

Claverack awarded funds for fiber high-speed internet project

WYSOX, PA — Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative 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, awarded Claverack \$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 of the homes, farms and businesses across portions of our area,” said Steve Allabaugh, Claverack president and 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 opportunities in distance learning, telemedicine, 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 adjoining the cooperative’s service area. Fiber construction will begin in 2022 and must be completed within six years to satisfy FCC requirements.

“This project will allow us to bring broadband to rural areas just like we brought electricity to them back in the 1930s,” Allabaugh said. “But more than that, it will bring tremendous benefits to our electric system by providing the communications backbone needed to build a truly smart grid. 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 in Bradford, Susquehanna and Wyoming counties.

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.

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

Claverack, with headquarters in Wysox, provides electric service to over 16,000 consumer-members in Bradford, Susquehanna, Wyoming, Tioga, Lycoming, Sullivan, Lackawanna and Luzerne counties.