

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- James E. Luce, Zone 6**
Chairman
570-833-5668
- Charles R. Bullock, Zone 7**
Vice Chairman
570-280-8470
- Steven T. Sliwinski, Zone 9**
Secretary/Treasurer
570-364-5250
- Danise C. Fairchild, Zone 1**
Vice Secretary/Treasurer
570-265-3599
- Dr. Robert R. Faux, Zone 2**
570-574-3531
- Angela S. Joines, Zone 3**
570-756-4979
- Gary L. Hennip, Zone 4**
570-247-7233
- Vacant, Zone 5**
- Charles R. McNamara, Zone 8**
570-553-4385

Bobbi Kilmer
President & CEO

Staff

- Annette Bender, *Executive Assistant*
- Steve Allabaugh, *Director, Engineering*
- 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, CCC, *Local Pages Editor*

From the President & CEO



Committed to a fair, transparent election process

By Bobbi Kilmer

THANKS to all who attended our 81st annual meeting on July 17. It was truly an enjoyable evening. For me, the best part about the annual meeting is meeting members from all over our service territory. It is a great opportunity to hear your comments and concerns and answer your questions.

One of the most important things that happens during the annual business meeting is the election of board members. For the past few years, we have conducted the election via mail-in ballots and announced the official election results during the meeting.

This year, attendees heard a report from our cooperative attorney, Robert Chappell, regarding some unusual circumstances surrounding the director election for Zone 5, which encompasses several townships, primarily in eastern Susquehanna County.

Michael Coleman, who had held the seat for 12 years, decided not to seek re-election. While we were disappointed by Mike's departure from the board, we understand his desire to have more time to spend traveling and with his family.

We had just one individual submit a petition to run for the seat. Prior to the annual meeting, that candidate withdrew his name after uncertainties arose concerning whether he met the cooperative's residency requirement. As a result, the Zone 5 seat remains vacant.

After reviewing the situation, the Credentials & Election Committee, a six-member committee comprised of cooperative members, recommended that a special election be held to fill


the seat. In this issue, you will find the call for petitions from eligible members in Zone 5 interested in serving on the Claverack board.

The Credentials & Election Committee plays an important role in the election of directors. This group determines eligibility of candidates, oversees the entire election process and acts as tellers by counting the ballots. We appreciate the committee's efforts ensuring a fair and transparent election is held each year.

Routinely we receive a couple of questions from members concerning the election. One deals with how members can run for a board seat. Any eligible member can appear on the ballot provided they submit a petition with the signatures of 15 members from the zone up for election.

Additional information regarding qualifications can be found in our bylaws or by contacting our office. The schedule for our 2019 election for zones 7, 8 and 9 will be published in the January issue of *Penn Lines*.

The other question we hear is why we go forward with balloting if the election is uncontested. Our overall goal is a fair and transparent process for the election of directors. We want you to see the names and qualifications of those who serve on our board. Further, we want our members to be aware of and engaged in the process.

We are fortunate to have a group of knowledgeable and committed board members who value doing the right thing. We thank them and all who participated in the election process. 

Claverack highlights commitment to members at annual meeting

By Jeff Fetzer

THREATENING skies and a brief downpour didn't deter Claverack members from pouring into Elk Lake High School July 17 for the co-op's 81st annual meeting.

More than 900 co-op members and guests turned out for the Tuesday evening affair to enjoy barbecued chicken dinners, take in a few songs and an informative talk by local historian and musician Van Wagner of Danville, and hear updates about their electric co-op.

Members learned during the business portion of the meeting that two incumbent directors, Gary L. Hennip of Rome and James E. Luce of Laceyville, were unanimously re-elected to the co-op board of directors, representing Zones 4 and 6, respectively.

In announcing the election results, co-op attorney Robert Chappell noted that the Zone 5 director seat would remain open even though it had been among three zones slated for election. The attorney explained that the lone candidate for the Zone 5 post, Travis J. Long of Montrose, had withdrawn his petition for candidacy due to uncertainty about whether he met Claverack's residency requirement.

