

Ancient city astonishes with its past and history

UNESCO registers Polotsk's 1,150th anniversary on Memorable Date List

By Kristina Domanova

UNESCO believes Polotsk's 1,150th birthday to be one of the most important international dates for the 2012-2013 calendar. The 36th UNESCO General Conference in Paris has agreed to add the date — celebrated in late May 2012 — to the official list.

"The inclusion of Polotsk's birthday on the honorary list shows its significance for world culture," notes the Ambassador at Large of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry and Chairman of the Belarus National Commission for UNESCO, Vladimir Schastny. "Not every proposal for the date list finds support; only around 60 have been registered for the 2012-2013 calendar."

Polotsk will have the opportunity to hold an exhibition at the UN headquarters in Paris as the result of its inclusion, in October 2012. Polotsk will also host an international conference involving UNESCO to honour its anniversary.

The committee currently organising the celebrations for Polotsk's 1,150th birthday is headed

by Belarus' Deputy Prime Minister, Anatoly Tozik; it has already launched its work, currently drafting a programme of celebrations. Soon, it will receive drafts of the official symbols of the holiday for approval. Polotsk's City Executive Committee has elaborated a plan to develop and improve the city, for approval by interested departments. It will then be submitted to the organising committee for consideration.

A jubilee medal 'In Memory of Polotsk's 1,150th Anniversary' is on the agenda, alongside a commemorative coin devoted to the city's foundation, and an envelope with an original post stamp and a special post mark.

Undoubtedly, Polotsk has a rich and glorious history. Among the most ancient in Eastern Europe, the city was first mentioned in the *Tale of Bygone Years*, in 862. Its advantageous geographical position on the 'Varangians to the Greeks' trade route helped Polotsk become a key trading and cultural centre in medieval Europe. It is directly connected with such names as Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya, Fran-



Polotsk's jubilee is to become an international event

tsisk Skorina and Simeon Polotsky. General Roman Kondratenko, who took part in the defence of Port Arthur, was born there, as was the founder of Belarusian cinema, Yuri

Tarich. Polotsk's cultural and historical heritage comprises nearly 150 sites, including the unique St. Sophia's Cathedral and the Saviour Transfiguration Church.

Site ready by new year

By Alexander Timofeyev

Contemporary student campus buildings at Polesky State University to grace Pinsk

The stylised facades of the student campus are rather fitting for the ancient town on the River Pina.

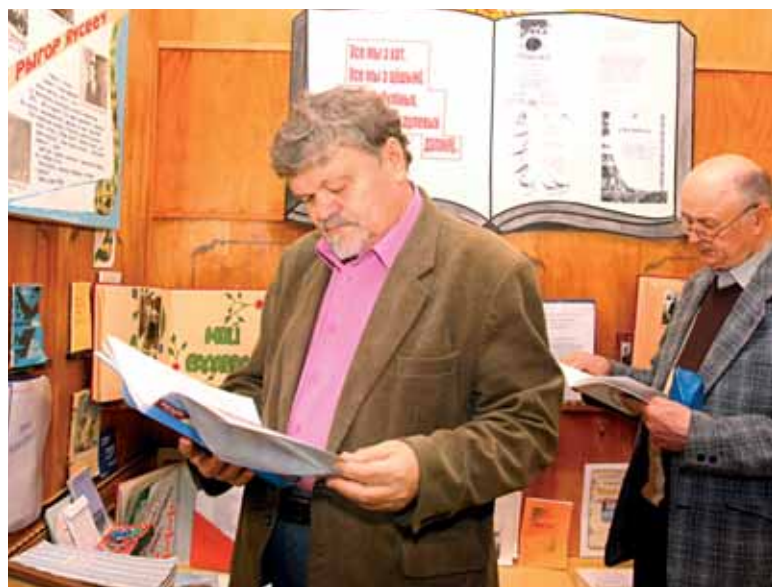
The unique project has been developed by Brestproekt Institute, guided by the National Academy of Sciences' History Institute. Moreover, the student village is being constructed within walking distance of classes.

The complex includes everything that 1,200 young people might need: a residential zone, a museum, a dance hall with bar and stage, an Internet café, a post office, a hairdressing salon and self-service laundry, a gym, a recording studio and halls for choreography. Other rooms also exist for creative activities.

By December 1st, construction should be complete in three buildings, with 662 students organising a housewarming party. The site will be fully ready by the end of the year.

An event in area's life

Theatrical presentation of local history encyclopaedic directory in Belynichi involves Belarusian writers



Writers find inspiration in Belynichi

By Sergey Kulyagin

The creative project by the editorial office of the *Belynichi Zarnad Druttsy* (Dawn over River Drut) district newspaper, took three years to prepare, comprising data on the history and modern life of the area, alongside its

outstanding people. During the creation of the reference book, unique archive materials and documents were used, as well as media sources, photos and recollections of local residents.

Valery Malashko, Deputy Chairman of the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee, notes

that the publication is a significant event for the district and the whole region, since these 'bricks of memory' are the foundation of our state ideology and of the high spiritual and moral values of future generations.

According to Nikolay Cherginets, the Chairman of the Union of Writers of Belarus, such projects and meetings between writers and the creative intelligentsia of the country's regions enable us to penetrate real life, expanding our world outlook and helping us to understand the essence of life. A contemporary writer should be aware of current affairs at home and abroad, discussing today's problems in their works and searching for solutions.

According to the editor-in-chief of the Belynichi District newspaper, Mikhail Karpechenko, the reference book will be updated as the years pass. "We'll continue to collect materials and information, printing them in our newspaper and regularly re-publishing this edition," he adds.

Moving upward in prosperity ratings

Belarus ranked 50th on Legatum Prosperity Index — up four places on last year

The British Independent Research Institute Legatum annually produces a joint report with Oxford Analytica and the Gallup World Poll Service. Among our neighbours, Russia occupies 59th place while Ukraine is placed 74th. Norway is ranked first, followed by Denmark and Australia. Ethiopia is 108th, Zimbabwe 109th and the Central African Republic is 110th, being recognised as the worst states.

The economic situation of our country has been assessed, alongside our education, healthcare and quality of state management. According to the Legatum Prosperity Index website, this is the world's only assessment of countries' prosperity, looking at how certain 'standard of living' factors influence economic growth and the long-term prosperity of a nation's population.

3D virtual exhibition online

3D exhibition of Vitebsk Region's innovative proposals to go online

The 3D virtual exhibition of investment and innovation proposals for the Vitebsk Region is soon to be available on the Internet, developed jointly by the Economic Committee of the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee and one of Vitebsk's universities. The unusual project, which aims to present investment proposals and innovation opportunities across the Vitebsk Region to a wider audience, uses 3D technology to allow easier visualisation. Contemporary graphics enable existing land lots to be shown clearly. The technology is to be available to everyone taking part, with the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee organising the project.

The idea originated from investment business forums, which are regularly organised region wide, with potential investors showing great interest in the idea. Exhibitions and traditional catalogues cannot compete with computer technology and the easy access of a website. In response to competitive conditions, the Vitebsk Region is eager to use every avenue available to attract investors.

Ocean in all its beauty

Rare tropical fish, starfish and sea hedgehogs on show at Central Botanical Garden

The greenhouse of tropical plants at the Botanical Garden now displays rare species of sea flora and fauna, showcasing coral and sea-shells of various forms and colours, some of which are millions of years old. Visitors can watch tropical fish, sea hedgehogs and starfish, as well as an amazing metre long lobster.