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Rocker Spurns Capital for Vladivostok

By Alexander Bratersky

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Conservation activist Lagutenko, left, intends to build a house in Vladivostok that will use solar and wind power.

Rock musician Ilya Lagutenko has announced the selling of his mansion in the Moscow region to build an eco-friendly residence in his native Vladivostok.

The musician's $2.7 million home on prestigious Novo-Rizhskoye Shosse near Moscow is currently for sale. The complex consists of two three-story buildings measuring 345 square meters each.

"In my dreams I always wanted to build a smart and self-supporting house that would use the ecological technologies of sun and wind," Lagutenko, the 43-year-old leader of band Mummy Troll, said in a statement released by Century 21 real estate agency, which put his Moscow region house on the market.

While the sale of a celebrity house is a common occurrence, Lagutenko's desire to build a house in Vladivostok, still seen as a remote place in the Far East, is rather unusual for a

celebrity of his standing.

But not for Lagutenko, a Vladivostok native who has popularized the city in his songs and a book called Vladivostok 3000, which he recently penned with Novaya Gazeta journalist Vasily Avchenko.

"Vladivostok is located in a unique geographical position," Lagutenko said in an earlier interview with The Moscow Times. "It has all these features: being close to Asian countries and the mentality of a settler and a sailor."

"Mummy Troll always was and always will be a Vladivostok band. The particular sense of humor of my songs is connected to the city's folklore," said Lagutenko, who recently released an English-language album, called Vladivostok, in the United States.

While the news might sound like a promotion for Lagutenko's new album, real estate experts said that the move might boost the city's popularity on the eve of the APEC summit.

The summit has been promoted by the Russian government to bring attention to Vladivostok and the Far East region and facilitate trade with Asian countries.

Lagutenko, a specialist in Chinese studies who is expected to appear at the APEC summit in September, has spoken favorably of the summit in interviews with the Russian media. He is known to have facilitated international contacts for the Vladivostok region in the past.

"His step will bring some attention to Vladivostok. It might influence someone's opinion to move from Moscow, a city that is still a dream place to live for many Russians," said Dmitry Potash of the Inkom-Nedvizhimost real estate agency, who added that Lagutenko would be able to spend half as much money there as in Moscow to build a comfortable place.

In 2010, Lagutenko, a member of the Global Tiger Initiative to preserve tigers, lobbied then-Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to host a summit for the initiative in Vladivostok.

The Global Tiger's summit was held in St. Petersburg, though, since, as Putin said at the time, Vladivostok had turned into a "large construction site" for the APEC summit.

Staff writer Irina Filatova contributed to this story.

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