"It was uncertain whether Mr. Long met the technical requirements of the one-year prior residency," Chappell



PHOTOS BY JEFF FETZER

ON BOARD: Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative President and CEO Bobbi Kilmer congratulates James E. Luce of Laceyville, left, and Gary L. Hennip of Rome following their re-election to the board of directors during the cooperative's July 17 annual meeting at Elk Lake High School.

said. "To avoid any potential conflict or dispute, Mr. Long chose to withdraw his petition of candidacy."

The Zone 5 seat had been held for the past 12 years by Michael J. Coleman of Montrose, who did not seek re-election.

A special election for the open seat will take place later this year, and details about the process of petitioning for candidacy appear on page 12d.

The successful candidate for the director post will join a diverse group

of men and women who "work well together in supporting the best interests of the cooperative," said board Chairman James E. Luce of Laceyville during his annual chairman's report.

"We are fortunate that our cooperative is in an excellent position, and we are working hard to keep it that way," Luce said, touting accomplishments including eight consecutive years in which the cooperative has returned a total of over \$9 million in capital credits to members.

Luce, who has served on the nine-member board since 2003, said the board strives to work closely with management to implement policies that reflect the best interests of the membership.

During her address to members, Claverack President & CEO Bobbi Kilmer said the board and management team focuses on four key areas — financial performance, safety, reliability and member satisfaction — as part of the cooperative's commitment to providing affordable, reliable electric service to members.

"By carefully balancing our rates, capital credits retirements and expenses, our financial ratios are strong, our rates have been stable for a number of



CHOW TIME: Co-op consumer-members lineup for their barbecued chicken dinners during the 2018 annual meeting. Staff with the Elk Lake School District and the Susquehanna County Career & Technology Center served approximately 900 dinners during the course of the evening.



MAPPING SOLUTIONS: Claverack member Wilham Weidner discusses tree issues with the co-op's director of engineering, Steve Allabaugh, while looking over a map of Weidner's property in the Vernon area.



COLLEGE CONNECTION: Claverack member May Belle Golis of Montrose chats with Claverack President & CEO Bobbi Kilmer in the exhibit area prior to the start of the annual meeting. Golis, wearing her Mansfield University Alumni cap, made an immediate connection with Kilmer, a graduate of Mansfield University who chairs the university's Council of Trustees.

years, and we've been able to return millions of dollars back to our members through capital credits," she said.

She noted that despite having a much lower consumer density than its neighboring investor-owned utility, Claverack's rates remain very competitive. She noted that for consumers using 600 kilowatts of electricity, there's

about only a \$1 difference between Claverack and Penelec.

Kilmer also stressed the cooperative's commitment to the safety of its employees, members and the community in general.

"Because we're committed to making sure that each of our employees goes home safely every day, we make sure that we don't sacrifice safety by using inferior materials or unsafe work practices, even if it costs more or takes longer to get the job done," she said.

The co-op's culture of safety has been yielding dividends, she said, most notably that the Claverack employees worked 84,000 hours in 2017 and did not have a single OSHA-reportable accident.

Kilmer said the cooperative's efforts to improve reliability include boosting spending for right-of-way maintenance in recent years to help curb the impact of diseased trees throughout the co-op territory. She noted that to better manage the co-op right-of-way program, Claverack has created a new position for a full-time utility forester to guide vegetation management activities complicated by the emerald ash borer and other forest pests that have been ravaging trees throughout northern Pennsylvania.

detailed some of the major obstacles loggers and farmers had to overcome in order to move massive white pine logs felled from area mountainsides to the Susquehanna River and ultimately to market in Maryland. He compared the 19th century loggers' determination to overcome obstacles to the challenges Claverack's forefathers encountered as they sought to bring electricity to rural northeastern Pennsylvania in the 1930s.

In each case, he said, "They saw opportunities and obstacles, and they didn't let the obstacles get in the way."

