

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Jeff Fetzer, Local Pages Editor

Guest Column



An honor to serve

By Brian Zeidner, *Director of Member Services*

GROWING UP in a rural area, I could not wait to leave home. My parents diligently instilled morals, motivation, integrity, and a strong work ethic in me, but by the time I graduated from high school I was ready for independence and joined the U.S. Air Force at 17.

Early in my military experience someone asked, “Why are you here?” There can be many answers: to get an education, to see the world, to have a steady paycheck, to learn a trade. But there is only one truly good answer: to serve my country.

For a hard-working farm kid, the physical requirements and technical training were not especially difficult. My eight years of service in the finest air force in the world was very positive. I did all the things I noted above — and more.

However, as good as the experience was, it was not always fun. Sometimes it was lonely, like a 12-month unaccompanied tour to South Korea. Sometimes it was gut-wrenching, like a recovery mission in a desert for the crew of an aircraft that lost a wing midflight. But it was always service with honor.

When I came to work for Claverack in 2005 to help meet the needs of our membership in the member services department, I felt like I had

re-enlisted. There are some startling similarities. The co-op is a first-class organization, committed to its mission. It provides a lot for cooperative employees, but also expects hard work and excellence from them. And, above all, it expects that employees will serve the needs of the membership.

Much like my military service, some days at Claverack are not much fun. Talking with hundreds of frustrated members on day two of a widespread power outage is difficult. Working with upset members who are being disconnected for non-payment also makes for hard days.

But the good days make up for it. Watching an engaged class of fourth graders comprehend the dangers of electricity during our safety presentation is an uplifting experience. Helping a member find a continuously running well pump while doing a high-bill investigation is satisfying. And representing your cooperative to our communities, schools, civic and trade organizations, and elected representatives is a privilege.

Living in a rural area and leading the member services department of your electric cooperative is an opportunity many will never have. Please know that regardless of the uniform — dress blues or the cooperative-logoed shirt — I still consider it an honor to serve. ☀

Co-op's veteran employees on a mission to serve

By Jeff Fetzer

THEY joined the military for a variety of reasons — to fight the enemy, to see the world, to serve their country. Now these Claverack employees, veterans of the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines, share a common mission of service to the cooperative membership.

“In honor of Veterans Day on Nov. 11, we would like to salute and thank our veteran Claverack employees for their service to the nation and for the work they do on behalf of co-op members, day in and day out,” says Steve Allabaugh, Claverack president & CEO.

Claverack counts five military veterans among its employee ranks. They are:

Eric Henry; apprentice lineman — U.S. Army, 2012-2019;

Paul Huffman; journeyman lineman — U.S. Army, 2006-2009;

Brian Zeidner; director of member services — U.S. Air Force, 1987-1995;

Greg Wilcox; journeyman lineman — U.S. Navy, 1988-1992; and

Neal Snyder; purchasing supervisor — U.S. Marine Corps, 1984-1988.

Henry, Claverack's newest veteran recruit, joined the cooperative team in 2020, and says his eight years in the infantry, which included tours in Afghanistan, Kuwait and South Korea, prepared him well for the challenges of working on a co-op line crew, especially during storm restoration work.

“The main thing it probably helps me with is dealing with the long hours,” he says. “If we have outages or storms, the long hours aren't a struggle. You just do what you've got to do to get the job done.

“It's very similar to the military,” he continues. “It doesn't matter how long it takes, doesn't matter the weather conditions, you don't stop until you're done. When we get outages, it's always about getting those members back on as fast as you can.”

The Susquehanna County native didn't follow the typical timeline for military service. After graduating from Montrose High School in 2005, Henry



CO-OP VETS: Four of the five military veterans employed by Claverack stand outside the co-op's headquarters in Wysox. They are, from left: Neal Snyder, U.S. Marine Corps; Greg Wilcox, U.S. Navy; Eric Henry, U.S. Army; and Brian Zeidner, U.S. Air Force. Absent from photo is Army veteran Paul Huffman, who served from 2006 to 2009.

moved to Rochester, N.Y., worked construction, met his wife, Danielle, and had a child before deciding to join the Army in 2012.

