

# Felt boots are feast for the eyes

## Smilovichi Felting Factory sets up new winter fashion trends

By Galina Trofimenko

Each company aims to create a trademark which is both recognisable and prestigious. Think of 'Belarus' tractors, vehicles from MAZ and BelAZ, and 'Milavitsa' lingerie. Soon, felt boots made in Smilovichi (Minsk region's Cherven district) are to join the list of well-known domestic goods.

The financial-economic crisis of 2009 was the third of its kind for the Smilovichi Felting Factory's Director, Vasily Saban. However, each time, his unique company has recovered from its challenging situation. Mr. Saban, 55, has not only survived these times of trouble but has discovered a solution for 'his' factory. Having worked there for 38 years, we can admit that he is justified in claiming it for his own. The crisis of the early 1990s partially changed the focus of his company, with alternative jobs created via diversification into furniture making. Meanwhile, the company modernised its felt boot production, with the range of wool-made products expanded, increasing supplies to the domestic market. The same, time-tested method was applied in 2009.

"This branch may be one of the oldest but it has em-

braced progress," says Mr. Saban, looking at black-and-white photos from the 1950-1960s. These depict cumbersome felt boots with rubber soles, being made in dilapidated wooden factory buildings. "In 1928 (the



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Smilovichi Felting Factory's footwear boasts increased demand in winter

year of the factory's establishment), Smilovichi staff made just 8-10 pairs of felt boots daily; the figure is ten times larger now. Over eight decades, the quality has also improved. Our modern felt boots are lighter, boasting coloured fur trimmings, fluorescent bands and appliqué detailing. Our felt boots for children have light, transparent rubber soles, while those for adults have ridged polyurethane soles (instead of the previous black-coloured slip-

perty rubber soles). We're now working on making women's felt boots more attractive and fashionable, without giving them high heels! Jointly with a Belarusian shoe factory, we're developing a new boot-tree."

Felt boots have been worn for over two centuries but still enjoy popularity with villagers, builders, the military, steel workers and ice fishermen. In recent years, felt boots have even gained iconic status, being bought in

Russia, the Baltic States, Ukraine and Finland; Smilovichi-made footwear is worn with pleasure. In Soviet times,

about three dozen enterprises produced felt boots.

"...I went to Smilovichi to buy felt boots for my sister but ended up buying some for myself and my family. They're beautiful and warm and environmentally friendly, being produced from sheep's wool, without additives or synthetic glue. Anyone wearing Smilovichi-made felt boots must surely feel warm; their footwear has been made with love and retains the warmth of their makers' hands.

# Time travel to arouse interest among everyone

By Nadezhda Radivonova

## Museum of Road and Postal Service History opening in Starye Dorogi (Minsk region)

The Starye Dorogi Regional History and Folk Museum has received a grant from the Minsk Regional Executive Committee to create a new branch exploring the development of road infrastructure, while showing how the post station looked many years ago. It will detail how the museum's collections and scientific archives were formed, with exhibits expected to be of interest to Starye Dorogi residents and guests alike.

The centrepiece of the exhibition will be a recreated interior of the post station as it once existed, while the museum will also feature an inn, a guest

room, a smithy and other buildings. The museum is due to open in mid-2012.

Belarus began constructing unsurfaced roads in the 17th century, before which, waterways were the main means of conducting trade. Initially, small sections of roads were built to connect magnates' estates with the nearest inns. From 1700-1721, during the Northern War, construction of postal roads and stations began in Belarus, at the order of Tsar Peter I.

The first mail was run by the military, delivered via the road connecting Borisov with Bykhov, through Mogilev, in December 1707. Later, the mail service became civilian run, delivered by postmen rather than the military. Over time, roads and stations changed, improving to the quality we enjoy today.

# Polesie residents always glad to welcome tourists



Polesie interesting not only for its unique nature

By Andrey Atreshchenkov

## Pripyat Polesie to become Belarus' cultural-tourist brand

Pripyat Polesie is famous for its landscapes, with unique lowland oak forests and folk traditions fascinating tourists. The region has its own cultural identity. Moreover, some of the villages in the region become islands during floods, making them especially interesting for tourists.

"It would be wonderful for tourists to boat through these unique villages, with thatched houses and shadoofs. They could also chat with Polesie residents," explains the Head of Marketing and Publishing Activity Department at the National Tourism Agency,

Valery Boldyrev. "The area rather resembles Japan, which was a closed island for a long time. In fact, Pripyat Polesie is among the few Belarusian regions where authentic cultural traditions have been preserved."

Pripyat Polesie includes three districts of the Brest region and four districts of the Gomel region. The State Programme for Socio-Economic Development and Complex Use of Natural Resources of Pripyat Polesie (running from 2010-2015) aims to support the social and economic development of the region. Resources are to be used wisely, with investments attracted and favourable living conditions created for residents.

# Interesting moments from UN history

Photos from UN Library collection on show at Minsk gallery

The exhibition, dedicated to the 65th anniversary of the UN, has opened at the University of Culture Art Gallery, showing photographs from the UN's Dag Hammarskjöld Library, portraying moments from UN history. It boasts rare shots, such as a photo of the UN Conference in San Francisco in 1945 and those of meetings of the heads of allied countries in Yalta, from 1945.

The exhibition depicts UN humanitarian activity and such global challenges as the maintaining of peace, environmental protection, healthcare, education and the development of humanity.

# No rival in the CIS

By Veronika Pimenova

## Scientists from National Academy of Sciences' Physics Institute develop laser device to diagnose cancer tumours



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Scientist-physicists develop new device for doctors

The innovation allows doctors to save time and costs in diagnosing cancers. It can be used to monitor and localise cancer tumours during surgical operations and negates the need for repeated surgical interven-

tion, enhancing patients' recovery. The new device registers tissue fluorescence under the influence of laser irradiation. "Molecules in human tissue are highly fluorescent in the ultra-violet, visible and near infra-red range of the spectrum," explain the specialists. "Cancer tumours have a different fluorescence, so are easily spotted; we can use the device to study the disease."

The major advantage of the new technology is that it uses sources of light which are safe for patients. Additionally, it is highly accurate, speedy and allows us to conduct research in tissues with plenty of blood vessels. No similar device exists within the CIS and, in future, it could help develop new optic methods of cancer tumour diagnostics. Doctors will be able to receive unique information about various optic characteristics of tumour tissue and identify them more accurately.