

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Claverack REC

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

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Guest Column



Proud to be part of the co-op team

By Nick Berger, *Director of Engineering and Operations*

I AM EXCITED to be part of the Claverack REC team and grateful for the opportunity to serve the co-op membership as director of engineering and operations.

Prior to joining Claverack in June, I had worked for Pioneer Rural Electric Cooperative in Ohio as the director of operations and safety. Over the past 20 years, I have been involved in some incredible projects and have had the opportunity to work with some wonderful people. After just a few months in my new position, I can already tell Claverack will offer me the same level of rewarding experiences.


Mother Nature was quick to welcome me to Pennsylvania. The extreme weather this summer has been relentless. With multiple back-to-back storms since my arrival, our employees have worked long and hard hours to restore outages throughout our service territory. In July alone, we experienced four major weather events that resulted in historic levels of outages. I'd like to thank members for their patience during these outages and offer kudos to the co-op team for their tireless efforts and commitment to safely restoring power to the membership.

We had to utilize our mutual aid network to assist with some of our recent restoration efforts. In the spirit of "cooperation among cooperatives," one of the Seven Cooperative Principles, Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative and Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative sent line crews to help us follow these summer storms. In addition,

BNF Powerline, a utility contractor, also provided several crews to assist us in power restoration efforts. These crews helped to significantly reduce the outage times for our members.

Major events emphasize the importance of our preventative maintenance programs. Our pole inspection/replacement program, right-of-way maintenance, line upgrades, and substation and device inspections all play a very important part in our system reliability. This past year, Claverack piloted a new technology using drones to inspect our overhead lines. This technology provides an enhanced visual of our poles to identify potential issues. It also dramatically reduces the amount of time it takes to inspect overhead lines.

Major events can also create potentially hazardous conditions and situations. The safety of our employees and members is always of the highest importance. I am happy to report we had no accidents or injuries during any of the major storm events in early summer. I'd also like to remind members to always stay well away from any downed wires they encounter.

Whenever a major event happens, it can be very stressful both for our members and for our employees. The determination, perseverance and teamwork demonstrated by our employees during this challenging period has been amazing. I am proud to be part of this group, and I look forward to taking the next steps to enhance our service to members. 

Claverack member sheds light on plight of monarchs

By Jeff Fetzner

WITH September's arrival comes the departure of one of summer's most beloved insects, as stately monarch butterflies begin their 2,500-mile migration to the mountains of central Mexico.

A few of those orange-and-black beauties may have gotten their wings thanks to the nurturing efforts of Claverack member Betty Booth.

For more than 15 years, Booth has been rearing monarch butterfly caterpillars at her Factoryville-area property.

"Monarchs are just beautiful creatures and important pollinators," says Booth, a former master gardener with the Penn State Cooperative Extension. "Their numbers are decreasing, so I have been trying to help increase the population."

In addition to the satisfaction of releasing 20 to 30 monarchs that she hand-raises each year, the activity gives Booth the opportunity to educate others about the importance of pollinator



BUTTERFLY BOTANY: Claverack member Betty Booth searches for monarch butterfly caterpillars on a milkweed plant growing on her Factoryville-area property.



CATERPILLAR CATCHER: Betty Booth displays monarch caterpillars she collected from milkweed plants in late July. Milkweed is the only food source that the caterpillars consume, and the loss of milkweed habitat across North America is largely blamed for the steep decline in monarch numbers over the past three decades.

insects while also highlighting the plight of the monarch butterfly.

The population of monarchs has fallen an estimated 90% since the 1990s, prompting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the iconic species as a candidate for inclusion under the Endangered Species Act in December 2020.

One of the primary reasons cited for declining monarch numbers is loss of milkweed habitat due to chemical spraying of herbicides on and along farm fields, roadways and utility rights of way. Please note that Claverack's vegetation management practices encourage growth of low-growing pollinator species such as milkweed on its rights of way, according to the co-op's utility forester, Joshua Baublitz. (For addition-

al information, please check out Joshua's article, "Promoting the growth of pollinator habitat," in the August 2019 issue of *Penn Lines*, which can be found on our website at claverack.com.)

Before retiring as a volunteer with the master gardener program, Booth would display containers of monarch caterpillars and chrysalises at the Cooperative Extension's master gardeners' booth at the Wyoming County Fair each September. There, she would educate fairgoers about the butterfly, its life cycle and its dependence on milkweed habit for survival.

"I would also do education with the neighborhood children and adults at my workplace," says Booth, a retired nurse practitioner. "I think the adults

appreciated it more than the children sometimes. The metamorphosis is just such a dramatic change, and people find it very interesting.”

Raising monarchs, Booth says, requires only a container to house the caterpillars — basically a clear plastic container with screened lid — a ready supply of fresh milkweed and a commitment to feeding the insects and cleaning out the caterpillar waste from the container on a daily basis for several weeks in July and early August.

Adult monarchs lay their eggs on the underside of the leaves of milkweed plants, and monarch caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed leaves.

