

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: <https://www.claverack.com>

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Office Hours

Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Jeff Fetzer, Local Pages Editor

From the President & CEO



Turbulent times

By Steve Allabaugh

IT'S A topsy turvy world we've lived in the past couple of years, and there doesn't seem to be an end in sight. Just when you think things might get back to normal, whatever that is, things seem to go awry.

The latest news, as I write in early December, is about the new COVID-19 variant called "omicron." Countries around the world are imposing travel restrictions in response to the latest threat, although no one seems to know exactly how serious a threat this new variant really is. One thing we do know is it's not going to help our world feel more stable.

Here at Claverack, as we plan for the new year, we are working hard to hold down costs and bring some stability to our members' lives.

Besides dealing with the ups and downs of COVID-19, there is certainly much change afoot in the electric utility industry. One of the long-term challenges the industry faces is climate change and the effort to "decarbonize" electric generation.

The push to retire fossil fuel generation sources to reduce carbon dioxide emissions is a tremendous challenge that many utilities are grappling with, especially those with significant investments in coal. We are fortunate as our generation supplier, Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny) provides about 70% of our energy needs from carbon-free nuclear and hydro-electric sources. The remaining 30% is purchased from the market, which remains predominately fossil-fuel based.

While generation costs to our mem-

bers will not increase in 2022, Allegheny will continue to closely monitor this part of our electricity supply in the future.

Changing weather patterns are certainly impacting electric utilities, as well. It seems as if the western half of the country is increasingly dealing with destructive wildfires, while the East grapples with more frequent flooding and wind events. Either way, utilities are working to harden their systems to better weather these events and improve reliability.

For Claverack in 2022, this means things like investing \$2.8 million to clear vegetation from our lines, completing technology projects like our advanced metering system for better outage prediction and more rapid restoration, and deploying advanced communications technology like our planned fiber optic system, which will enable distribution automation and other smart grid technologies.

While we are investing in our system to improve reliability for our members, like everyone, we face dramatically rising costs and longer lead times for the materials, equipment, and labor we use and depend on every day. For example, the cost of a basic transformer that hangs on the pole outside your home has gone up 28% from November 2020 to November 2021. We are seeing double-digit increases in most of the staple items we use. Skilled utility workers, including line and right-of-way tree contractors, are getting more difficult to find and more expensive to hire. We are hopeful some of these increasing price pressures are transient,

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Eilenberger Springs supplying water to Towanda for over 130 years

By Jeff Fetzer

WITH WATER, water, everywhere around the Bradford County seat of Towanda, it may come as a surprise that the bulk of the borough's water supply has flowed from an underground spring in Albany Township, some 14 miles away, since the late 1800s.

With the entire eastern border of the borough bound by the Susquehanna River, Lake Wesauking located northeast of town and Mountain Lake to the west, Towanda's town fathers settled on the distant Eilenberger Springs near Laddsborg to supply the town's drinking water.

Privately owned until purchased by the Towanda Municipal Authority in 1950, the Eilenberger Springs are on a 25-acre parcel off Marsh Road in Albany Township, near the headwaters of South Branch Towanda Creek. A locked gate prevents public visitation to the site, but there's really not much to see anyway. The main spring is fully underground; a removable concrete top, surrounded by fencing, is the only indication of its presence.

There is also a small building, served by Claverack, where chlorine is added to the water before it leaves the property and travels through a 10-inch cast-iron pipe to a reservoir in South Towanda.

The spring supplies about 60% of the Towanda water supply and has permitted flows of 575,000 gallons per day, according to Kyle Lane, former manager of the Towanda Municipal Authority.

The Eilenberger Springs are about 600 feet higher in elevation than the Borough of Towanda, and its waters flow by gravity the entire distance to the South Towanda reservoir, which was once an open reservoir but is now a 500,000-gallon glass-lined steel holding tank.

"The system uses about 500,000 to 600,000 gallons a day, but is capable



CO-OP POWERED: The Towanda Municipal Authority's chlorination building at Eilenberger Springs in Albany Township has been powered by Claverack since it was constructed in 1996. The underground springs on the authority's 25-acre property supply water to the boroughs of Towanda, Monroe, and New Albany, as well as portions of North Towanda, Towanda, and Wysox townships.

of producing 1 million gallons," says Lane, who now serves as director of broadband operations for Claverack Communications, the co-op's broadband subsidiary. "The water is pristine. It's not filtered. It's just chlorinated."

