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Chebarkul Mayor Offers Piece of Meteorite for Best Marketing Ideas

By The Moscow Times

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The mayor of the city of Chebarkul, in the Chelyabinsk region, has called for residents to brainstorm about ways to profit from the city's role as the final destination of the meteorite that struck last Friday.

"In the last few days, there have been lots of calls from friends, acquaintances and even some little-known people, and they're all saying the same thing: 'You guys really got lucky. A little city with 40,000 suddenly wound up at the center of a world event, on the front pages of international and Russian newspapers. Now just don't mess up that luck and do everything right.' But what to do — they don't say," the city's mayor, Andrei Orlov, wrote on his blog, Interfax reported Wednesday.

The mayor believes that the city has a chance to not only end up in travel books as an interesting site in Russia, but also to earn some money.

"Maybe someone has ideas about how to 'monetize' the fame from the celestial visitor who temporary registered with us? Or maybe someone would like to invest in new asteroid infrastructure? I'm prepared to give a piece of the meteorite for the best idea," Orlov said.

"In the city's suburbs, there are dozens of health resorts, the guests of which could be taken on excursions to the site of the crash," he said.

The meteorite fell into a lake about 2 kilometers from the city's shores on Feb. 12. Before crashing, it burst into flames in the atmosphere and exploded, causing a shock wave that resulted in extensive damage throughout the Chelyabinsk region and injured more than 1,000 people.

The meteorite's impact has been more than just literal, prompting international discussions on how to protect against such events in the future, calls for creation of a system to destroy approaching space objects, and even inspiring some Chelyabinsk entrepreneurs to auction off fragments of the space rock on the Internet.

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