There has been growing attention to social and economic problems of everyday life in the single-industry towns of the Russian Arctic in recent years. Depopulation and reduction in quality of life are underlying topics of every research. In this light, it seems important to study the social well-being and identities of the Arctic single-industry towns’ inhabitants. Two single-industry towns are located in the “Karelian Arctic” region — Kostomuksha and Segezha. The paper highlights the social and anthropological dimensions of these towns. The authors investigate the historical and cultural traditions, identified in two spheres of everyday life: the presentation of towns in the public space, including media and social networks, and the opinion of residents reflected through interviews. Kostomuksha and Segezha are similar in their representation as international communities and the Soviet heritage. The international aspect is especially significant for Kostomuksha inhabitants, whose town was a trans-border project in the 1970s. According to the interviews with residents of Kostomuksha, there is a considerable focus on the future in the city. On the contrary, the cultural memory of Segezha inhabitants is more “historical” with an emphasis on the Soviet past and the role of “Komsomol construction” of the local pulp and paper mill. The study demonstrates the importance of Northern identity in the cities. Arctic identity is more clearly seen in Kostomuksha due to realized border projects between Russia and Finland.

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