

THE CITY UNDER ONE ROOF



The town of Whittier is one of the most unique and curious places in the world. It is nothing less than a town where all its inhabitants and services—hospital, shops, police station, post office—are housed within a single building, hence it is known as "The city under one roof."

But how is this possible? What explanation lies behind all this? What is the reason behind everyone deciding to live in the same place and so close to each other? The answer, as always, lies in its history and its location.

It all began near the coast of a remote place in Alaska, a chilly and very cold place, even in the summer months. The U.S. military had established themselves in the area during the period between the end of World War II and the Cold War. There, they conducted military maneuvers and training, as well as their daily lives. They built two large buildings, the Begich Towers, for their families to live in. Because it was such a hostile climate, one way to combat the cold and save energy was for everyone to live close together.

Over time, the military left the area, and civilians began to inhabit the towers. However, one of them was abandoned, while the other remains in operation to this day. Inside the tower, all necessary services can be found: hospital, post office, shops, supermarkets, and there's even a police station with a jail. Interestingly, the school is the only facility located outside the tower, situated in a nearby building accessed by an underground tunnel.

Whittier is a very curious and unique place, one of a kind in the world. If you want to visit, the building even has a room for tourists, and it has become quite a popular destination as its case has become famous on social media. However, if you decide to go, you must plan it well, as accessing the town is not so easy. It is only possible to reach it by traversing a long single-lane tunnel that is closed during the night.

Comprehension Questions

1. What was the origin of Whittier?

2. Which of its facilities is located away from the building?

3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of everyone living in the same building?