“It's something that I always wanted to do,” he says. “I wanted to serve my country and was going to join the Marines right out of high school, but my parents kind of talked me out of it.”

Seven years later, with the blessing of his wife, Henry enlisted and headed to Fort Knox, Kentucky, for basic training. He re-enlisted three times before deciding to call it a career in 2019.

“My initial intent was to do the 20 years and retire from the military,” he says. “I really enjoyed the deployments, but when I got out, it was becoming more of a garrison army, and that just wasn't for me. Plus having three kids and a family kind of persuaded my decision to get out and pursue a different career.”

Henry decided to seek a career in linework because he liked the idea of working outdoors with a small team of co-workers. Three months after separating from military service, he traveled to Trenton, Ga., to attend the Southeast Lineman Training Center. He was hired as an apprentice lineman assigned to the co-op's Montrose District

following graduation from the school last year.

Like Henry, Claverack's purchasing supervisor, Snyder, was gung ho about joining the Marine Corps upon graduation from Northeast Bradford High



IN REMEMBRANCE: Claverack apprentice lineman Eric Henry reflects on his service in the U.S. Army. Henry wears a bracelet in remembrance of Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Lacey, a member of Henry's unit who was killed in 2014 by a rocket propelled grenade in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan.

SERVING OUR COUNTRY



PVT. NEIL SNYDER

Pvt. Neil Snyder graduated from U.S. Marine Corps basic training at Parris Island on Sept. 19. On Sept. 30, he reported to Camp Lejeune for schooling in the mechanical-electrical field.

READY TO SERVE: A newspaper clipping announces Neal Snyder's graduation from U.S. Marine Corps basic training at Parris Island in 1988.

School. Unlike Henry, Snyder's father, an Army veteran, encouraged him to do so.

"My dad thought it was a good idea that I go in the military," says Snyder, grinning. "He thought maybe I needed a little discipline."

Was he right? "Oh yeah. Absolutely."

Service in the Marine Corps also gave Snyder the opportunity to travel, one of the reasons he signed up for service.

"I had a great experience in the military," he says. "I got to travel and meet a lot of great people, and it gave me the chance to get out of my bubble and learn what life is really about outside of Bradford County."

After finishing basic training and engineers school for heavy equipment repair, Snyder was stationed at Camp Pendleton in California for three years and Okinawa, Japan, for a year. During his service career, he also spent time in the Philippines, Egypt and Hawaii.

While at Camp Pendleton, Snyder worked in an electric generation shop, where he was involved with repairs and

maintenance on diesel-powered electric generators. Because it was a small shop of about 20 service members, Snyder was sometimes involved with linework at the plant, which sparked an interest in seeking a career with an electric utility after leaving the Marines in 1988.

Thirteen years later, Snyder got his wish when he accepted an apprentice lineman position with Claverack's Wysox District.

Snyder says he believes his service in the Marine Corps helped him get his foot in the door at Claverack.

"It tells an employer that you at least have discipline, because you're not going to last in the Marine Corps without some sort of discipline," he says. "So the military experience served me well throughout life, absolutely."

After three years of linework, a medical condition prevented him from obtaining the medical card needed to accompany his commercial driver's license (CDL), so he decided to transfer to the cooperative's engineering department as a field engineer and was later promoted to purchasing supervisor.

"You have to be pretty disciplined in this job to make sure that all the crews have what they need to work and to keep this company rolling," he says of his current duties.



SETTING SAIL: Claverack journeyman lineman Greg Wilcox served in the U.S. Navy from 1988 to 1992.

Claverack journeyman lineman Huffman says serving as a 19 Delta Cavalry scout with the U.S. Army during the Iraq War gave him an edge over other candidates for the job when he interviewed for an apprentice lineman position with the co-op in 2009.

"Having the military experience, having gone to war, builds a good background for employment," he says. "Other than that and being a good laborer, I didn't have much to offer" in terms of linework experience.

Huffman, whose unit was deployed for 16 months in the Diyala Province of eastern Iraq, as well as the city of Mosul in northern Iraq from 2007-2008, says he enlisted during war time with a desire to serve on the front line of battle.

