

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Claverack REC

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Office Hours

Monday through Friday

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Jeff Fetzer, CCC, Local Pages Editor

From the President & CEO



Reflecting on a rapidly changing industry

By Bobbi Kilmer

I CELEBRATED my 20th year of working at Claverack in 2019. Reaching that milestone caused me to think about how much change we've seen at your electric co-op over the past two decades.

The year I came on board, one of the biggest concerns, industry-wide, was the possible impact of the Y2K bug. We wondered if our computers, meters and other equipment would continue to function after the calendar turned from Dec. 31, 1999, to Jan. 1, 2000. Systems were evaluated, contingency plans were made, and we sat back and watched as the world rang in a new century without a hiccup.

While in some ways the year 2000 seems like yesterday, it is amazing how drastically things have changed since then.

As I look at our budget and plans for 2020, the contrast between today and 20 years ago is striking. In 2000, our members were still reading their own mechanical meters and reporting their readings back to the cooperative. This year, we will begin deployment of our second generation automated meter system, which will provide a host of benefits to the cooperative above and beyond our first generation of "smart meters."

A couple of items in our budget were almost unheard of in 2000. For example, we plan to purchase a drone this year to help us inspect rights of way and patrol lines. This technology has the potential to help us spot trouble areas more efficiently and could be very beneficial during storm-related outages.

We are also considering adding an electric vehicle (EV) to the Claverack fleet this year. We believe gaining first-hand experience with an EV will help us provide guidance to members who are considering purchasing an electric vehicle and who have questions about charging their EV at home, driving range in our hilly region of the state, and the impact of our winter weather on battery life.

There's a lot of technology in our budget this year. Our employees will be transitioning to a new work management system that will put a tablet computer in the hands of just about every employee in the field. We also plan to add a full-time IT professional, who will focus on cybersecurity at Claverack and our affiliated companies.

Not all of the changes the cooperative has experienced during these past 20 years have been related to technology. In 2015, we moved our annual meeting from the Wysox Fire Department grounds to the campus of the Elk Lake School District.

We will be moving the annual meeting site again in 2020. Our big event will be held at the Wyoming County Fairgrounds in Meshoppen on Sept. 2, 2020, in conjunction with this year's County Fair. Stay tuned for further information and be sure to mark the date!

I'm really proud of our accomplishments over the last 20 years, and I'm excited about what we have in store for this new decade as we work to serve our members and our communities. Wishing you all a Happy New Year. 🌞

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 2020 Rural Electric Youth Tour, a six-day sightseeing excursion that mixes fun and education.

During the tour, which takes place June 21-26, 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 2020 Rural Electric Youth Tour

1. This contest is open to any high school junior (2019-20 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 history. What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of and what would you have contributed?" If you are unable to create a video, a 400-word essay will be accepted. See the application form for details.
3. Complete the online Youth Tour application form, which can be found on the Claverack website at claverack.com. Be sure to attach an appropriate school photo of yourself



CAPITOL CONNECTIONS: Claverack's 2019 Rural Electric Youth Tour student delegates stand in front of the Capitol during their weeklong tour of Washington, D.C., last June. Students representing the cooperative on the annual trip were, from left: Kemuel Lauder Milch of Wyalusing, Katrina Roof of Wysox, Emily Moyer of Wyalusing, Mary Stretch of Laceyville, Dawcin Jones of New Albany and Logan Newton of Wyalusing.

- 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@ctcenterprises.org, 570-268-1332.
6. Entries must be received by Friday, Feb. 14.
7. The cooperative will mail notifica-

- tion to those selected as finalists on Tuesday, 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. 27, 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 2021 NRECA Annual Meeting.
8. The decision of the judges is final.

Claverack wins communications award

CLAVERACK Rural Electric Cooperative captured top honors for its communications efforts in an annual statewide competition organized by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA).

The 2019 A.D. Stainbrook Award for Cooperative Communications Excellence was presented to Claverack during the PREA/Allegheny Annual Meeting in Hershey Oct. 31.

