond those that would be found with the production of satellite dishes; they are challenges that SVEC is taking on enthusiastically.

SVEC has ambitions to become one of the leading suppliers of satellite reception systems in the world. As Director Wang Duo says: "We care very much about the high technology development. It's very important because it determines our life in future. Our goal is to play a much bigger role in the world market with high quality and technology products."

That spicy soup in Sichuan is boiling away at SVEC!



■ Automatic welding robots are used in the production of the support rods.



■ There are only two dish factories in China which have the ability to develop the mould in their own mould plant.



■ A look at the press machines in the production hall. The dishes as well as the dish panels are formed here out of sheet metal



■ Dish panels are waiting here for further transport.



■ Becky (left), Export Sales Manager, Alexander Wiese (center), TELE-satellite Editor-in-Chief, and Wang Duo (right) Board Director SVEC



■ In the SVEC showroom: Frank is in the Export Sales Team



■ The R&D center with the developmental engineers. In the background Development Manager Wei Yun Han is discussing their new automatic tracking system product.



■ A prototype of their new self-tracking satellite antenna is installed on the company van. The driver keeps an eye on the mini TV while driving to make sure that reception is interference-free.



■ A look at the Sales area: all customer inquiries are funneled here. Nine employees are responsible for export with another 25 responsible for domestic sales.



■ Becky is in charge of the Sales Team. She also travels quite extensively internationally and represents SVEC at the trade shows.



■ Belinda Zhou is Sales Manager for Middle East and European markets



■ Reina is Sales Manager for Africa and India



■ Green Li is the Sales Manager for Southeast Asia and Russia. She had read the article in TELE-satellite about the pink dishes from Thailand. She gestures to her monitor: "We also manufacture satellite dishes in pink for our customer TrueVisions."