

# 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](mailto:mail@claverack.com)

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

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#### **Office Hours**

Monday through Friday

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

**Jeff Fetzer, CCC, Local Pages Editor**

## From the President & CEO



## Our history, our future

By Bobbi Kilmer

ONE OF my favorite quotes has always been, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Yet sometimes remembering our history with the goal of repeating it can actually be a good thing. As the nation's 30,000 cooperatives celebrate National Cooperative Month this October, it is a great time to take a look back — and a look forward.

Take the history of your electric co-op. Claverack was founded 80 years ago when neighbors worked together to bring electricity to our rural communities here in the northern tier. Big investor-owned power companies thought they couldn't generate enough profit so they bypassed rural areas.

Back then, there were frequent meetings among neighbors to discuss the formation of the cooperative. Once established, annual meetings were the "must-attend" event of the year. The co-op — on behalf of the owner-members — committed to provide the community with electricity.

Fast forward to today — and tomor-

row. Claverack currently serves 16,000 members at approximately 19,000 metered locations in Bradford, Susquehanna, Wyoming and surrounding counties. We have returned \$7.3 million dollars in capital credits to our members since 2011.

We understand the spirit that helped create this co-op must be continually nurtured. While times and technology will continue to change, our commitment to you will not.

Although we started out to provide electricity, our impact — with your support — has grown.

As we continue to look toward the future, you can be confident that we will commit to explore new ways to help our members and our communities through improved reliability and additional services.

Over the years, as we've listened to you and your fellow co-op owner-members, we know that we have to keep pace as technology and consumer tastes evolve. As always, we welcome your participation as we plan for the future. ☀

### Keep in touch with us on Facebook

Looking to keep up with the latest news involving your local electric cooperative? Join us on Facebook.

By "liking" Claverack on Facebook, you will receive updates about power outages, current events and activities involving the cooperative, as well as information about system projects, photos and other items of interest.

To find us on Facebook, simply click on the Facebook icon on our homepage at [www.claverack.com](http://www.claverack.com). You can also view all of our Facebook posts by checking out the Facebook feed on the right side of our home page.

# Something old, something new

## Claverack members convert barns to wedding venues

By Jeff Fetzer

BRIDES-TO-BE in search of rustic wedding venues have breathed new life into old barns throughout the country.

Claverack serves a pair of such barns, Longacre Farm Weddings in Susquehanna and Foggy Hollow in New Albany, that began courting wedding customers last year.

Both businesses are part of a fast-growing segment of the wedding venue industry that blossomed following the housing market collapse and recession of 2008.

The Knot, a multi-platform wedding resource media company that conducts an annual survey of newlyweds called the Real Wedding Survey, didn't even mention barn weddings in its 2008 survey. A year later, however, about 2 percent of newlyweds participating in the survey said they opted for a barn wedding venue. That number had risen to 6 percent by 2014 and jumped to 12 percent in 2016.

### Longacre Farm Weddings

Claverack members Adam and Hollie Longacre, who operate Longacre Farm Weddings at their property in Susquehanna County, didn't set out to begin a barn wedding business when they cleaned out and refurbished their century-old dairy barn in the spring of 2015. Engaged at the time, the couple simply wanted to be married outdoors and



NEWLYWEDS: Alison and Justin Richmond of Estella stroll down the lane toward the barn at Foggy Hollow before their wedding reception on Oct. 8, 2016.

PHOTO BY CARRIE DINGER

couldn't find a suitable location in the area for their special day in September.

"We were looking for a place to do a barn wedding but everything was booked," Adam says, "so we just decided to renovate the barn for our own wedding."

The barn, built in the 1800s and owned by Adam's father, features hand-hewn beams, mortise and tenon construction, and a planked hemlock ceiling reaching 45 feet at its highest point. It served as the Longacre family's dairy barn until 1998 and was used to raise heifers and beef cattle until 2015.

At the time of its conversion for Adam and Hollie's wedding reception, the barn was being used primarily to store hay. The family transported the hay to another storage building, and the Longacres and their family and friends spent months preparing the barn and property for the big day. They removed decades-worth of chaff and dust from the barn, added lighting and vintage wagon wheel chandeliers, installed a new cherry and hemlock

floor capable of accommodating a wedding party of up to 175 people, and constructed a 12-foot bar using local barnwood and tin salvaged from other buildings on the property.

