

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Claverack REC

570-265-2167

1-800-326-9799

Email: mail@claverack.com

Website: <http://www.claverack.com>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James E. Luce, Zone 6
Chairman

570-833-5668

Charles R. Bullock, Zone 7

Vice Chairman

570-280-8470

Steven T. Sliwinski, Zone 9

Secretary/Treasurer

570-364-5250

Danise C. Fairchild, Zone 1

Vice Secretary/Treasurer

570-265-3599

Dr. Robert R. Faux, Zone 2

570-574-3531

Angela S. Joines, Zone 3

570-756-4979

Gary L. Hennip, Zone 4

570-247-7233

Vacant, Zone 5

Charles R. McNamara, Zone 8

570-553-4385

Bobbi Kilmer

President & CEO

Staff

Annette Bender, Executive Assistant

Steve Allabaugh, Director, Engineering

Doug Nichols, Director, Operations

Shelley Young, Director, Financial Services

Brian Zeidner, Director, Member Services

Office Hours

Monday through Friday

7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Jeff Fetzer, CCC, Local Pages Editor

From the President & CEO



Making plans for the New Year

By Bobbi Kilmer

I HOPE your New Year is off to a great start and that you enjoyed a peaceful and blessed holiday season.

Some of you snow lovers will disagree, but I hope the rest of our winter doesn't follow the pattern of snow set in November. But if it does, be assured that we are prepared.

In this business, if you aren't prepared, you aren't doing your job. Our preparations for each new year begin with crafting operating and capital budgets. Those budgets have been approved and call for considerable investment in right-of-way management and infrastructure improvements in order to improve service reliability in 2019.

In 2018, we hired a talented utility forester to manage our right-of-way program. He is committed to finding ways to improve our vegetation-clearing programs while using our budgeted funds efficiently. Our budget for right-of-way maintenance in 2019 is \$2.2 million, an increase from last year that reflects our ongoing effort to deal with the many trees dying along our rights of way.

We have a number of system improvement projects on tap. Our first project involves upgrading 6 miles of line in our Steinbeck Substation area from single-phase line to three-phase. We also have two single-phase to three-phase upgrades planned in the Vernon area.

We plan to continue promoting energy conservation in 2019 by offering our consumer-members rebates when they install heat pumps or purchase certain Energy Star-rated appliances. We will

continue to assist members experiencing financial difficulty through our HOPE program and remain committed to providing financial contributions to local nonprofit agencies in our area.

In addition to our electric system, we also have a headquarters facility and two district offices to maintain. Later this year, we will be updating the transformer storage area in the warehouse at our Wysox location and resurfacing the parking area at our Montrose District Office.

System improvements and maintenance work are necessary but come at a price. While we have been blessed with positive financial results and stable rates for a number of years, there is a need to make a small adjustment to our monthly cost-of-service charge. For residential members, the cost-of-service charge will increase from \$27.70 to \$30 per month, which equates to an annual increase of about 1.8 percent for the average residential consumer-member. The new charge will be reflected on members' electric bills beginning this month.

Please know that this change was not taken lightly. We are very mindful of the impact rate increases can have on our members, and we strive to keep rates as stable as possible. However, there are times when we need to account for increases to our operating expenses. Unfortunately, given the additional investment we have had to make in our right-of-way maintenance activities in recent years, this is one of those times. 

Special Election ballots being mailed Two co-op members competing for Zone 5 director slot

CLAVERACK members will have the opportunity to elect one of their fellow members to the cooperative board of directors by participating in a special election taking place this month.

All co-op members can expect to receive an election ballot in early January listing the names of candidates running for the vacant Zone 5 seat on the Claverack Board of Directors.

The completed ballots should be returned in the addressed, stamped blue envelope included with the special election packet. Claverack must receive members' completed ballots no later than Friday, Feb. 1.

The special election was necessitated when the Zone 5 director seat went unfilled following last year's annual meeting. The seat had been held by Michael J. Coleman of Montrose, who chose not to seek re-election when his three-year term expired in July 2018.

Results of the special election will be announced at the cooperative's headquarters office in Wysox at 1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 7, and will be subsequently published on the cooperative's website, claverack.com, Facebook page, and in the March issue of *Penn Lines*.

The winner of the seat will serve the remainder of the three-year term for Zone 5, which expires in July 2021. Zone 5 serves members in Apolacon, Choconut, Forest Lake, Jessup, Middletown and Rush townships in Susquehanna County, and Warren Township in Bradford County.

Directors are responsible for establishing co-op policies and overseeing the management of the cooperative.

