

# 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](mailto:mail@claverack.com)

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Charles R. Bullock, Zone 7  
Chairman**

570-280-8470

**Dr. Robert R. Faux, Zone 2  
Vice Chairman**

570-574-3531

**Danise C. Fairchild, Zone 1  
Secretary/Treasurer**

570-265-3599

**Charles R. McNamara, Zone 8  
Vice Secretary/Treasurer**

570-553-4385

**Angela S. Joines, Zone 3**

570-756-4979

**Gary L. Hennip, Zone 4**

570-247-7233

**Robert W. Fearnley, Zone 5**

570-278-2288

**Timothy T. Tewksbury, Zone 6**

570-833-2320

**Anthony J. Ventello, Zone 9**

607-765-2615

**Steve Allabaugh  
President & CEO**

**Staff**

**Annette Koder, Executive Assistant**

**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, Local Pages Editor

## From the President & CEO



### New opportunities

By Steve Allabaugh

AS I considered what to write in my first *Penn Lines* column as president & CEO, I began to reflect on what a year 2020 was. What started off so routinely for us all, quickly became anything but — due to a global pandemic. While it was a year everyone wants to put in the rearview mirror, 2020 challenged us to adapt, adjust and think differently. And it was also a year that, despite its hardships, brought opportunities to Claverack, its members and to me.

In late 2019, Bobbi Kilmer announced plans to retire. Bobbi had served as Claverack president & CEO since 2006, and I had the good fortune to work with her as the co-op's director of engineering throughout those years. She will be a tough act to follow.

I am truly honored to have the opportunity to serve as the president & CEO of your cooperative, and I am committed to working with the board and our talented employees to provide the quality service you have come to expect from Claverack.

I am excited about the projects and programs we will be advancing in the coming year, including the deployment of our second-generation automatic metering infrastructure, an electric vehicle education program, as well as new line and substation upgrades.

None is more exciting, though, than the cooperative's plan to move forward with a high-speed internet project.

In recent years, we have been hearing our members' frustration over poor access to quality broadband service. The coronavirus pandemic drove home the fact that access to broadband is a


need, rather than a want.

Our board of directors and management team took members' concerns to heart and initiated a feasibility study to see if Claverack could play a role in improving access to high-speed, affordable broadband in our area. The high cost of installing the needed fiber optic cable infrastructure was always viewed as the primary roadblock.

So when the Federal Communications Commission announced an auction to award over \$9 billion to help provide broadband internet service to unserved customers in rural areas across America, we decided to participate. This auction, called the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, took place in November, and I am pleased to report we were successful bidders.

While we did not secure sufficient funding to serve our entire service area with broadband, the federal funding we were awarded will allow Claverack to be a part of the high-speed internet solution. We are forming an affiliate to offer retail broadband services to members and other customers in our territory. Equally important, the fiber project will contribute to our continuing effort to improve technology of our electric system, moving us closer to building a truly "smart grid."

We are eager to get the project started, but we are mindful it will be a major undertaking that will take several years to accomplish. As we move forward, we will be providing updates on our website, [claverack.com](http://claverack.com), and in *Penn Lines*, so stay tuned.

Here's to 2021 and beyond! 

## Claverack awarded funds for fiber high-speed internet project

By Jeff Fetzer

CLAVERACK will be forming a separate affiliate to bring high-speed internet to some areas of its service territory after winning federal support through the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) auction in November.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which oversaw the auction, announced that Claverack won \$3.16 million in annual support for 10 years through the auction process.

“We are excited to be able to bring high-speed, fiber optic-based internet service to some homes, farms and businesses in our area,” said Steve Allabaugh, Claverack president & chief executive officer. “Access to high-speed broadband is no longer just a luxury for those living in urban areas; it is increasingly becoming a necessity of modern life.

“If we are to realize the opportuni-

ties in distance learning, tele-medicine, new business development and quality of life that our urban neighbors take for granted, we must do the hard work to improve high-speed internet access in our area,” Allabaugh continued. “This funding will help us begin to do just that, providing first-class internet service capable of live streaming and super-fast download speeds across portions of our region.”

With the federal support in place, Allabaugh said the cooperative will proceed with plans to create an affiliate that will offer service through a fiber-to-home network across parts of the co-op’s service territory as well as some neighboring areas just outside our territory. Work will begin in 2021 and must be completed within six years to satisfy FCC requirements.

“Our goal is to bring broadband

to rural areas just like we brought electricity to them back in the 1930s,” Allabaugh said. “We are eager to move forward with a project that has such transformational possibilities for our region.”

He noted the scope of the project is massive, requiring construction of nearly 1,500 miles of fiber-optic lines.

