

# Kremlin Youth Camp Spending to Double Despite Reluctant Sponsors

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A larger-than-life poster of President Dmitry Medvedev adorns a stage at a Kremlin-backed youth camp at Lake Seliger last year. **Maxim Stulov**

Half a billion rubles (\$17 million) will be spent to hold an annual youth camp on the shores of Lake Seliger this year, its director said, but attracting the funds may be difficult because many potential sponsors seem reluctant to be associated with the Kremlin-backed event.

The spending goal for the camp is more than double last year's total, with most of the increase expected to come from sponsors, camp director Alexei Volokhov said in comments published in Izvestia on Tuesday.

About 200 million rubles will come from the state budget, compared to 178 million last year, while sponsors are being sought to contribute the remaining 300 million rubles. Last year, sponsors gave only 15 million rubles.

Organizers have outsourced the task of attracting sponsors to a company called Teamliner, which is courting about 725 potential sponsors with a range of sponsorship opportunities

from 1 million to 10 million rubles, Teamliner manager Nadezhda Vdovichenko told the newspaper.

Vdovichenko said she hopes to work with about 100 companies, though at least that many companies have already declined sponsorship deals, with some saying they do not want to participate in political events. Teamliner and camp organizers insist the camp is not political, but a national and international forum.

Companies that declined to sponsor the event last year include Mercedes, Intel and Moleskine, which all backed out of negotiations when they found they had been prematurely included on a list of sponsors for the camp.

Another reason given for the refusals is that budgets for 2012 are already set.

The camp, known simply as Seliger, has been controversial since its founding as a Nashi youth camp in 2005. In 2010 participants in the leadership portion of the camp sparked outrage when members of Nashi's radical wing Stal offered an exhibit that featured portraits of former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, human rights leader Lyudmila Alexeyeva, and opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, mounted on stakes and wearing hats with swastikas. A source in Nashi said this act itself played a role in repelling many potential sponsors, Izvestia reported.

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