

# Focusing on hospitality and cordiality in service sphere

Roadside service sites in Belarus are to render all-inclusive services, notes Trade Minister Valentin Chekanov at a joint meeting of the Transport and Communications, Trade, Sports and Tourism Ministries

By Olga Levkova

Roadside service sites enjoy great popularity abroad, offering shops and catering outlets, fuel, parking and repair services. According to Mr. Chekanov, Belarus should similarly develop sites to be all-inclusive. He stresses that drivers should be able to 'have a meal, rest, take a shower, sleep or, even, repair their vehicle if necessary'. He adds, "Unfortunately, not enough such sites exist, especially near large cities."

According to the Trade Ministry, 1,091 roadside service sites are currently operational, alongside almost 400 fuelling stations and 441 public catering outlets, with numbers growing all the time. However, the development of such sites is being hampered, including by some bureaucratic procedures.

According to the Trade Minister, roadside services should offer hospitality and a friendly attitude towards travellers; sadly, this can be lacking. The appearance of shops at such stations needs



New roadside services open at 219th kilometre of Minsk-Vitebsk motorway

to be improved, with all staff offering a more attentive attitude towards customers.

Souvenir sales could be developed too. "We need all these, since such sites give

a general impression of the country," stresses the Minister. Roadside services should

equal those in Europe, so their quality must be kept updated constantly.

The Sports and Tourism Minister, Oleg Kachan, is particularly keen to see facilities built along roads leading to historical and cultural sites of international significance — such as the Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Mir, Nesvizh and Polotsk. "We should examine in detail the issues of roadside services across the regions, adopting effective measures to satisfy the needs of local people and tourists — not forgetting those who'll arrive for the 2014 IIHF Championships," he underlines.

"Everyone should prepare for this: Republican state management bodies and administrative agencies. State-private partnership can be used to improve roadside services and the service sector in general," Mr. Kachan adds. He wishes to plan a clear strategy of development for these two directions. "We need to decide on locations and corresponding infrastructure. Our decisions will guide the level of convenience and comfort for guests," he emphasised to those attending the session.

## Colleagues mutually sharing experience



OSTIS-2012 conference debates artificial intelligence

By Svetlana Savkova

### New areas of artificial intelligence application discussed at international conference in Minsk

The OSTIS-2012 conference in the sphere of artificial intelligence application gathered over 120 participants from CIS states, including those from academic circles and business communities. The application of artificial intelligence in the fields of medicine, education, criminal investigation and mapmaking was discussed.

International artificial intelligence research centres around neurophysiology (computer modelling of brain functions) and semiotic (reproduction

of human reasoning with the help of sign systems). Application is diverse. The Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics has developed a system to solve geometrical tasks, while artificial intelligence is helping doctors make prompt diagnoses and select the best treatments for patients.

Sergey Zalivako, the Chairman of the OSTIS-2012 Organising Committee, notes that investigations may simplify human labour. Belarus is developing all areas of artificial intelligence, with the conference providing an opportunity for Belarusian scientists to adopt foreign practices and demonstrate their experience.

# Big city easily presented by scientists in retro style

National Historical and Archaeological Centre to appear soon in Minsk

By Victor Anikeev

A hill once stood between today's Pobediteley Avenue and the Svisloch River in Minsk. From the 11th century, the city of Menesk (forerunner of contemporary Minsk) buzzed with life on the site. Now, only the foundations of buildings remain, hidden beneath the earth.

The landmark site will soon acquire a future, alongside its already glorious past. Minsk's Citadel has been registered on the 2012-2018 Castles of Belarus state programme, approved by the Council of Ministers. From 2014, major investigations are to be launched.

A year ago, it was planned that, in 2013, the former hilly relief would be restored, while the National Historical and Archaeological Centre would be raised on the site of the unearthed town from the time of Ancient Rus. Intriguingly, when preliminary digs were organised in 2009,

an unexpected discovery was made.

some distance from the sign, changing previous thoughts



Minsk's Citadel to be explored

In 1993, a memorial sign was installed on the site of Minsk's first 12th century Orthodox church, consecrated by Metropolitan Filaret. The original foundations lie under the earth and, in fact, are sited

on the location. "1950-1960s digs failed to find the exact location of the church's foundations, so we had to look at surrounding findings," explains Vadim Koshman, who heads the Medie-

val Archaeology Department at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus' History Institute. "Foundations of a 17th century Uniate stone church lie under the asphalt in Pobediteley Avenue. However, we know of it only from written chronicles. Minsk's Citadel holds many mysteries, as no more than 20-25 percent of its three hectares have been explored."

Archaeologists are ready to continue their investigations of ancient Menesk, as Sergey Baglasov explains, chief architect of Minskproekt and leading the Minsk's Citadel. South-Eastern Part. National Historical and Archaeological Centre project. He tells us, "Documents have been approved and the project has undergone state assessment, being approved by the Minsk City Executive Committee. Construction is likely to begin in 2014, although much depends on funding. As soon as money arrives, we'll set to work."