Claverack received confirmation that it had been among the successful RDOF bidders in November but was not permitted to announce the grant award until late January. Additional details about the grant award and project scope will be announced on the Claverack website, claverack.com, and in *Penn Lines* as they become available.

“This fiber project is going to be a huge undertaking, and we ask for members’ patience and understanding as we proceed,” Allabaugh said. 🌞

## Claverack’s website sports a fresh new look

CLAVERACK recently refreshed its website, giving the site an attractive new look and added functionality to enhance members’ online experience when visiting claverack.com.

In addition to redesigning the site with a clean and orderly new layout, we’ve also made it easier to navigate and more responsive when viewing from a tablet or mobile device.

The website still houses the same valuable information that members seek when visiting us online, including our outage center, bill payment area, online forms and agreements, educational resources, and content focusing on the many programs and services we provide.

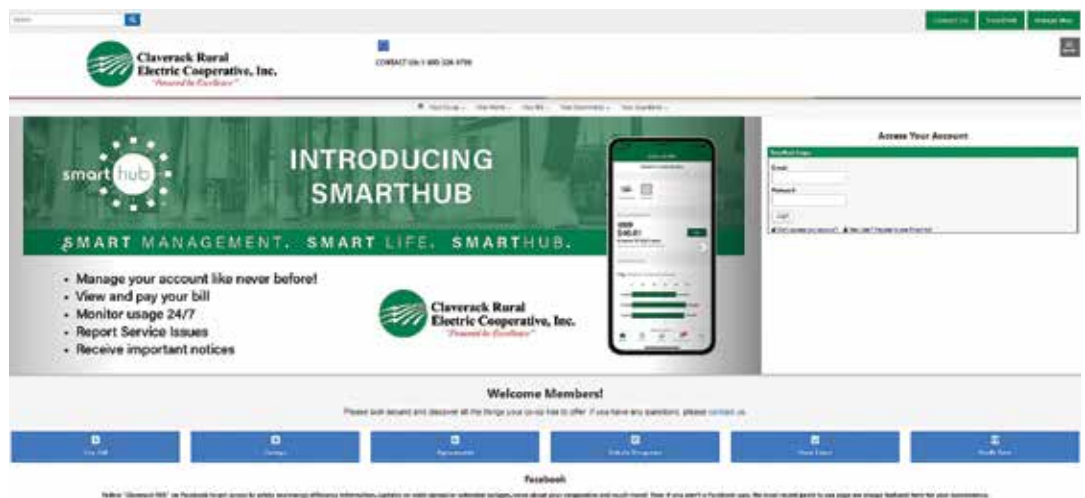
We have also upgraded our SmartHub link with an embedded login on the homepage that makes

viewing and paying your bill, reporting outages and checking your energy use a snap.

In addition, we’ve improved the Facebook feed on our home screen to give those visiting our homepage quick access to the five most recent Facebook posts. Of course, if you don’t want to miss any of our posts, you can always follow us directly by liking

Claverack REC on your Facebook account.

We hope you’ll visit claverack.com and explore our new website and its features. Please tell us what you think of our revamped site and let us know of any suggestions you have for further improvements. Just click on the “Contact Us” button at the top of the screen to send your comments. 🌞



# Ice, snow storms mark challenging start to new year

By Jeff Fetzer

AFTER bidding good riddance to 2020 and the myriad challenges wrought by a global pandemic, many celebrated the start of the new year with a sense of optimism.

Mother Nature quickly put a bit of a damper on the post-New Year enthusiasm, unleashing a pair of winter storms that left thousands of Claverack members without power over the course of the first five days of 2021.

Trouble began on Day 1. A winter storm making its way from Texas to New England reached Pennsylvania New Year's Day, coating much of the state in ice and knocking out power to about 900 Claverack members that Friday evening.

Claverack crews worked through the night making repairs and getting the lights back on. On Saturday morning, with all members back in power, crews headed home to enjoy the remainder of their holiday weekend.

For some of those lineworkers, the New Year's weekend ended abruptly Sunday evening; at about 8 p.m. they were called into action after a



**OUTAGE REPAIRS:** Lineworkers from Claverack and Central Electric Cooperative work to reattach downed wires to a damaged pole in Wilmot Township, Bradford County, following a snowstorm on Jan. 3. The storm, which blanketed the region with 5 inches to a foot of snow, resulted in widespread power outages across Claverack's service territory. Working around the clock and with assistance from Central Electric, Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, Citizens' Electric and BNF Powerline Construction, crews safely restored power to the nearly 8,400 members who lost electricity during and following the storm. The weight of the wet, heavy snow resulted in broken poles and severed electric lines and caused numerous trees and limbs to fall onto the wires.

wet, heavy snow that had been falling throughout the day began taking down power lines and nearby trees and limbs.

