

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Claverack REC

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President & CEO

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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



Our broadband revolution begins

By Steve Allabaugh

MY WIFE Angie and I have three children. We are super proud of them, and, like many other parents and grandparents, we realize they represent the future — not only our family's future, but also the future of our area.

Unfortunately, the digital divide that separates rural areas from our more urban communities makes it increasingly less likely that the next generation will wish to raise their families in rural areas like ours that lack high-speed internet service.

My son, Derek, an engineer, has mostly worked remotely via the internet since the beginning of the pandemic. He can't work from my home, or even from my neighborhood, because our internet connections are not fast or reliable enough.

My daughter Megan, a college student, drove to McDonald's to use its Wi-Fi during the pandemic so she could attend online nursing classes. My youngest daughter, Amanda, often wasn't able to Zoom into her junior high class when school went remote during the pandemic.

I struggled to do my job as director of engineering when we transitioned to a partial work-from-home status early in the pandemic. Many of our members have shared similar stories of the barriers they face due to lack of access to adequate broadband service. It is no longer a nicety; it's a necessity.

Unless something is done to improve access to adequate broadband in our area, more and more of the next generation will choose to live else-

where. With the launch of Revolution Broadband, the name we have selected for our high-speed internet service, we at Claverack are doing something to bridge the digital divide for local communities that lack adequate internet service. (Please check out the article announcing the launch of Revolution Broadband on the following page of *Penn Lines*.)

From the start, our board and management's goal has been twofold: to ensure all Claverack members who don't already have access to affordable high-speed broadband can get access and to construct a fiber-optic-based system that will help us build a truly smart electrical grid.

The challenge is the high cost to design, purchase, install and operate the fiber-optic lines and equipment in our rural area, where we have only six members for every mile of Claverack line.

Without financial support, the costs are simply too high to be able to offer broadband service at a fair price. To get over this hurdle and help us begin to achieve our goal, we were able to secure grant funding through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). This initial FCC grant will help us build about 1,500 miles of fiber-optic line that will make high-speed internet available to about 8,500 homes and businesses in our area.

The funding we have received so far doesn't enable us to provide broadband
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BRINGING FIBER INTERNET INTO OUR COMMUNITY

Claverack launches Revolution Broadband

Since the 1930s, Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative has dedicated itself to serving the community, offering exceptional service delivered by people you can count on to be there for you.

Today—almost 100 years later—reliable high-speed internet is vital to our lives. More than ever, we depend on the internet to work, connect with family and friends, and live stream our favorite television shows and sporting events. The internet is becoming as important to our daily lives as electricity, and the well-being of our community is tied to the availability of broadband.

Claverack REC always wants to improve and innovate, and—in the process—make our region more livable for you, your friends, and your family. That's why the next logical step in our evolution as a company is making sure our rural areas have access to high-speed broadband internet. To make this possible, we have secured federal funding that will enable your electric co-op to construct a network consisting of about 1,500 miles of fiber-optic lines in Bradford, Susquehanna and Wyoming counties.

But the network is just the beginning. We established Claverack Communications as an entity to serve as Claverack REC's broadband subsidiary, and then—working with Pivot, a marketing and customer experience company—we worked to bring our fiber network to life and develop our new brand: Revolution Broadband.

REVOLUTION BROADBAND

The three lines in the Revolution Broadband logo (which look like streams of data) symbolize three strands representing our company, our customers, and our shared connection to the world. The warm green color represents the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania.

Why Revolution? The word describes just how important we believe broadband is in the lives of the people we serve. The internet is revolutionary technology, allowing us to have access to untold information and convenience at our fingertips. At the same time, internet service that is accessible, easy, and reliable in rural areas has also become revolutionary, as service is often too slow, too expensive, or unreliable. Broadband internet delivered via a fiber-optic network is considered future-proof technology, meaning it will serve your needs for years to come. Our high-speed internet service will be as good or better than what is available in metropolitan areas. It's a revolution in broadband internet and will bridge the rural digital divide.

And it's all for you—the people of Northeastern Pennsylvania, who are our neighbors and our friends. Serving you is a responsibility we value and a privilege we cherish.

As we move toward offering broadband fiber internet, here's what you can expect: In 2022, our Phase I work will involve a six- to nine-month fiber network buildout, with construction starting first in our Lime Hill Substation area this spring and ending the year in our Herrick Substation area. During this phase, 300 miles of fiber-optic cables will be installed, and when it's done more than 2,000 Claverack REC members will have access to Revolution Broadband. The first connection of internet service will begin before the end of the year.

Watch for information about how to sign up for services. Revolution Broadband is on the way, and we hope you'll join us. As always, thank you for being a Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative member and for being the reason we strive to improve and innovate.

Image Credit: Nicholas A. Tonelli

All About Eve

The positives and negatives of EV batteries

By Brian Zeidner

Director of Member Services

BATTERIES are a crucial component of an electric vehicle (EV), so I want to try to address some of the questions we frequently hear concerning the batteries that power an EV.

Most EVs utilize lithium-ion batteries, the same type of batteries used to run most modern cordless tools. These differ from the lead-acid battery used to start the engine of your gas-powered vehicle and the dry cell batteries used in flashlights, which commonly come in sizes from AAA to D.

A couple of years ago, I had the opportunity to tour the Tesla Gigafactory in Sparks, Nevada. I belong to an advisory group for energy resources that arranged the learning opportunity. The technology and robotics in the plant were impressive, but the battery construction was especially fascinating.

