

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Claverack REC

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

570-574-3531

**Angela S. Joines, Zone 3
Vice Chairman**

570-756-4979

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

570-553-4385

**Timothy T. Tewksbury, Zone 6
Vice Secretary/Treasurer**

570-833-2320

Charles R. Bullock, Zone 7

570-280-8470

Danise C. Fairchild, Zone 1

570-265-3599

Robert W. Fearnley, Zone 5

570-278-2288

Gary L. Hennip, Zone 4

570-247-7233

Anthony J. Ventello, Zone 9

607-765-2615

**Steve Allabaugh
President & CEO**

Staff

Annette Koder, Executive Assistant

Nick Berger, Director, Engineering and Operations

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



We missed seeing you at the annual meeting

By Steve Allabaugh

WHAT a bummer...for the second consecutive year, COVID-19 prevented us from gathering in person for our annual meeting of the membership.

You just can't replace the personal interactions of a "live" event, so I was disappointed that I was unable to talk to members in person at what was my first annual meeting as Claverack's CEO.

Over the past 15 years, when I served as the co-op's director of engineering, I was able to meet so many great members and their families as they stopped to chat at our engineering table during the annual meeting. Year after year, I'd see many of those same people again, and it was like seeing old friends. The one-on-one discussions are what I missed most about not being able to meet in person for our 84th annual meeting.

We were planning to hold this year's meeting at the Wyoming County Fair, but it was not to be. Instead, we conducted our business meeting Aug. 25 online via videoconference at our headquarters in Wysox. Our board was in attendance, along with staff and our cooperative attorney. We structured the event similarly to our in-person meetings.

Board Chairman Charles Bullock reviewed our major achievements over the past year, including the retirement of \$1.7 million in capital credits, while noting the cooperative remains in a strong financial position.

I reported on several exciting initiatives happening here at the cooperative. At the top of the list is our broadband project. I noted we are really beginning to ramp up the project

but have not quite finalized details of our construction plan and schedule for release. We are working hard on developing the initial build-out plan and expect to begin construction on our first miles of fiber early next year.

As I noted in my report, we will be releasing details about the project throughout the fall, and I encouraged members to visit our website for the latest updates. I also spoke briefly about some of the co-op's other projects and activities, including deployment of our next-generation metering system, enhanced right-of-way maintenance targeting damage caused by the emerald ash borer, and our use of aerial drones to inspect our system for safety and reliability.

Attorney Robert Chappell announced the election of directors, reporting that incumbent directors Gary L. Hennip, Robert W. Fearnley and Timothy T. Tewksbury ran unopposed, and each was elected to serve a three-year term.

Despite COVID-19, I am grateful that we were able to provide updates and reports to our members and safely conduct the business of the cooperative. An upside to the videoconference format is that members were able to participate from wherever they were, without travel, which we know for some members can be a challenge. Additionally, we were able to record the meeting so members whose schedules wouldn't allow them to participate live can view it at their convenience. The recording of the meeting can be accessed by visiting our website and clicking on the annual report/annual meeting link under the "Your Co-op" *(continues on page 16d)*

Co-op officials highlight a year of challenges, opportunities during virtual annual meeting

By Jeff Fetzer

FOR THE second straight year, a global pandemic prevented Claverack from bringing members together for its traditional annual meeting of the membership.

Instead, and out of an abundance of caution, the cooperative opted to conduct its 84th annual meeting online via live videoconference from the Claverack headquarters building in Wysox on Wednesday, Aug. 25, with only directors, key staff and the cooperative attorney in attendance.

“Despite the challenges of 2020, Claverack has stayed true to its mission, and I am happy to report that Claverack is stronger than ever and ready to provide an even brighter future for our members,” proclaimed board Chairman Charles R. Bullock as he welcomed members tuning into the videoconference on their computers and smart devices.

Bullock stated the cooperative remains in excellent financial condition and continues to seek innovative ways to improve the lives of its members



ELECTION RESULTS: Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative President & CEO Steve Allabaugh, right, congratulates members elected to the board of directors following the co-op’s 84th annual meeting held via online videoconference on Aug 25. Pictured, from left, are directors Timothy Tewksbury, Gary Hennip and Robert Fearnley, representing Zones 6, 4 and 5, respectively.

while maintaining focus on the day-to-day business of operating an electric cooperative safely, reliably and efficiently.

Because of hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic, Bullock noted that Claverack bolstered its efforts to assist members who struggled personally

and financially over the past year.

“2020 was a year where the Seven Co-op Principles by which we operate were truly put into action, especially principle No. 7, ‘concern for community,’” he said. “Claverack stepped up by helping members in need through our HOPE program and by partnering with and supporting area agencies like TreHab and our local food pantries.”