Lane had visited the chlorine treatment building at Eilenberger Springs during his first few years as manager of the municipal authority, but wasn't aware of the story behind the development of the springs until a local historian, Elaine Engisch, presented a lecture to the Bradford County Historical Society.

Engisch, a lifelong Bradford County resident who resides in Standing Stone Township, unearthed the history behind the springs while doing research for a series of lectures on fires that plagued Towanda in the 1800s, including the "Great Fire of 1847," which destroyed the courthouse and jail, among other buildings in town.

Engisch says while she was nominally familiar with Eilenberger

Springs, she became intrigued about how they came to be the source of the borough's water supply when they were located at such great distance from Towanda.

"The springs are so far away from town," she says, "and the Susquehanna River is right there. Why didn't Towanda use the river? Well, thank goodness they didn't."

By the late 1800s, the residents of town had three main sources of water: cisterns that collected rain water from roofs, hand-dug wells that were susceptible to pollution from groundwater runoff, and the river, which was polluted by sewage from local hotels that drained directly into it.

In 1879, the town council entered into a 20-year contract with Towanda Water Works, which promised to pump "pure and wholesome" water from Mountain Lake and Lake Wesauking to the town. Instead, the company piped polluted water from Downing Hollow and the nearby river, according to Engisch, who noted it

took 11 years and three court trials to get out of that contract.

In 1890, Charles Goodhue of Massachusetts, who had purchased Towanda Water Works, presented the town council with several options to procure water for the town for home use and fire protection. One of his suggested water sources for the system, and the most expensive option, was Eilenberger Springs, which had been owned until that time by Septimus Bacon Eilenberger and was known locally as Eilenberger's Trout Ponds.

The ponds were stocked with trout — 53,000 of them by one newspaper account — and fed by “the purest and coldest spring water,” according to an advertisement in the Bradford Argus in 1873. Cost of admission to the ponds was 25 cents.

The council ruled out several lower-cost options, including pumping water from the nearby Susquehanna River, and opted to pay Goodhue \$3,000 annually to provide potable water for fire protection. Monroeton also contracted water for fire protection for another \$500 per year. The local residents who wished to purchase drinking water piped from Eilenberger Springs were able to do so at their own



GOING UNDERGROUND: The main spring at Eilenberger Springs flows beneath the concrete structure in the center of the fenced area, above. Before the main spring was channeled underground during construction of the Towanda Water Works water system in 1890, water rushed between two boulders at the base of the hill behind the present-day fencing at a rate of about 750,000 gallons per day. Gravity carries the water from the Albany Township site through 10-inch cast-iron piping to a 500,000-gallon tank in South Towanda, more than 14 miles away. Eilenberger Springs has served as the primary water source for Towanda Borough and nearby townships for over 100 years.

expense.

In 1890, work began to fully enclose the Eilenberger Springs to protect against runoff and to lay the estimated 14 to 16 miles of cast-iron pipe necessary to deliver the spring water to Monroeton and Towanda. The project got under way in July, and on Nov. 26, 1890, crystal clear spring water was flowing into Towanda from Eilenberger Springs.

An account in the Dec. 17, 1891, Bradford Republican, published after borough council and representatives of the press visited the site, offered these observations: “The main spring, and the one from which a large portion of the supply is taken, lies at the foot of a high gravel hill, and the water, we were told, rushed out between two large rocks. All along the foot of the hill is a score or more of smaller springs, the water issuing forth from one of the best filterers, this hill of pure gravel. The Water Company have laid a 12-inch pipe up to within about 20 feet of the main spring. From the end of the pipe to the spring is a walled ditch several feet deep and about two feet wide which will be covered with heavy flagging and cemented. ... The 12-inch pipe continues along the foot of the hill towards Laddsburg some 1,000 feet, and in this distance there are ten receiving wells, or branches, leading into it from other springs, all of which are under ground and securely covered.”

The newspaper account highlighted the fact that the water from the springs did not reach the earth's surface until it was drawn from a faucet or hydrant.

“If there is another town or city in Pennsylvania that has even as good water as this we do not know where it is,” according to the Republican article. “Several are supplied from springs, but it is either pumped into a reservoir, or runs into one, where no matter how much care is taken it must gather impurities, while Towanda's supply issued from beneath a bed of rocks 16 miles distance and never reaches the surface until it is drawn from the pipes by takers. What chance is there for

impurities? Virtually none.”