Individually, the Tesla-manufactured lithium-ion batteries are about the size of a C dry cell battery. The batteries are connected in a manner that reminded

me of a machine-gun belt of ammunition. These bandoliers of batteries are then installed into a metal box that looked like a large ammunition can.

Several of these boxes are then assembled into the bottom of the EV during manufacturing. The batteries are configured to provide 48 volts for the operation of the electric drive motors and for the vehicle's electronic components.

Many members have asked me how far an EV will go before the batteries need to be replaced. As explained at the Tesla facility, the battery system is designed so that an individual battery can fail without impacting the entire battery pack. Tesla claims its battery packs are designed to last more than 300,000 miles. The expectation is the batteries will last 10 to 15 years.

Based on some internet research, I found several EV owners claiming to have driven hundreds of thousands of miles on their original batteries. Further research indicates that replacing an EV's battery would cost thousands of dollars, with some predictions

as high as \$20,000.

Many experts concur that battery longevity depends on how the vehicle is used, including driving habits, weather, battery depletion levels and charging practices.

Members have also questioned the use of rare earth metals, such as cobalt and lithium, which are often used in manufacturing certain types of batteries. Some manufacturers have transitioned to limited or no use of these types of metals in their products.

Additionally, members have asked what happens to dead batteries after they are replaced? There is currently a disposal issue with EV batteries, but it's exciting to note that the Argonne National Lab is doing great work regarding the recycling of these batteries.

Given the advancements in electric vehicle technology in the past five years, I believe battery longevity and recycling issues are likely to be solved soon. I also think range will increase for many models, and an extensive national network of chargers will continue to be deployed. ❁

From the President & CEO

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service to all of our unserved and underserved members, but it's a great start. We know some members will be disappointed they are not included in the initially funded areas of our fiber project. Though it may take time, we plan to ultimately expand our broadband service territory beyond the designated areas where the FCC funding requires us to serve.

We are exploring additional funding opportunities through various agencies, including the USDA Reconnect program, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, the newly formed Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority and our local counties and municipalities.

While we are looking for every funding source available, we'll consider any other creative means, such as crowdsourcing and community funding to financially help us make it possible to reach all of our members lacking adequate broadband access. It's that important to us and our area.

We will also continue advocating for accurate data and revised broadband service maps so all unserved and underserved locations are accurately identified.

We have been working behind the scenes for months to get ready to launch our fiber broadband service, and we are nearly there. We will start construction on our first 300 miles of fiber-optic cable beginning in our Lime Hill Substation area this summer and will progress to our Herrick Substation

area later this year.

We have identified the homes and businesses we will be passing in our first-year build and will be reaching out to those members and customers directly. Our electronic equipment is currently being installed at our headquarters, and we are feverishly working to get our service and support systems ready to serve our first customers. Be sure to watch for future updates and the launch of our new website, expected in June.

There has been a lot of work and anticipation, and I can speak for all of us at Claverack in saying that we cannot wait to begin providing unparalleled internet speed and reliability at an affordable cost to our members.

Let the broadband revolution begin! ❁

Unwanted signs of spring

SPRING signals the return of many splendid things — warm weather, blossoming flowers, baseball and barbecues, to name a few — but one unwelcome sign of the season is the return of handbills and flyers on utility poles.

Attaching yard sale signs, election posters, home security sensors, lights, cameras, satellite receivers or any other equipment to utility poles is not only unsightly, it creates safety concerns for our lineworkers — and it's illegal.

Claverack's line crews are required to climb up and down utility poles in all kinds of weather, day and night. Anything nailed, stapled, tacked or screwed into utility poles creates a potential danger to our workers.

The safety of our lineworkers depends upon their ability to dig into poles with their climbing hooks. Nails and other metal fasteners can cause workers to slip while climbing, and climbers or boots may get caught on



UTILITY POLES ARE NOT BULLETIN BOARDS

Think before you post that sign!

Staples, nails and tacks used to hang signs and fliers create dangerous obstacles for electric lineworkers.

Their jobs are dangerous enough – help us keep them safe!



the fasteners, causing falls.

In addition, protruding nails, screws and staples can cause cuts and other injuries to workers, as well as damage clothes or protective gear.

Please don't break the law or endanger co-op lineworkers by attaching anything to power poles. Their jobs are dangerous enough — help us keep them safe! ❁

Co-op offers scholarship to MU students

Applications are being accepted for a \$1,000 scholarship that is available for the 2022-2023 academic year to a Mansfield University student who is a Claverack member or dependent of a member.

To be eligible for consideration, students must:

- ▶ be enrolled full-time at Mansfield University
- ▶ demonstrate financial need
- ▶ be a member or dependent of a member of Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative
- ▶ demonstrate the highest traits of leadership, citizenship and character.

Students can also apply online by visiting our homepage, claverack.com, and clicking on "Scholarships" under the "Your Community" drop-down menu at the top of the screen.

Claverack endowed the scholarship fund at Mansfield University in 2000, with a goal of providing financial assistance to any Claverack member or dependent of a member pursuing a degree at the university.

A member of the State System of Higher Education, Mansfield University attracts many students from throughout the cooperative's service territory.

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 member services department at 800-326-9799.

**Claverack REC will be closed
Monday, May 30,
in observance of Memorial Day.**