As the night wore on, the snow and the outages continued to accumulate, and by Monday morning, with 6 to 12 inches of snow blanketing the region, the cooperative was facing one of its most extensive outages in recent years. Nearly 3,600 members were without power at the peak of the outage late Sunday night.

Power outages were numerous and widespread, impacting members in all three of the cooperative's service districts, according to Doug Nichols, Claverack's director of operations. Hardest hit were areas of higher elevation served by the Evergreen and Hollenback substations in Bradford County, where over a foot of snow fell, making road travel difficult and repairs to remote, off-road sites even more so.

Given the scope of the storm damage, which included five broken poles, numerous trees and limbs in contact with power lines and many spans of line pulled to the ground from the weight of the snow, Claverack enlisted outside assistance to aid in restoration efforts. More than 20 lineworkers from Tri-County REC, Sussex REC, Central Electric Cooperative, Citizens' Electric Co. and BNF Powerline Construction joined the co-op's efforts to restore power throughout the day Monday.

"This was one of those agonizing, forever outages, where it seems like you're not making any progress, because every time you'd get a line energized another one would go down," Nichols said.

But by dusk on Tuesday, Jan. 5, less than 48 hours after the second storm outage of the year began, all except 11 co-op members were back in service. Those remaining outages were restored to power several hours later.

*(continues on page 12d)*



**OUTAGE RESTORATION:** Claverack lineman Jeremiah Lund works from a bucket to repair a wire that had been taken down by a heavy accumulation of snow in Bradford County Jan. 4. A New Year's Day ice storm, followed by the snow on Jan. 3, kept co-op line crews busy responding to more than 245 outages affecting nearly 8,400 member services in the first week of 2021.



**PREPARING LINE:** Central Electric lineman Randy Renfrew prepares an electric line to be hoisted into place while assisting Claverack with power restoration efforts along Kane Road in Wilmot Township, Bradford County, Jan. 4.

**Ice, snow storms**

*(continued from page 12c)*

“This snow storm was one of the more challenging events we’ve had recently because it was so widespread,” Claverack President & CEO Steve Allabaugh said. “We truly appreciate members’ patience, support and many words of encouragement and appreciation throughout the restoration process.”

Including the ice-related outages on New Year’s Day, Claverack responded to 245 outages affecting nearly 8,400 member services in the first five days of 2021.

Allabaugh, who began duties as the co-op’s top executive on Jan. 1, said while his first week in the new position was more eventful than he expected, he was grateful to have a dedicated team of employees committed to restoring power efficiently and safely.

“We worked as a team from start to finish and, most importantly, did it safely,” Allabaugh said. “Great job to all involved, and kudos to all of the crews from out of the area who came to help us out.”



**REPAIRS UNDER WAY:** Jeremiah Lund, a journeyman lineman with Claverack’s Wysox District, uses a hotstick to close in a circuit and restore power to members in Bradford County Jan. 4. Accumulations of wet, heavy snow the night before made accessing co-op lines challenging in some of the remote and higher-altitude locations of the co-op’s service territory.

## How can we reach you?

**PLEASE** be sure to verify that the telephone number that appears on your electric bill is accurate and up to date.

If you have replaced your landline telephone with a cellphone, or if the telephone number on your bill is incorrect or missing, please call the office at 1-800-326-9799 so we can update our records. Also, if your cellphone has become your primary telephone, please let us know that, too.

Having an up-to-date phone number is important to our efforts to communicate with you during outages and emergencies or when we have other questions or concerns. Please take a moment to review your bill to make sure we can stay in touch.

Members are also encouraged to provide us with a valid email address for an additional means of communications. Please note that an email address is required to participate in our SmartHub application, which allows you to manage your account and report outages online or with your mobile device. 📶

## Co-op offers scholarship to MU students

Applications are being accepted for a \$1,000 scholarship that is available for the 2021-2022 academic year to a Mansfield University student who is a Claverack member or dependent.

To be eligible for consideration, students must:

- ▶ be enrolled full time at Mansfield University
- ▶ demonstrate financial need
- ▶ be a member or dependent of a member of Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative
- ▶ demonstrate the highest traits of leadership, citizenship and character

Students can also apply online by visiting our homepage, [claverack.com](http://claverack.com), and clicking on Scholarships under the “Your Community” drop-down menu at the top of the screen.

Claverack endowed the scholarship fund at Mansfield University in 2000, with a goal of providing financial assistance to any Claverack member or dependent pursuing a degree at the university.

A member of the State System of Higher Education, Mansfield University attracts many students from throughout the cooperative’s service territory.