Candidates who have successfully filed petitions to run for the Zone 5 board seat are: Robert Fearnley of Forest Lake Township, Susquehanna County, and David R. McGuigan of Little Meadows. Profiles of the candidates follow:

Robert Fearnley
752 Chestnut Ridge Road
Montrose, PA 18801

Robert Fearnley resides in Forest Lake Township, Susquehanna County, with



Robert Fearnley

his wife Dawn.

A graduate of Montrose Area High School, Fearnley holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Penn State University. After graduation, he returned to the family dairy farm and ran the business until 2007. Following a barn fire, a new season of life began for Fearnley when he took a position as watershed specialist with the Susquehanna County Conservation District. He recently retired from that position.

Fearnley has enjoyed a lifelong relationship with Claverack. In high school, he represented his co-op on the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Fearnley's son, Jeremiah, was a recipient of the William Matson Scholarship in his senior year.

A former 4-H leader, Fearnley has served as a board member of Farm Service Agency, Susquehanna County Holstein Club, Susquehanna County Conservation District, Penn State Cooperative Extension of Susquehanna County, YPAC and Friends of Salt Springs State Park. He currently serves on the Friends of Salt Springs State Park Education Committee.

Fearnley is a past member of the Susquehanna County Farm Bureau and a current member of the National Rifle Association, Ducks Unlimited and Forest Lake Baptist Church, where he serves on the ministry support team.

Fearnley has served on the board of directors for the Dairy Herd Improvement Association, the Montrose Area Sire Power Advisory Committee and the local board of directors for Dairy Farmers of America. He was also a cooperative member of Agway and AgChoice Farm Credit.

Robert has two sons. Jeremiah is employed with Select Sire Power Cooperative and resides in Apolacon Township with his wife, Nicole, and their two daughters. Matt is a teacher at Northeast Bradford School District and resides in Forest Lake Township.

David R. McGuigan
611 Turkey Lane
Little Meadows, PA 18830



David R. McGuigan

David McGuigan was born at home on the family farm in Gum Tree, Pa. After graduation from high school, he started his career in the electric utility industry, initially driving a line truck and working as a ground hand. He

subsequently attended lineman training school to become a lineman.

McGuigan served in the U.S. Army during the height of the Vietnam conflict. During his tour of duty, he was awarded the Soldier's Medal for Valor.

He married his high school sweetheart, Sharron Oatman, on July 4, 1970. They have two adult children.

McGuigan transitioned from line work to substation maintenance, then later on to the planning group. He retired from PECO Energy in 1998 as a foreman in the work management department of the utility's transmission and distribution division.

In 2000, David and Sharron McGuigan sold their family farm and moved to Little Meadows. There, they owned and operated "Token Lake, Inc.," a 545-acre retreat, for 10 years.

McGuigan served as a township supervisor for 18 years, including six years as an Apolacon Township supervisor in Susquehanna County. He currently serves as committeeman for Apolacon Township.

He has also been involved with the Little Meadows Volunteer Fire Company, serving as treasurer for several years. He volunteers at Warren Township Fire Company functions. He and Sharron are members of Community Independent Bible Church in Little Meadows, where David serves as treasurer. He is the Master of LeRaysville Masonic Lodge No. 471, F&AM.

McGuigan has served on Claverack's Members Advisory Committee and the Credentials and Elections Committee. 🗳️

Students can compete for free tour of nation's capital

CLAVERACK Rural Electric will send six students from the co-op's service territory on an all-expenses-paid trip to the nation's capital this summer.

If you are a high school junior who enjoys sightseeing, history, politics and making new friends, then this trip may be for you.

The lucky students will have the opportunity to explore Washington, D.C., with a group of their peers from across the country during the 2019 Rural Electric Youth Tour, a six-day sightseeing excursion that mixes fun and education.

During the tour, which takes place

June 16-21, participants will have the opportunity to explore Washington's historic sites, visit the Smithsonian, make friends with Youth Tour students from throughout the United States, meet with federal legislators and learn about electric cooperatives and the cooperative movement.

The Youth Tour is expected to draw more than 1,800 students to Washington, D.C., for the week. If you are interested in being one of them, here's what you need to know:

Rules for 2019 Rural Electric Youth Tour

1. This contest is open to any high school junior (2018-19 school year) whose parents or legal guardians are members of Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative.
2. Create a 3-5-minute video on the following: If chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, you will be traveling to Washington, D.C., to experience and learn about America's rich



ALL ABOARD: Claverack's 2018 Rural Electric Youth Tour student delegates enjoy a warm summer evening on a boat cruising the Potomac River. Students representing the cooperative on the annual trip to Washington, D.C., are, from left, Isaac Walker of Montrose, Carissa Hiduk of Wyalusing, Collin Cowles of Rome, Karissa Cowles of Rome, Madison Sickler of Meshoppen and Riley Brown of Hallstead.

