

MELISSA DAVIS

# HEET got help from everywhere in fulfilling its mission

The Houghton Energy Efficiency Team, better known as HEET, began in 2014 when a thoughtful, energetic group of local citizens and the Houghton County Board of Commissioners decided to enter Houghton County into the Georgetown University Energy Prize competition. Approximately 50 regions nationwide are in the running for the \$5 million prize, which challenges local communities to rethink their energy use and implement creative strategies to increase energy efficiency.

The application process took many hours of volunteer work. For that, we thank Abhilash Kantamneni, Richelle Winkler, Brad Barnette, Maria Janowiak, Marcia Goodrich, Rob Handler, Joan Chadde, Alexander Guth, Sarah Green, Lynn Artman and Edward Louie. They met deadline after deadline.

Then, in the blink of an eye, it was 2015! Things started hopping, and in two years HEET has made a dent in our electricity and natural gas consumption. Both sectors saw a reduction of about 13 percent in residential and municipal use during 2015-16, compared to 2013-14.

The Upper Peninsula Power Co., Semco Energy and the Ontonagon County REA worked with HEET from the beginning. Staff put in many hours generating the data we needed, a tedious, time-consuming process at best. Thanks go out to Dan Crane (UPPCO), Debbie Miles (OCREA) and Jennifer Denis (Semco). Efficiency United was a superpower, bringing energy-efficient supplies and appliances to residents saddled with old, energy hogging refrigerators and the like.

Now we face the daunting task of thanking everyone else who played a part. Our gratitude does not flow more heavily to those who are listed first;



everyone's input has been phenomenal. Our only fear is that we've left someone out.

The Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR) was instrumental in coordinating the effort and supplying data during the competition phase.

The Baraga-Houghton-Keweenaw Community Action Agency and the cities of Hancock and Houghton also supplied HEET with data, and Hancock gave us the use of a much-needed truck for a few months.

Keweenaw Food Co-op members donated six months of revenues from their Bring-A-Bag campaign to buy winterization materials.

The Keweenaw Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Keweenaw team, along with Russ Fouts's IT Oxygen Enterprise at Michigan Tech, stepped in to rebuild HEET's website after it was brought down by a hacker.

Our primary aim has been to winterize as many homes as possible, and volunteers came from all corners of the community to make that happen, including the Keweenaw Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Council; Hancock Rotary and its student affiliate, Interact; Kiwanis Club of the Copper Country with its student partner, the Houghton High School Key Club; and the Keweenaw Young Professionals; the Houghton High's National Honor Society and Environmental Club; numerous individuals who have donated their time and talents. Thanks to you all, including those who are continuing to volunteer in our fall winterizations.

River Valley Bank's amazing team continued to flabbergast as they tackled project after

project. They also ran an in-bank fundraising campaign, providing nearly \$2,000 in materials.

Marilyn Swift at Swift Hardware was a strong supporter from the get-go, as was Rodney Mishica at Ace of Calumet and John Cherubini over at Festival Foods True Value. They also donated lots of prizes for different events we had along the way. Tadych Econo Foods gave a generous donation, and McGann Building Supply donated several cases of spray foam which HEET used to tighten and insulate area basements.

Wal-Mart was a key supporter of the Great LED Light Bulb Swaps, with manager Jeffrey Weeks donating refreshments and 100 LED bulbs.

AmeriCorps sent a team of young people that winterized homes full time for six weeks.

Fifth & Elm Coffee Shop provided bag lunches for the AmeriCorps volunteers, and Grace United Methodist Church provided them with free housing.

Good Times Music Store came through with a donation for our Orpheum fundraising concert, organized by Jenna De Lisle, as did Cypress Manor.

Nicholas Insurance provided a place to meet and strategize, as did the Portage Lake District Library.

The Daily Mining Gazette provided HEET with thorough, accurate and superb coverage. We are also grateful to WMP, Eagle Radio, Houghton Community Broadcasting, WLUC-TV6 and ABC News 10 for their excellent reporting.

The Western U.P. Center for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education supported HEET by including us many of the educational events that they are involved with. Thanks go out to Joan Chadde and the unflappable Lloyd Wescoat. Houghton's Carnegie Library

displayed HEET's Energy Efficiency Exhibit for a month.

CLK Library in Calumet hosted a HEET event, and they still have a bucket of caulk guns if anybody wants to check them out and tighten up their house. The CLK High School wood shop class built our energy efficiency exhibit, as well as some displays under the oversight of shop teacher Mark Bonenfant.