The estimated cost for the project was \$150,000, and the water system was owned by Goodhue for about five years before he sold it to Congressman George Kipp and his nephew, Edwin Kizer. The Towanda Borough Municipal Authority purchased the grounds and water system in 1950. With the exception of the addition of the chlorination building in 1996, the gravity-fed system is largely unchanged since it began serving the Towanda area in 1890.

The pristine water from Eilenberger Springs has flowed nonstop to Towanda for more than a century, a testament to the vision of Charles Goodhue and a town council that ignored the polluted water, water everywhere nearby and, instead, procured “pure and wholesome” spring water that residents of Towanda Borough and neighboring townships have enjoyed for generations. ❁

From the President & CEO

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but we know some of the increases are here to stay.

Our continued investments in the electric system in today's inflationary environment, unfortunately, will necessitate a modest rate increase for 2022. The good news is we have worked hard to keep costs down, and the cooperative remains in good financial condition, so we are able to hold the increase to a minimum. For our residential members, the cost-of-service charge will increase from \$31 per month to \$33 monthly. All other charges will remain the same. For the average residential member, this equates to an annual increase of approximately 1.6%. Our commercial and industrial members will likewise see a modest increase in their monthly cost of service.

We know no one wants to spend more on electricity, and we are very cognizant of the impacts of increased costs on our members. Rest assured we will continue to work hard at our mission of delivering reliable service at the least possible cost. ❁

All About Eve

Our first experience with Tesla service

By Lynn Jennings

Member Service Representative

THE LAST thing a new car owner wants to think about is service on their beautiful new vehicle, but sooner or later there will be a problem that needs to be addressed.

Our service experience started with the Tesla online app when I requested a service appointment for moisture that had accumulated in the taillight cover of Claverack's Tesla Model 3, which we call "Eve." I received a phone call from a service scheduler to confirm the appointment that I had made online. I asked if the service appointment could happen at my location in Wysox, but the scheduler was quick to inform me that Bradford County is not in Tesla's mobile service territory. The closest service center is in Henrietta, N.Y., near Rochester, N.Y., about 155 miles from Wysox, so a 310-mile round trip.

As much as I hated to waste a day traveling for a car repair, I admit that I was excited to test the limits on Eve's range and experience some range anxiety for myself. The trip to Rochester would require that I find a way to charge on the road, since the battery has a range of around 280 miles.

When I arrived at the service center, I was quickly greeted by the service manager, and the car was taken into the garage area to have the taillight lens removed and re-sealed.

I asked if they had a charger that I could use, since I would need to charge to make it home. The service manager said he would be happy to plug it into their level 2 charger, which would provide at least 25 miles of charge while they were working on the car. I wasn't surprised to learn that they did not have a level 3 fast-charger since they are extremely expensive to install.

As I waited for the taillight repair, I listened to the service manager discuss



PIT STOP: Claverack's Tesla electric vehicle fuels up at a level 3 fast-charging station near Rochester, N.Y. The "fill-up" added 173 miles of range at a cost of \$14.62.

service issues with other customers, and I was extremely impressed with his customer-service skills. I also was able to check the Tesla app on my smartphone, which provided me with an estimate of how long the service would take and alerted me that Eve was charging, just as the manager had promised.

When the service was complete, the manager told me the service invoice was available on my app and that everything was covered under the warranty.

I looked at my remaining range, which was 125 miles, and the car's on-board navigation system directed me to the nearest level 3 fast-charging station, which was 18 miles away at a shopping mall. Since the mall would have a food court, I could fuel my tank at the same time Eve was getting her power fill-up.

When I backed up to the charger at 12:13 p.m., my "miles to empty" registered at 97. Since the Tesla app has my credit card information stored, all that is required to charge at a Tesla charger is that I plug the cord in.

The charger recognized my car, and I walked to the food court at the mall to place my order. Twenty minutes later, I checked my smartphone, and the charge level was already at 235 miles, which was more than enough range to get me back to the office. When I returned to the car at 12:49, the charge was complete, and Eve had a range of 270 miles.

The detailed invoice for the fast charge was 43 kilowatt-hours (kWh) at 32 cents per hour, for a total of \$13.60. Taxes added another \$1.02, for a total of \$14.62. The fast-charge increased my range by 173 miles. Had the same kWh been consumed at our level 2 charger at the co-op office, the cost would have been .10009 cents per kWh, for a total of \$4.30.

It is definitely advantageous to charge at home when possible, and as with anything, there is going to be an added cost for the convenience of charging with the fast-charge equipment. Even so, "filling up" for \$14.62 is still quite a bargain when compared to the price at the gas pumps these days. ☀