"I remembered 9/11 vividly," says Huffman, who was a sophomore at Towanda High School on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, when al-Qaida, a militant Islamist terrorist group, conducted four coordinated attacks against the United States. "I wanted to go fight to protect us from further attacks and that kind of terrorism. I felt like we needed to be over there to keep them from coming here again."

Huffman got what he signed up for. During his extended deployment in Iraq, he says his unit was subject to daily mortar attacks and small arms engagements.

He suffered a concussion when the MRAP (Mine Resistant Ambush-Protected) vehicle that he was traveling in was destroyed by an improvised explosive device.

His military experience, he says, made him a better person.

"It definitely made me grow up and gave me a better understanding of life in general," says Huffman, whose unit lost 11 members during his deployment. "You don't take things for granted."

The experience also prepared him physically and mentally for his post-military career as an electric lineman.

"It gave me the edge right in the beginning to push hard and not complain," he says. "If you're out working in horrible weather and doing your thing during a big outage, sometimes it wears

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Co-op's veteran employees

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on you. I can always compare that to some of the rough times I had in the military and chalk it off as, "Well, it ain't that bad."

He says he was attracted to linework for some of the same reasons he sought to be on the front line during a wartime.

"I am a bit of an adrenaline junkie," he admits. "The climbing part of linework is what really intrigued me. I



PROUD GRADUATE: U.S. Air Force veteran Brian Zeidner, Claverack's director of member services, smiles during his Airman Leadership School graduation ceremony.

thought it sounded like a cool job."

Huffman says he also liked the idea of working with the co-op's small, five- to six-man line crews.

"We are working in small groups, just like a platoon," says Huffman, who is assigned to the co-op's Montrose line crew. "We all lean on each other to get tasks done and work together in small groups as a team."

For Claverack's Director of Member Services Brian Zeidner, serving eight years in the U.S. Air Force was the

perfect training ground for his career at Claverack, which began when he was hired as a member services representative in 2005.

Zeidner says a desire for independence and a chance to see the world prompted him to enlist in the service during his senior year of high school in Morrisville, N.Y., in 1987. He chose the Air Force, he says, because he was interested in a branch of service that placed an emphasis on training and personal development, as well as a balance of work and life.

After undergoing technical training as a heavy construction equipment operator, Zeidner was assigned to a civil engineering squadron at Pease Air Force Base in New Hampshire and then to a RED HORSE (Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer) squadron, a unit responsible for the construction of runways, towers and other large building projects.

During his military career, he worked for the headquarters of the Strategic Air Command as a rapid runway repair instructor at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana and was part of a water-well drilling team during a 12-month deployment to Osan Air Base in South Korea. He also spent four months on a temporary duty assignment at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska, where he assisted with the construction of a dispatch building for aircraft fuel trucks during work hours and did a lot of fishing and sightseeing when not on duty.

"For a country farm kid who loved all things with a motor, I couldn't have picked a better job for myself," says Zeidner, who characterized his military experience as "outstanding."

During his time in the service, Zeidner earned an associate degree in construc-



TOUR OF SERVICE: Paul Huffman, bottom row, second from left, poses with members of his Army unit in Diyala Province, Iraq, in 2007. The co-op journeyman lineman served as a 19 Delta Cavalry scout during the Iraq War.

tion technology through the Community College of the Air Force, which has aided him throughout his post-military career.

He notes that as director of the cooperative's member services department, he is tasked with overseeing the cooperative's buildings and grounds, as well as helping members find the source of unexpectedly high electric consumption within the home.

"My Air Force experience and educational background helps me provide those services to our members," he says. "The co-op has an expectation that employees will serve the needs of the membership, and that expectation really parallels what the Air Force expected from its service members."

For more about Zeidner's commitment to service, please check out his column on page 14a of this issue of *Penn Lines*.

