

County eyed for walled city

By Dan Hammes/St. Maries Gazette Record

The Benewah Valley has been selected as a potential site for a community, comprised of 3,000 to 5,000 families, based on gun manufacturing.

Whether backers of the effort own anything more than a website is unclear. Efforts to contact organizers willing to discuss the proposed development were unsuccessful.

There is little question the plans are ambitious.

Proponents of The Citadel Project say the community will include schools, medical facilities, recreational facilities, retailers, a retirement community, a community armory among numerous other amenities. Plans call for the construction of a wall that would encompass one square mile to encircle the city.

The proposal appeals to people who could be described as survivalists and are frustrated with the federal government. The web page describes the Citadel as "*. . . a developing community of Patriots in the mountains of Idaho who believe in Jefferson's Rightful Liberty and have chosen to live amongst one another, and have sworn our lives, our fortunes and our Sacred Honor to defend one another and Liberty.*"

The community will be financed through the sale of firearms that will be manufactured at the Citadel, according to the website.

"III Arms Company is not your average firearms company. The revenue generated by selling our First-Class Fighting Arms does not line the pockets of corporate fat cats. III Arms was created by Patriots to help finance our own community in the beautiful mountains of Idaho, where we can build firearms and live with neighbors who think as do we. We call our community in Idaho the Citadel. No Liberals are allowed."

A 3,000-acre parcel located a few miles off the Benewah Road is proposed as a possible location for the community. Supporters of the location believe Benewah County offers what people who would live at the Citadel desire. Building codes that are 'reasonable' are cited as one attraction.

The anonymous person wrote "*The county has rugged mountains and it has large tracts of land that are working ranches and farms. I have walked the ground on one mountain, and you'll simply have to accept my word for it at the moment, the terrain favors the defender.*"

There was considerable discussion among people who posted on the site whether the new community would be welcome in Benewah County. The author believes local residents will be amenable to the project.

"The County wants to grow. The Citadel will bring at least 9-12 businesses with national reach, nearly double the number of households and will probably double the population of the county. That all means tax revenue and lower unemployment, things that politicians (county commissioners) like during campaigns.

If the people who support the Citadel concept approach the County of Benewah with respect, it is very, very possible that the Citizens and politicians of Benewah may not only welcome us to their beautiful piece of America, but help us by, as Bonnie Gadsden so aptly stated, helping us pull the rope so we can build what we want and live as we wish.

Let's make friends in Benewah, and our courtesy may just earn us a town among them."

Potential residents of the Citadel will be required to sign a 'patriot agreement' that stipulates 12 requirements for residency in the Citadel. The agreement accompanies this report.

While county records show no land ownership under the name of the Citadel the group's website is active. A posting Dec. 7 noted that "*. . . we have 225 individuals and families who have reserved space in our community, wherever we finally decide to locate. So far we've had a mixed reception from residents in Benewah County, but the number of Benewah residents who have wished us well and welcomed our community (potentially) into their county is higher than the naysayers.*"

There are few names associated with the group. James Miller is listed as the president of the III Arms Company. Bonnie Gadsden is a member of the Citadel board and Teresa Sue Hoke-House, of Tekoa, is listed as president.

Militia duty part of residency

The following is the Patriot Agreement which is described as a 'voluntary set of conditions to which every single resident who accepts a residence in the Citadel must agree, in writing.'

According to the Citadel website, the Citadel 'is a martial endeavor, and is not the best housing solution for everyone.'

Preamble: We the People come together in this covenant of our free will and do pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor to defend one another and Jefferson's Rightful Liberty, defined as unobstructed action according to our will within limits drawn around us by the equal rights of others. We further affirm our intent to abide all Constitutional laws of the United States of America and the State of Idaho.

One: Once ratified, this list of conditions may only be altered by unanimous consent of all parties governed by the Agreement.

Two: Every able-bodied Patriot aged 13 and older governed by this Agreement shall annually demonstrate proficiency with the rifle of his choice by hitting a man-sized steel target at 100 yards with open sights at the Citadel range.

Three: Every able-bodied Patriot aged 13 and older governed by this Agreement shall annually demonstrate proficiency with a handgun of choice by hitting a man-sized steel target at 25 yards with open sights at the Citadel range.

Four: Every able-bodied Patriot of age within the Citadel will be armed with one AR15 variant in 5.56mm NATO, at least 5 magazines and 1,000 rounds of ammunition. The responsibility for providing arms and ammunition shall be the head of household for every member of the household. Every able-bodied Patriot will be responsible for maintaining a Tactical Go Bag or Muster Kit to satisfy the Minuteman concept. Details TBD and posted elsewhere.

Five: Every household within the Citadel will remain stocked with sufficient food, water and other preps (to be detailed elsewhere) for every member of the household for a duration of one year.

Six: Every able-bodied Patriot aged 13 shall pass a class sponsored by the Citadel on basic emergency medical care, the courses focused on battlefield and wilderness environments every three years.

Seven: Every child attending Citadel schools, with parental discretion for maturity, shall have as part of every class semester a basic marksmanship and safety firearms curriculum (with attendance/training of/by the parent if so desired) leading to the proficiency test on the child's 13th birthday as a "Coming of Age" moment.

Eight: All Patriots shall agree to remain armed with a loaded sidearm whenever visiting the Citadel Town Center.

Nine: Each Household will provide ONE able-bodied Patriot (aged 13 and older) who shall muster one Saturday per month for Martial/Support Training, as set forth by the militia Commanders of the community, and once annually a full scale Town Defense Drill for all households and residents. In the course of every calendar year every able-bodied Patriot in every household must participate in at least one monthly muster,

Ten: Town Militia will hold a yearly award/recognition ceremony on April 19th each year to celebrate Patriot's Day. This will be a public event with all families welcome and encouraged to attend.

Eleven: Violations of this Agreement will result in review by a selection of residents and an appropriate disciplinary action taken, up to the most severe action of the loss of lease and expulsion from the community,

Twelve: All Citizens agree to accept dispute resolution by an arbitration panel of peers in the event a problem cannot be resolved between residents.

The purpose of this agreement is several-fold. Firstly, it informs all residents of their obligations to their fellow residents. Secondly, it will help to select-out people who are not suited to our lifestyle.

If your application for residency is approved, you will receive a copy of this document that will require a live ink signature.