Plenty of support came from throughout Michigan Tech. The Sustainable Futures Institute operations manager Rob Handler to devote time to HEET as its fundraising coordinator and handy-guy-on-the-job with winterizations. Superior Ideas hosted our crowd-funding campaign, which netted about \$2,000 for winterization materials.

MTU's Engineers Without Borders helped to winterize a house for our project, and their group has volunteered to winterize one house a month for this fall semester. MTU's Rotaract Club had a Great Gatsby Fundraiser for us, organized by Lauren Kroeger, which netted nearly \$2,500 in donations for winterization materials. They also helped winterize the intern house at Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly.

Several fraternities and sororities, including Sigma Rho and Sigma Phi Epsilon, helped us test-run a Greek Life winterization program. Greek students volunteered to work on their own house and now get to enjoy warmer winters.

Finlandia University worked with HEET during its Martin Luther King Junior Day volunteer event, as did Michigan Tech's Make A Difference Day.

Blue Terra Energy's Dave Camps has been a consistent resource through the competition.

The Soyring Family Foundation provided a FLIR C2 thermal imaging camera, a great

tool for showing where heat loss is occurring.

Habitat for Humanity's Jeff Flam contributed his know-how repeatedly, as did John Hamilton Construction and energy-efficiency pioneer Dave Bach.

In conclusion, I've been waiting a long time to publicly thank Larry Julio for saving HEET from a public relations disaster back in 2015. We had invited the community to bring in their old refrigerators to recycle at the Energy Show. The turnout was overwhelming; trucks were lined up for over a block waiting to drop off appliances at Dee Stadium. Then, two hours into the event, the program manager told me that his truck was full, and that he was going back to Milwaukee. I said, "The heck you are. They'll come after me with torches and pitchforks."

Thus began the long, white-knuckled minutes while we made phone call after phone call, trying to find someone who would be willing to store 17 refrigerators and freezers for a few days. Finally, we called Larry, who agreed to store them on his property. The Milwaukee guys objected (they wanted to go home), saying they were sure that nobody would know how to get there. Everybody just laughed. And looked across the canal.

We are thrilled that HEET has been able to help Houghton County cut its energy use, but the fact is, it wouldn't have happened without so many great people pulling in the same direction.

P.S. HEET is still in business, so if you want to learn how make your house warmer, we are organizing winterizations twice a month. Find out more by clicking on the volunteer link at energizehoughton.org.

*Melissa Davis is the energy manager for the Houghton Energy Efficiency Team (HEET).*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Synergy of smelter and Isle Royale

**To the editor:**

On a recent guided tour of the Quincy Smelter, it was mentioned that there is discussion of relocating the Isle Royale National Park (IRNP) headquarters to this site.

Thirty years ago, I worked for five years to help create the Keweenaw National Historical Park

(KNHP).

In May of 1987 I organized a tour of the Quincy Smelter for U.S. Sen. Carl Levin. Levin instantly saw the importance of the smelter and the synergy with IRNP, the headquarters being a few hundred feet across the canal. The Isle Royale superintendent Tom Hobbs, who accompanied us, wholeheartedly agreed.

I met often with Hobbs and William Fink, who was the first KNHP superintendent. They both told me

of their hope that combining the IRNP visitors center and headquarters at the Quincy Smelter site would benefit the mission of both parks.

In March of 1988, U.S. Secretary of Interior Donald Hodel and Congressman Bob Davis visited the proposed KNHP sites. I pointed out the closeness of the Quincy Smelter and the IRNP headquarters. Hodel said, "What an opportunity to combine the missions of two parks."

In July of 1988 I was with U.S. Congressman Bob Davis and National Park Service (NPS) Director William Mott as we toured the Quincy Smelter. They both recognized the value of combining the missions with an expanded visitors center for Isle Royale using the refurbished Quincy Smelter site.

The fly in the ointment? The EPA Superfund designation. Finally, the EPA stigma is off our back. Now is the time to fulfill the vi-

sion of Sen. Levin and Congressman Davis when they passed legislation to create the KNHP 25 years ago in 1992.

The Quincy Smelter is the only one in the country of that era preserved to tell the story of how tens of thousands of men locally spent over 125 years extracting rock from the ground, which finally got purified into 11 billion pounds of copper. Copper made the 19th century industrial revolution possible.

During the Civil War 90 percent of the nation's copper was produced locally.