He also credited sound fiscal management with enabling the co-op to finish one of the most challenging years in recent memory on a strong financial footing.

“We were able to have a strong year financially,” he said. “2020 was our 10th successive year of retiring capital credits to our current and former members.”

The cooperative returned \$1.7 million in capital credits retirement to members in June, he said.

Inaugural address

In his first address to the membership as president & CEO of Claverack, Steve Allabaugh expressed his disappointment that COVID-19 prevented the co-op



INAUGURAL ADDRESS: Claverack President & CEO Steve Allabaugh presents his first executive address to the membership during the cooperative’s 84th annual meeting, held virtually via videoconference Wednesday, Aug. 25, from Claverack’s headquarters in Wysox. Allabaugh, who was promoted to CEO in January, discussed the challenges of the past year, including the COVID-19 pandemic and frequent storms, as well as the co-op’s plans to bring high-speed internet service to parts of its service territory beginning next year. Pictured, clockwise from left, are director Tony Ventello and incoming board Chairman Robert Faux, Allabaugh, outgoing board Chairman Charles Bullock and Secretary/Treasurer Charles McNamara.

from hosting an in-person meeting.

He acknowledged the extra efforts of co-op employees to work safely and protect the public as a result of the pandemic.

“The pandemic also drove home the importance of communications and how essential it is in our lives today,” he said. “As our employees transitioned to remote work last March, it shined a bright light on the fact that much of our region lacks access to true high-speed internet.”

He noted Claverack, at the urging of its membership, had been exploring the possibility of providing high-speed internet service for about five years but had determined it to be financially unfeasible without additional financial support.

That opportunity for financial assistance became available in 2020 when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced a program, the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, to provide funding for companies seeking to build broadband networks in unserved or underserved rural areas.

Broadband project a go

Claverack was able to secure more than \$31 million through the FCC program, which will enable the co-op to build approximately 1,500 miles of fiber optic lines in portions of Bradford, Susquehanna and Wyoming counties.

“While this funding does not allow us to serve all of our members, it provides a springboard for us to begin to help bridge the digital divide,” Allabaugh said. “It’s a huge undertaking. We expect construction to take place over the next five to six years, putting up about 300 miles of fiber optic cable each year.”

In addition to bringing high-speed internet service to co-op members in some parts of its service territory, the project will deliver additional benefits to the co-op’s electric system operations.

“It will allow us to install electronic system protection equipment out on our lines that can communicate directly with the office over the fiber optic system, helping us identify outage locations faster and speeding up restoration,” he said. “It will allow

us to bring metering information from our automatic metering system back to the office and will help us secure our network communications.”

Allabaugh said the cooperative is in the planning and design phase of the broadband project and expects the co-op’s newly created broadband subsidiary, Claverack Communications, will begin installing fiber optic cable by the middle of next year.

The chief executive also acknowledged that frequent storms, coupled with the ash tree die-off caused by the emerald ash borer, have created a higher-than-usual level of power disruptions over the past year.

To address the ash problem, he said the Claverack board allocated an additional \$1 million to the co-op’s right-of-way maintenance budget to be used to target ash tree removal in 2021 and 2022.

“Turning to 2021, we have the same core priorities as always — working safely, maintaining strong financials, operating efficiently, improving reliability and service to our members, and providing the services our members want,” Allabaugh said. “With the

focus of our board of directors to do what is right for our members, and the skill and commitment to improvement that our employees bring to work every day, we are poised to do great things.”

Election results

The virtual annual meeting concluded with the announcement of the director election results. Because this year’s election was uncontested, the cooperative’s Credentials & Elections Committee decided to dispense with formal balloting and cast a unanimous ballot at the meeting on behalf of the sole nominee for each zone.

As a result, incumbent directors Gary Hennip, Robert Fearnley and Timothy Tewksbury, representing Zones 4, 5 and 6, respectively, were elected to serve three-year terms.

During a reorganization meeting that immediately followed the annual meeting, Robert Faux was elected as the cooperative’s chairman of the board, Angela Joines was elected vice chairman, Charles McNamara was elected secretary/treasurer, and Tewksbury was elected vice secretary/treasurer. 🌟

Claverack Communications hires director of broadband

Claverack Communications, Claverack’s broadband subsidiary, has selected Towanda native Kyle Lane to oversee the build-out of the new company’s ambitious fiber-to-the-home project.

Lane began his duties as director of broadband operations for Claverack Communications on Aug. 9. Before coming on board with the co-op subsidiary, Lane had served as Towanda Borough manager for the past eight years.



Kyle Lane

Prior to that, he had spent a decade in the telecommunications field, working for Frontier Communications and its predecessor, Commonwealth Telephone, in various roles, including customer service representative, communications technician, and technical supervisor/local manager.