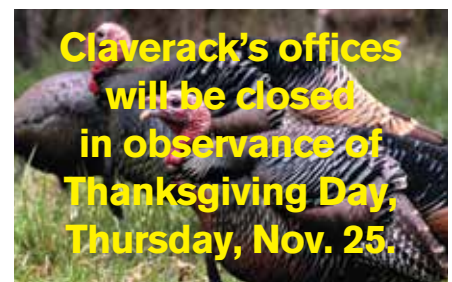
"My military experience helped shape me to become who I am today," he says. "And that mindset of service has enabled me to have a lot of opportunities with really great organizations that have enriched my life." 🌞

Claverack to conduct member survey this month

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 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.



All About Eve

Charging costs, part II – fast chargers

By Brian Zeidner

Director of Member Services

LAST MONTH, we shared information about charging Eve, the nickname given to our electric car. We discussed Level 2 (240-volt) charging and Level 1 (120-volt) charging, both of which use about \$8 of electricity (at Claverack rates) to fully charge Eve if the batteries are depleted and take from eight to 48 hours, respectively.

But many members have asked, “How do I charge if I take an electric vehicle (EV) on a long trip?” To recharge an EV in a short period of time, you will need to use a Level 3 charger. Sometimes called a DC fast charger or a super charger, Level 3 chargers replenish the batteries of your EV quickly while you wait.

Level 3 chargers are typically found in rest areas along traffic corridors like Interstate 81 or the Pennsylvania Turnpike. They can also be found at some traditional gas stations, restaurants, hotels and sometimes at shopping centers. In our region, there are Level 3 chargers in Mansfield and Williamsport at Sheetz convenience stores, in the Binghamton area at a restaurant and at the shopping area on Montage Mountain in Scranton. Additional charging networks are being installed throughout the country.

When we tested the Level 3 charging option, we discovered several things you should know, including charge times, charge levels, costs, and while-you-wait activities.

We found Level 3 charging was fast, giving us about 200 miles of range in about 20 minutes. The charge level will vary somewhat depending on the type of fast charger available to you. Some Level 3 chargers are brand specific and charge faster, like the Tesla Super Chargers. Some are more generic, like the ChargePoint products.

Fast charging does not “top off” the batteries. Because of the rate of charge

and to avoid damage to your batteries, these charging options usually only charge to 80% of the full battery capacity. So you’ll have to plan your fill-ups accordingly when traveling.

Like the price of gas, costs vary. As we tested these fast chargers with our EV, we found the electricity cost per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to be two to three times higher than your current Claverack rates. Although we could fully charge for \$8 at the office, we found that partial (up to 80%) charging using a fast charger often costs \$15 to \$25.

What did we do while waiting for the car to charge? We used the restroom, got a coffee, stretched our legs and checked

our messages, which made the 20-minute wait go quickly. It seemed the gas-purchasing customers spent a similar amount of time to fuel up and take these breaks while on a long-distance trip.

We should also note the technology built into our electric vehicle allows us to program a destination into the GPS and shows all the available charging options along the way, specifically the Level 3 chargers. The car even provides low-charge warnings and strenuously tries to reroute us to the nearest charger when critically low on range. We have discovered that by downloading the applicable apps, our cellphones also have charging details. ☀

Operation Round-Up

MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS



Financial hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic have caused many cooperative families to struggle keeping 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 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. The average yearly donation is \$6.

CAN YOU SPARE MORE THAN CHANGE?

If you’d like to help your fellow members even more during this unprecedented time of financial uncertainty, we have created additional options for you to contribute more than the traditional round-up amount.

Members can add an extra dollar amount to their monthly donation. Simply enter the even dollar amount that you would like to add to the Round-Up form that can be found on our website, claverack.com, or call our office and ask your member service representative to make the change for you. Your bill will reflect the total amount donated each month.

If you would prefer to make a one-time donation to Operation Round-Up, that option is also available. Enter the one-time amount in the associated field on our online Round-Up form, and we will add that to your account. With the next bill you receive, the amount of your donation will be added to the total amount due, and you will see it listed as “Roundup Amt.”

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

If you would like to help others, Operation Round-Up is an easy way to do so.

Sign up today to start helping others by calling us at 800-326-9799, or sign up through the Claverack website by clicking on Operation Round-Up under the “Your Bill” drop-down menu at the top of the screen.