The smelter site could show visitors the final stage of the mining, which is also part of Isle Royale's history. Isle Royale visitors could leave on the NPS ship, the Ranger, from the docks that once shipped billions of pounds of copper.

Please write to our elected officials to make this happen.

**Robert Pieti  
Sun City, AZ**

JOHN KASS

# 'Dunkirk': Decency on a murderous beach

Many words have been written about "Dunkirk," the film by Christopher Nolan about hundreds of thousands of soldiers — most of them British — trapped on that long beach in Northern France with the German army coming to slaughter them.

"Riveting" and "Oscar-worthy" and "stunning" and so forth, and they're all appropriate for this worthy film.

And because it is a great film, it should be seen in a theater. Don't wait for it to show up on your home TV. You'll only cheat yourself.

This one requires a theater screen to appreciate the span of it all, that long beach, the tiny men on it yearning for home, and that short ride across the English Channel; the rescue ships of the British Navy smashed by the German bombers, the British Spitfires knifing out of the sky.

So, there are many praiseful words for the movie, but after watching "Dunkirk," I wanted to add another:

Decency.

Yes, decency is an odd word to pair with war. Nothing human beings have ever created and unleashed is more murder-



ous than war, with death beyond measure, and so there's nothing decent about the cost of it.

And yes, as "Dunkirk" is a film about the war, there is death in it, death that comes randomly, or is delivered with surgical dispassion, which makes it all the more horrible.

But a great film always leaves me quiet and spent when it's over; and in a quiet moment leaving the theater, I thought about the decency in what I'd seen.

The decency of the young British soldiers waiting in impossibly long lines, quietly, standing out in the wind, searching the sky for enemy planes, praying for a chance at a boat to take them home.

The decency of their officers, who cared for them and who kept them calm.

The decency of British civilians, weekend sailors who answered the call and took their own fishing boats and pleasure craft, crossing the English Channel in a motley armada and approaching the murder-

ous beach to save their soldiers, their countrymen, their boys.

The decency of a middle-aged father played by Mark Rylance, the owner of a small yacht "Moonstone" with his teenage son, played by Tom Glynn-Carney.

They crossed the channel because they had a job to do and they weren't about to shirk responsibility. They didn't do a lot of talking. They made no big speeches. But they did share a look. And that was enough.

And the decency of a British fighter pilot, finally out of fuel, making one last desperate run in the hopes of knocking down a German plane to save more lives.

The pilot was played by actor Tom Hardy; the commander who kept them calm was played by Kenneth Branagh. Yes they are great stars, but they were not the true stars in "Dunkirk."

The star of "Dunkirk" is the character of the British people at that time, in the worst days of the war, long before America joined in, when the British Expeditionary Force was humiliated in Europe and almost destroyed.

And so it is a movie about a

people of a certain time, a people who knew who they were, a people who firmly understood their culture and their obligations to it, and to their nation, and to each other.

You don't see or hear Winston Churchill in this film. You hear some of his words read by a soldier on a train, but you don't see his genius. All that happened after the troops were rescued.

The withdrawal at Dunkirk and what led to it was a terrible military defeat for the British Expeditionary Force. And yet, Churchill was somehow able to convince the British people that they had won a great victory by rescuing their men on the beach. He rallied his people. And that kind of leadership is pure genius, indeed.

If you see "Dunkirk," please don't go expecting a typical Hollywood formula war film, with plenty of character exposition and back story. This is not a movie about cliched archetypes. You won't find a platoon of Brits passing around photos of their sweethearts; and you won't see the joker, the farmer, the ladies' man or the upper-crust failure seeking to redeem himself. You won't see a Cock-

ney urchin who teaches the lads to survive.

"Dunkirk" isn't built that way. It expects more of its audience. It does not condescend. It anticipates your intelligence and respects it.

And so it presents stories on the beach, and stories in the water, and stories in the air and expects you to follow without a guide book.

Though you won't get to know the men by what they say, you'll know them by what they do. Actions, not words.

And you'll see details as death comes, the sound of paper in the wind, sea foam on the beach, the scratching of chalk on the dashboard of a fighter plane, the ping of a bullet, the panic of those trapped on a ruined ship as it tips, the sound of bubbles underwater, and of boys breaking the surface to find a sea of fire.

Not many films are worth the price. This one is.

But please don't cram it into the end of a day when you're tired or rushed. See it when you're at your best. Respect it as much as it respects its audience.

And I know you'll find the decency in it, too.