During a reorganizational meeting



STARTING THEM EARLY: 15-month-old Abel Rigdon holds a Co-ops Vote bumper sticker as his grandfather, Claverack member David Rigdon of Tunkhannock, goes through the annual meeting registration line.



TICKET TRANSFER: Ed and Jeanette Wulff, co-op consumer-members from Nicholson, receive their meal tickets and goodie bag from co-op employee Kylie Slater at the annual meeting registration table.



MAKING MUSICAL HISTORY: Van Wagner sings a song celebrating the region's lumber heritage following his keynote speech on the white pine raft era on the Susquehanna River during Claverack's 81st Annual Meeting at the Elk Lake High School. Wagner, an environmental science teacher with the Lewisburg School District, travels throughout the state sharing his love of local history through his original songs.

Rural voices

Guest speaker Van Wagner, a musical historian from Danville, spoke on the white pine rafting era of northcentral and northeastern Pennsylvania in the early 1800s.

Wagner, who teaches environmental science at Lewisburg High School,

immediately following the annual meeting, Luce was re-elected board chairman, Charles R. Bullock of Friendsville was elected vice chairman, Steven T. Sliwinski of Troy was re-elected board secretary/treasurer, and Danise Fairchild of Towanda was re-elected vice secretary/treasurer. 🌟

Candidates sought for Zone 5 special election

CLAVERRACK will conduct a special election to fill a vacant position on the cooperative's board of directors.

The cooperative is accepting nominating petitions from members who reside in Zone 5 and are interested in serving as a Claverack director.

The Zone 5 seat had been held by Michael J. Coleman of Montrose, who chose not to seek re-election when his three-year term expired in July.

The cooperative traditionally seats three of its nine board positions at its annual meeting each July. There was one announced candidate for the Zone 5 director seat vacated by Coleman; however, the nominee withdrew his petition for candidacy prior to the annual meeting due to uncertainty about whether he had met the cooperative's one-year-prior-residency requirement.

As a result, the Zone 5 seat remains vacant. Candidate petitions will be accepted until Nov. 2, 2018, for the Zone 5 director seat. Once candidates have been approved by the cooperative's Credentials & Election Committee, ballots will be mailed to the entire cooperative membership.

To be eligible for director candidacy,

the candidate must meet all guidelines listed in the cooperative's bylaws, which may be viewed online by visiting www.claverack.com. A copy of the bylaws can also be obtained by contacting the cooperative or visiting the co-op's Wysox office.

The candidate must be a Claverack member and a bona-fide resident of Zone 5, which encompasses Warren Township in Bradford County, and Apolacon, Choconut, Forest Lake, Jessup, Middletown, and Rush townships in Susquehanna County.

Director candidates cannot be employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or business, or be a close relative of a Claverack employee or board member.

Election Procedures

Residential members from Zone 5 interested in running for the open position on the cooperative's board of directors must be nominated by a petition signed by at least 15 members residing in the candidate's respective zone.

Petitions and further instructions are available by contacting Annette Bender

at the Claverack office at 1-800-326-9799 or 570-265-2167 or by email at mail@claverack.com.

Petitions must be received by Friday, Nov. 2, 2018, in order to be considered. The election will be conducted via mail-in ballots; therefore, adequate time is needed for the petitions to be received and reviewed by the Credentials and Election Committee.

Qualified candidates will also be asked to submit a brief biography, which will be included with the official ballot and published in *Penn Lines*. ☀

Even out your payments with Levelized Billing

You can avoid large fluctuations in your electric bill from month to month by participating in Claverack's Levelized Billing plan.

The program allows you to level out your monthly payments throughout the year.

Levelized Billing is available to members with at least one year of electric use, provided they have fewer than two late payments in the prior 12 months.

This plan is particularly helpful to members with electric heating or central air conditioning systems, since their electric bills tend to increase significantly during the heating and cooling seasons. It's also convenient for those on fixed incomes.

If you are interested in a levelized billing plan, please call the financial services department at 1-800-326-9799.

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

Signing up for SmartHub is easy. Visit our website, www.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.