The Stainbrook Award recognizes outstanding achievement in cooperative communications. A panel of independent judges makes the award selection based on how well the cooperative communicates news and information and promotes the cooperative business and philosophy to its members through a mix of communications tools, including *Penn Lines* magazine. ☀



AWARDED: Claverack REC was selected as the winner of the 2019 A.D. Stainbrook Award for Communications Excellence. The award was presented to Bobbi Kilmer, president & CEO, and Jeff Fetzer, vice president of communications, at the 2019 PREA/Allegheny Annual Meeting.

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 www.claverack.com. You can also view our most recent Facebook posts by checking out the Facebook feed on the right side of our home page.

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 online health and human services benefits application site, by visiting compass.state.pa.us.

Below are the income guidelines for acceptance into the program:

Household Size	Household Income
1	\$18,735
2	\$25,365
3	\$31,995
4	\$38,625
5	\$45,255
6	\$51,885

Add \$6,630 for each additional member of the household

Steps for reporting a power outage

EVEN with the advances of our computerized outage management system, members still play a vital role in the co-op's power restoration efforts.

The first thing you want to do when you lose power is call the cooperative at 1-800-326-9799 to report the outage. You can also report outages through our SmartHub application.

Please do not report the outage through Facebook because it is not monitored at all times.

When you call in to report an outage, the more information you are able to provide, the sooner Claverack can have you and your neighbors back in service.

Here are simple steps to follow when an outage occurs:


1. Never attempt to fix or move an electric line yourself. Fallen lines often remain energized. Contact with live wires can result in injury or death.
2. Check your circuit breakers and fuses. If nothing appears out of the ordinary, it's time to call the cooperative.
3. Call 1-800-326-9799 or 570-265-2167 to let us know you are out of power, or report the outage through

the SmartHub application.

4. If calling to report the outage, be sure to provide the telephone number of the account that is out of service. Our operators can quickly pull up your account information and map location by typing your telephone number into the outage management system.

5. Report when you lost power. If you are unsure of the exact time, please offer your best estimate. Also tell us if all or only some of your lights are out, or whether your lights are flickering or dim.

6. Check on your neighbors. If possible, tell the Claverack operator whether or not your neighbors have electricity.

7. Give us any additional details. Be sure to tell our operators any additional information that may be related to the outage or helpful to our crews. Report the occurrence of downed lines, trees on electric wires, sparking transformers, flashes of light, explosions or unusual noises, broken poles, tree-blocked roadways, car accidents, etc. 

Operation Round-Up MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

With today's higher energy costs, more and more cooperative families struggle to keep up with their energy bills.

You can help some of your neighbors in need by participating in Claverack's Operation Round-Up program.



This voluntary program allows you to assist members of the cooperative who are experiencing difficulties paying their electric bills. Participating in the program is inexpensive – less than \$1 a month – and allows you to help make a difference in a neighbor's life.

CONTRIBUTING IS EASY

The concept is simple. Claverack rounds up your monthly electric bill to the next dollar amount. The difference between the round-up amount and your actual bill amount goes into our member assistance fund.

For example, if your electric bill is \$100.32, then you would pay \$101. The extra 68 cents goes into our member assistance fund for needy families of the cooperative.

In addition to being a great way to help neighbors in need, participating in the program can also make balancing your checkbook easier.

A FEW PENNIES CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Each year, hundreds of Claverack members receive energy assistance in the form of government money. That financing is often targeted in congressional budget cuts; so help for needy families is never certain. That's why we began Operation Round-Up – to help more members.

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

If you would like to help others, Operation Round-Up is an easy way to do so. An average yearly donation is about \$6. And if you change your mind and decide to quit, just call the office and ask to stop.

The choice is yours. Sign up today to start helping others by calling us at 1-800-326-9799. You can also sign up through our website, claverack.com, by clicking on Operation Round-Up under the "Your Bill" drop-down menu at the top of the screen.

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.