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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Patriots Want to Rename Their Town 'Putin'

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Russia's President Vladimir Putin

Activists in the Ural Mountains want to change the name of a local town to "Putin" in honor of the Russian president, arguing that his name alone will be enough to force authorities to address ongoing municipal problems.

Renaming the town of Krasnokamsk in the Perm region would enshrine the name of President Vladimir Putin, "who has done a lot for the country and for the town in particular," said a petition posted on Russia's public initiatives website roi.ru. The petition then goes on to list some of the possible benefits of the proposed name change.

"With such a great name, the town [will be more prosperous]," the petition reads. "The authorities will be obliged to solve [our] problems with clean water, roads, parks, kindergartens, infrastructure and other pressing problems."

Problems with the municipal running-water system have essentially left Krasnokamsk without proper drinking water, Ura.ru reported. But a name change will draw greater

attention to this issue, said local activists, who have even come up for a slogan for their campaign: "Give Putin Clean Water." Their petition notes that the name change would also be a boost for tourism in the town, which lies 35 kilometers from the city of Perm.

Putin visited Krasnokamsk in 2012, attending a hockey game and promising the town's residents that a new ice rink would be opened the following year. But despite Putin's pledge to personally attend the opening ceremony, the stadium's construction was delayed, regional news site Ura.ru reported, blaming local officials for "disrupting" the president's plans.

The name-change petition needs to gather 3,541 votes by April 11 in order to be reviewed by municipal authorities, according to the community initiatives website. By Thursday morning, it had gathered a total of eight votes, in addition to two people who had voted against it.

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