

“We’re always surprised by the entertaining, unique and sometimes totally bizarre cameras we discover each year when compiling our list of winners,” DeLiberto said. “Webcams are connecting people with beautiful locations and interesting sights in ways that we never imagined possible. We continue to be impressed with the new applications for webcam technology and how those virtual experiences are being shared with a worldwide audience.”

Crane hopes the recognition will allow his webcam to reach more people so they also can enjoy Charlevoix year round from anywhere in the world.

“It is something I can look at and keep me connected to a town I love,” Crane said. “I want to share this with the people of Charlevoix, people who love Charlevoix and people who have never experienced Charlevoix.”

Crane’s partner on the project, Kyle Kopytko lives in Charlevoix and handles all the maintenance and technical work.

Kopytko said they were very proud when they heard the news of the camera making EarthCam’s 25 Most Interesting Webcams in 2018.

“All of our hard work had been recognized and we knew we would have a much better shot at hitting our goal of 1,000 subscribers on Youtube,” Kopytko said.

Kopytko is the owner/operator of TechWise Guy in Charlevoix. His company offers computer tech support, network and smart home installations and web design for residential and business customers.

Kopytko installed the camera on the Pine River Building for Crane. Originally, Crane wanted the camera to be mounted on the bridge, but he got tired of dealing with the Michigan Department of Transportation.

“I actually planned on mounting the camera on the bridge, but the red tape with MDOT caused me to give up. All the back and forth with emails was exhausting,” Crane said. “I pitched the idea to Kyle and he loved it. He helped me find a spot for the camera.”

Crane has invested approximately \$7,000 and Kopytko invested \$1,000 to get the camera installed and running for the past two years. Crane has kept the camera viewing free and ad free because he wants people to experience Charlevoix.

“I am happy to do it. I am not looking to make any money from it,” Crane said. “I just love it and get such a kick out of it.”

The camera provides a four-hour history that viewers can rewind through and see what they might have missed, Kopytko said.

During events like The Bridge Drop and Boyne Thunder, Kopytko receives many chat messages on the video.

“Viewers announce where they were watching from,” he said. “Texas, Colorado, Florida, California and Alaska are a few of the places I remember seeing.”

Because the camera is live Crane said many of his friends often call him when they are walking down from the lighthouse and stop and wave to the camera.

“They are waving and jumping around,” Crane said. “That is kind of fun to watch and of course friends call from their boats during the summer and wave.”

Friends waving and boats traveling through the channel are not the only thing that has been viewed on the camera, Kopytko said.

“The craziest would probably be ‘the dancing man.’ Unfortunately, we do not have a recording of said event,” Kopytko said. “He was definitely dancing like no one was watching, but we were.”

Since the recognition Crane and Kopytko hope the camera and their future projects will add to the success of Charlevoix.

“We feel that the ChannelCam and potential future cameras will help raise awareness by showing off the beauty that Charlevoix has to offer,” Kopytko said. “I myself had never heard of Charlevoix before the age of 18 and have lived in Michigan my whole life, apart from being born in New York — more cameras equals more viewers equals more awareness helping with more potential tourism through media.”

For more information about the Top 25 most interesting Webcams, visit www.earthcam.com/top25/2018/ and to view the Charlevoix-Cam, visit www.charlevoixcam.com.