“I’m excited to welcome Kyle as the first employee dedicated to Claverack Communications and our effort to bring broadband internet service to portions of our service territory,” said Steve Allabaugh, Claverack president & CEO. “Kyle brings the right mix of education, technical knowledge and management experience to this new position and will be a great asset to our team.”

In his role as director of broadband operations, Lane will oversee the build-out, management and future operations of the co-op’s broadband initiative.

“I am extremely grateful and excited to be part of this historic venture to bring the highest quality internet service to our rural community,” Lane said.

A graduate of Penn State University with a bachelor’s degree in telecommunications, Lane and his wife, Jennifer, reside in Standing Stone Township with their two children. 🌟

All About Eve

Charging costs

By Brian Zeidner

Director of Member Services

ONE OF the most common questions members ask us about Eve, our electric car, is how much it costs to charge Eve and how does that compare with a gas-powered vehicle? It depends.

The cord and charger, which is built into the cord, for Level 1 charging (120 volt) came with the car. We purchased a \$39 adaptor for Level 2 charging (240 volt) and installed the proper receptacle, similar to a dryer receptacle, in the garage. So, with the same cord, we can use either option.

When we installed the receptacle in the garage, we also installed an electric meter, as we knew we wanted to share this information with you. The price is the same, about 10 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh), when we charge using Level 1 or 2.

The advantage of the Level 2 charge is that the car can be fully charged in about eight hours. Although the Level 1 charging option does not take any special receptacles or adaptors, if our range is depleted, Level 1 takes about 48 hours to fully charge.

Whether using Level 1 or Level 2, charging the car from empty to a full charge of 287 miles uses about 80 kWh of electricity, which would cost about \$8 at Claverack's electric rate. That's a pretty significant saving over gasoline costs for a similarly sized all-wheel drive car. The Subaru Legacy, as an example, averages around 30 miles per gallon. At current gas prices of \$3.25 per gallon, driving 287 miles would cost about \$31.



Carry out the \$23 weekly savings over the course of 52 weeks, and you're looking at about \$1,200 in annual fuel savings.

I live 17 miles from work. If I owned and used Eve as my daily transportation, I could drive all week, have 117 miles of range left, and could "fill her up" for about \$5 worth of electricity. If I used up the extra 117 miles on trips to the grocery store, feed store, barber shop and church, I would be closer to the \$8 fill-up cost each week.

With my vehicle needs and habits, I could charge once a week or, like my cellphone, I could plug the car in every night to top off the tank, so to speak.

It is interesting to note that some hotels now offer free Level 2 charging when you stay with them.

Level 3 charging is a little more complex, has more options, is a lot faster, and as you may imagine, is more expensive. Level 3 chargers are most commonly found along interstates and are what travelers would use during a long trip. We'll look at Level 3 charging next month.

If you have an EV-related topic or question you'd like us to explore, please send an email to mail@claverack.com.

From the President & CEO

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dropdown menu.

While the videoconference format works pretty well to conduct the "business" of the meeting, it certainly doesn't replace the personal interaction of our traditional annual meeting. Between now and next year's annual meeting, your board and management will be reviewing our overall member engagement and communications, including our annual meeting, to be sure we are listening to what you want, letting you know what we are doing, and making sure we continue to serve the needs of you, our members.

See you soon... 🌞

Going away for the winter?

Claverack offers members who will be away from home for an extended period – including "snowbirds" who migrate to warmer climates for the winter – two convenient and timely ways to receive their electric bills while they are gone.

ONLINE BILLING

Claverack's SmartHub program gives members the ability to receive and pay electric bills electronically, either online or through the SmartHub mobile app available for smartphones and tablets.

With SmartHub, members receive an email notification when a new bill is generated. They can then pay their bill electronically using a checking account, MasterCard, Visa or debit card.

SmartHub participants also have access to their account information 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To explore the features of SmartHub, visit our website, claverack.com, and click on the SmartHub option on our homepage.

SEASONAL ADDRESS PROGRAM

The co-op also offers a Seasonal Address Program that allows members to receive their electric bills at an alternate mailing address.

It's easy to sign up for the program: Just call our billing department and provide your alternate address, along with the dates you expect to be away. During this period, your correspondence from Claverack will be mailed directly to the seasonal address, eliminating the need for the postal service to forward it to you.

For more information on the Seasonal Address Program or SmartHub, contact the Claverack office at 800-326-9799.

Claverack to conduct member survey in November

Claverack will be conducting a member satisfaction survey by email with the help of Cooperative Insights and Data Decisions Group during November.

The email will include a link to the survey embedded in the email invitation. Claverack's logo will also appear in the email.

If you are one of the members to receive the email, please participate so we can find out how we are doing and how we can better serve you.