



# Harbor Light

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## **Petoskey Area Apartment Complex Garnering National Attention for Green Initiatives**

By: Beth Anne Piehl

A newly opened Petoskey area apartment complex is garnering national attention for its energy efficiency and well-spent use of Recovery Act funding, while at the same time filling a Northern Michigan need for affordable housing. The Murray Road Housing project, developed by the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians south of Petoskey, has also earned a coveted “Gold” LEED certification status, which signifies Leadership in Energy and Environmental design under the nationally recognized ranking system.

The multi-family development in Bay Shore was designed by Elaine Keiser Architect of Petoskey and was built under the direction of the LTBB. During a grand opening celebration on Jan. 28, 2011, a representative from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development agency (HUD) was on hand and noted this project would be brought to the attention of Vice President Joe Biden as an example of the successful use of Recovery Act money.

Kevin Fitzgibbons, the administrator of the Eastern Woodlands Office of Native American Programs, the division of HUD which helped secure the funding, said the project is remarkable for its ability to meet local housing needs and for its “green” features.

“It’s quite the accomplishment and again, the long term impact of a LEED-developed housing project is very significant in terms of having such a positive impact on the environment,” he noted.

The development is one of just two LEED-certified, tribal-owned affordable Housing projects in the eastern 26 states.

“We are thrilled to be part of a project that has gained so much attention,” said Elaine Keiser. “This development brings together the best of all worlds – it brought work to the area, built apartments for those in need, and qualified as a high-level energy and environmental project through LEED certification. Fitzgibbons said this project will surely gain national attention and that it will be brought before Vice President Biden to demonstrate how Recovery Act dollars are being well-spent.”

The project currently includes two, five-unit apartment buildings owned by the



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tribe. The future holds for a total of six, five-unit buildings at the site, south of Petoskey off U.S. 31. Keiser began working with the tribe in summer 2009 designing the project, after the LTBB was awarded \$2 million from the Native American Housing Block Grant to develop the complex. Keiser said more than 300 applied for funding, with 33 receiving grant dollars.

“In our area of Northern Michigan, it’s important to note that we are developing projects and filling needs that are recognized as significant on a national level,” Keiser said. “The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians has been an excellent partner in this project. They recognized a real need within their membership and worked hard to make sure this development happened. To have this level of recognition reflects well on the LTBB as well as our community.”

Known as “Mtigwaakiis,” in Anishnaabek, the language of the Odawas, the development serves as a model for greener living, according to Dan Atsma, Project Manager of Eagle/BCI Construction, general contractor for the project.

“These homes are at the national forefront of quality, and their example can help us all to live better by reducing our environmental footprint, cutting our utility bills, and coming home to a healthier place to live,” Atsma said.

LEED for Homes is the national, third-party certification system for building and designing high-performance green homes that are energy and- resource-efficient and healthy for their occupants.

There are five levels of certification granted to applicants: Certified, bronze, silver, gold and platinum.

Located just under six miles from the City of Petoskey, Mtigwaakiis is within walking distance of innumerable opportunities for outdoor recreation and the amenities specific to the northern Michigan lifestyle.

The project, constructed of energy efficient Insulated Concrete Forms (ICF), features low-e windows, high efficiency lighting fixtures, compact fluorescent bulbs, water saving plumbing fixtures, and high density, recycled cellulose insulation. Other energy-efficient features include high-efficiency air source heat pumps for heating, cooling and water heaters, energy recovery ventilators, programmable thermostats, as well as landscaping featuring rain gardens and native plantings. The homes focus heavily on reducing energy use.



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“Like the LTBB officials and members on hand for the grand opening, we are very proud to be involved in a project like Mtigwaakiis,” said Keiser. “We are blessed to live in area with rich cultural diversity and a great sense of community collaboration, and this development is a prime example of both.”