Booth maintains a small patch of milkweed on her property, where she searches for and collects caterpillars to rear and is able to harvest a supply of fresh leaves for food. By rearing the caterpillars in containers housed in her garage, she says the insects are better protected against predation.

“The biggest issue is you have to find fresh leaves for them each day,” she says. “You can’t just collect them and let them sit in a jar.”

Booth says a monarch caterpillar will feed for 10 to 15 days inside the container before climbing to the lid and attaching itself to the screen with a silk thread. Once attached, the pre-pupal



METAMORPHOSIS: A monarch butterfly chrysalis hangs from a container lid screen in Claverack member Betty Booth’s flower garden in late July. An adult monarch butterfly will emerge from the newly formed chrysalis in 9 to 14 days.



PRETTY POLLINATORS: An adult monarch butterfly lights on a flower in Claverack member Betty Booth’s flower bed. Monarchs are pollinator insects that arrive in Pennsylvania during the summer months to reproduce. In September, the iconic butterflies will begin their 2,500-mile migration to the mountains of central Mexico, where they will overwinter.

caterpillar will hang from the screen in a “J” shape before shedding its skin to reveal the chrysalis, a hard green shell that houses the developing pupa. The metamorphosis from pupa to adult butterfly takes 9 to 15 days.

The night before the adult butterfly emerges, the chrysalis turns black and then becomes transparent, giving view to the familiar orange and black wings of the monarch butterfly. Sometime the next day, usually in the morning, the butterfly breaks free of the chrysalis.

“You will see it jiggling around and all of the sudden it becomes a butterfly,” Booth says. “It’s all wet when it emerges, and it hangs there until it dries. Then it starts pumping its wings so they can expand, and then it sits there for a while.”

When the process is finished, Booth says the butterfly will often crawl onto her hand. If it doesn’t fly away, she places it on a flower so it can begin feeding on nectar.

“When it’s ready, it just takes off,” she says. “Sometimes it circles around you before it takes off, and it’s like a bonding experience, almost.”

Booth notes that raising butterflies requires a daily time commitment, but the payoff is witnessing the magic of the butterfly’s emergence from its chrysalis.

“I really enjoy sharing the experience and just seeing the excitement on people’s faces,” she says. “It’s a great thing to be able to see and share.”

Her most memorable monarch moment occurred three years ago during the memorial service for her late husband, Van, at the Tunkhannock United Methodist Church.

“I was hoping and praying I would have a monarch that would hatch during the morning of his service — and one did,” she says.

The service took place on an overcast day, and Booth notes emerging monarchs will not fly off unless the sun is shining.

“It was threatening rain, and I said to the minister, ‘I’m going to go out during the last hymn and see what it looks like, and if it’s cloudy, we’ll just talk about it, but if it’s not, we’ll go outside.’ So when I went outside, there was sun streaming through the clouds, so I said, ‘Let’s go for it.’”

After gathering attendees outside of the church, she coaxed the monarch out of its container and into her hand.

“I had a quartet of men singing, ‘I’ll Fly Away,’” she says, tearing up at the memory. “And it did. It flew up to a tree and then it circled back around me and flew off. It felt like it was divine providence.” ☀

All About Eve

Three options for EV charging

By Lynn Jennings

Member Service Representative

ONE OF the most popular questions that we receive about Eve, our nickname for Claverack's Tesla Model 3 electric vehicle, is "How long does it take you to charge your car?"

That depends on the type of charger being used. There are three different levels of charging, generally known as Levels 1, 2 and 3.

Level 1 refers to charging from a 120-volt regular wall receptacle outlet, which is the same voltage used to power common household items, like a lamp or a cellphone charger. If the car's bat-

teries have been fully depleted, it would take about 57 hours for Eve to reach a full charge at this level. The general rule of thumb is a Level 1 charger will add about five miles of range per hour of charging. This is not ideal, but it is a convenient option to top off the battery overnight or during a planned stay that will involve a few days of down time for the car.

Level 2 charging is a much more efficient and common way to charge, but it requires the use of a 240-volt receptacle, which is the same type of outlet

used for an electric dryer or oven. A Level 2 charger will typically supply a charge of 12 to 60 miles of range per hour, depending on the charger and the vehicle.

Many hotels and bed and breakfasts offer complimentary Level 2 charging at their facilities, since an eight-hour overnight stay can equate to a fully charged vehicle, and most EV owners opt to install a Level 2 charger at their homes.

Level 3 chargers, typically called "fast chargers," are 480-volt charging stations found at fueling stations and rest areas along major interstate highways. Level 3 chargers, which are very expensive to install and require direct connection to the electric grid, can provide an 80% charge in approximately 30 minutes. There is typically a cost involved with "filling up" at a fast-charging station.

Our Tesla Model 3 came with an AC-to-DC charger built into the cord. We installed a 240-volt receptacle at the Claverack office so we could charge the car at work. We also purchased several cord adapters to give us the ability to use other Level 2 chargers, as well as Level 1 receptacles, all using the same cord. We typically fully charge Eve overnight using our Level 2 charging option.

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

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 1-800-326-9799, 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.