3. Complete the online Youth Tour application form, which can be found on the Claverack website, claverack.com. Be sure to attach an appropriate school photo of yourself as required on the form. Also be sure to provide a link to your YouTube video.
4. If you are uncomfortable providing a link to your YouTube account, please bring a disc or flash drive of your video to the Claverack office in Wysox. If you do not have the ability to create a video or complete the online application, you may call the cooperative to schedule an appointment to have your presentation videotaped and have someone help you complete the online

application.

5. Questions should be addressed to: Karen Evangelisti, karene@ctenterprises.org, 570-268-1332.
6. Entries must be received by Thursday, Feb. 14.
7. Finalists will be notified by Monday, Feb. 18. Six students will be selected, and this will entitle them not only to the trip to Washington, D.C., but will also make them eligible for special scholarship opportunities. **All finalists will be required to attend a mandatory orientation meeting Thursday, Feb. 28, at 6:30 p.m. at the Claverack office in Wysox.** Finalists will be interviewed by a panel of judges, and one delegate will be chosen as Claverack's Youth Leadership Council candidate. The YLC candidate will compete with other candidates for the chance to be the Pennsylvania YLC representative and to attend the 2020 NRECA Annual Meeting.
8. The decision of the judges is final. 🌞

Are you prepared for the return of cold weather?

During extended periods of unusually cold weather, co-op members can face significant increases in their electric bills.

Those who heat with electric baseboards or heat pumps are especially prone to experiencing significant spikes in their electric consumption during prolonged periods of frigid weather.

Claverack's director of member services, Brian Zeidner, says extended low temperatures can also cause a member's electric bill to increase by over \$100 *per device* if they use any of the following:

- ▶ Portable electric heaters,
- ▶ Engine block heaters,
- ▶ Heat tapes or heat lamps, or
- ▶ Livestock water de-icers.

Zeidner encourages cooperative members to use energy wisely. To learn more about energy conservation and efficiency measures, visit the Claverack website, claverack.com, and click on the Touchstone Energy "Together We Save" link at the bottom of the home page.

If you are concerned about seasonal spikes in your electric bill, Zeidner also encourages members to consider signing up for Claverack's levelized billing program. The program allows you to avoid large fluctuations in your electric bill from month to month by leveling out your monthly payments throughout the year.

Levelized billing is available to members with at least one year of electric use, provided they have fewer than two late payments in the prior 12 months.

If you are interested in a levelized billing plan or wish to speak to a Claverack employee about energy conservation and efficiency measures, please call the co-op office at 1-800-326-9799.

10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

- 1 Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
- 2 Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
- 3 Turn off lights when not in use.
- 4 Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
- 5 Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.
- 6 Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
- 7 Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
- 8 Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.
- 9 Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
- 10 Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

Energy assistance program offers help with heating bills

If you need assistance paying your heating bills or have a heating emergency, help may be available through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

LIHEAP offers both cash grants and crisis grants. Cash grants help families pay their heating bills. If you are eligible for a cash grant, the grant will be sent directly to your utility or fuel dealer, and the payment will be credited on your bill.

Crisis grants are available to help those who have emergency situations in which they are in danger of being without heat. Those situations include: having broken heating equipment or leaking fuel lines; lack of fuel; having utility service terminated; or being in danger of not having fuel or having service terminated. Crisis grants are sent directly to the vendor or utility.

If you have a heating emergency, or for more information about LIHEAP, call your county assistance office or the toll-free LIHEAP hotline at 1-866-857-7095.

You can apply for energy assistance directly through COMPASS, the state's health and human services benefits application site. By using COMPASS, you can apply for LIHEAP at any time, day or night, from home, a library or any location with internet access. Apply online at: compass.state.pa.us.

SmartHub: Manage your account from anywhere

SmartHub, Claverack's online bill payment and account management program, lets you manage all aspects of your account online or with your mobile device.

WITH SMARTHUB, YOU CAN:

- ▶ View bills online
- ▶ View billing history
- ▶ Change account information
- ▶ Receive billing notifications
- ▶ Pay your bill online using your checking account, credit or debit card
- ▶ Receive a paperless bill
- ▶ Access your account info on your smartphone or tablet with free mobile app
- ▶ Report power outages



Signing up for SmartHub is easy. Visit our website, claverack.com, click on the "Pay Bill" button on the left side of your screen and follow the registration instructions. The SmartHub mobile app is available for download through your app store.

Keep in touch with us on Facebook

Looking to keep up with the latest news involving your local electric cooperative? Join us on Facebook.

By "liking" Claverack REC on Facebook, you will receive updates about power outages, current events and activities involving the cooperative, as well as information about system projects, photos and other items of interest.

To find us on Facebook, simply click on the Facebook icon on our homepage at claverack.com. You can also view the most recent Facebook posts by checking out the Facebook feed on the right side of our home page.