

The people of Varandey return home ...

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Much has been told and written about the fact that the former inhabitants of Old Varandey, who were moved to Naryan-Mar eight years ago, have not been able to adapt completely to life in the city.

Practically, right after resettlement it became clear that the people who were engaged in traditional occupations, would have a hard time finding fishing and hunting grounds in their new improved life. For this reason many of the Varandey people have not found work, and sadly continue to long for their native land.

Village, bordering the salty waters of the Barents Sea, Old Varandey remains in the dreams of each native inhabitant, as the majority of them still have their houses in the abandoned settlement, and in the rural cemetery lie the ashes of not just one generation of fishermen, reindeer herders and hunters.

It was considered that the sea washing around Old and New Varandey should wash away all the buildings from the coast. But the sea receded, and instead of disappearing from the list of living settlements, the name of Varandey reoccurs in official documents as the Varandey Seaport.

But the former inhabitants of Old Varandey could not reconcile until now the loss of the small native land, and every year the number of «returnees» grow. In spite of everything, the population makes the old houses habitable again, patching the holes, warming up the walls, installing windowns into the broken frames. On New Year's Eve more persons returned to the settlement, and today light has already been switched on again in seven houses. Dogs have returned, joyfully announcing their barking to the icy district. Today in Old Varandey resides already fifteen families who have no intention of leaving.

According to the representative of the Varandey community, Vera Ledkova, the «returnees» are very grateful to representatives of the Northern Sea Shipping Company, who reconnected the houses of Old Varandey to the electrical power grid last summer.

However, now, for unknown reasons, the shipping company is thinking of abandoning their «charity», and then Old Varandey will plunge into darkness again, and the persistent inhabitants would have to live with oil lamps or wood fire.

Now would be a good time to solve the problem of goods delivery to the settlement, and life would return fully to the so-called disaster zone. Today, the preparation of registration documents for the creation of the Old Varandey Territory of Public Indigenous Self-Administration goes on at full speed.

With the goal of reviving their small homeland, Old Varandey residents have already appealed to the district authorities and juridical bodies for the solution of this problem, and they now await the decision.

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