In September 2015, the couple wed in an outdoor ceremony on the 220-acre property, followed by a reception inside the barn. The positive response from those in attendance prompted the newlyweds to consider hosting additional weddings at the facility.

"We thought it would be a good way to keep money coming into the farm," says Adam, who notes he hopes to return the farm to agricultural production in the future.

About three months after exchanging vows on the property, the Longacres decided to give the wedding venue business a go.

Hollie created a website and Facebook page advertising the business, and in August 2016, the couple hosted the first of six weddings at Longacre Farms in their first season of operation. This year, that number grew to nine, as word spread via



PHOTO BY CARRIE DINGER

MARRIAGE VOWS: Jessica Williams and Ian Whinnery exchange vows at the arbor outside of Foggy Hollow on Aug. 5, 2017.



**GATHERING SPOT:** Claverack member Mike Epler stands at the entrance of his Foggy Hollow wedding venue in New Albany, Bradford County. The converted horse barn and an attached 40-by-42-foot pavilion can accommodate about 275 people and is used for weddings, class reunions, graduation parties and other private gatherings.

the internet and word-of-mouth.

Hollie says the rise in popularity of barn and farm weddings stems from a desire among modern couples to wed in bucolic settings where the atmosphere is more informal than traditional weddings.

"It's casual, and it's not where your

can have the ceremony on the yard or under the pavilion. Some will do hay bales (for seating), and we offer a bonfire and wagon rides if the bride and groom want that. Our goal is to make their day a great day."

Mike's wedding venue business grew out of a desire to repurpose a horse barn on his property that was no longer housing animals.

His partner, Susan Hinkson, says the idea to host weddings at the facility came after the vacant horse barn, built in 2008, hosted several family reunions and birthday parties. After one such gathering, one of Susan's daughters suggested that the barn and its attractive surroundings would make an ideal wedding site.

Mike liked the idea, and, following the removal of hay and equipment from the structure, he began a significant remodeling effort that included construction of four bathrooms, a serving area, an addition, and a poured concrete floor for the 50-by-54-foot, single-story building. This spring, he added a 40-by-42-foot pavilion to the front of the barn, which upped the venue's capacity to about 270 guests.

Foggy Hollow hosted its first wedding in May 2016, and word of the venue grew quickly.

"When you have 200 people here for a wedding and they have a great experience, you have 200 advertisers the next morning," he says.

And if those 200 advertisers are talking up your business on social



**OUTDOOR WEDDING:** Claverack members Hollie and Adam Longacre exchange wedding vows on their farm property in Susquehanna County on Sept. 26, 2015. The couple began hosting weddings on the 220-acre Jackson Township farm the following year.

media, that number multiplies rapidly, he says.

In its second season of operation, Mike notes, Foggy Hollow was booked most weekends of the summer and fall for weddings, as well as class reunions, graduation parties and private events.

"I am absolutely pleased where we are at," he says. "We are up over 200 percent from last year, and we've only had a few open weekends this year."

The venues at Foggy Hollow or Longacre Farm Weddings are not heated, so they are not operational year-round. Foggy Hollow operates May through the end of October, and Longacre Farm Weddings hosts events from June through the second week of October.

Both offer picturesque settings for outdoor ceremonies and wedding photography.

At Foggy Hollow, most of the weddings take place at an arbor on the well-manicured yard to the front of the former horse barn. Longacre Farm offers a variety of ceremony sites, from farm fields to a forested area, for couples to say "I do," on the 220-acre farm property.

With the 2017 season wrapped up, the venues are booking wedding dates for the coming year. Both operations maintain Facebook pages. For additional information about Foggy Hollow, contact Mike Epler at 570-637-4476. Longacre Farm Weddings can be reached by calling Hollie or Adam Longacre at 570-561-6601 or 570-591-0949. ☀



**OLD BARN, NEW BUSINESS:** Hollie and Adam Longacre and their baby boy, August, pose in front of the century-old dairy barn in Susquehanna that they converted to a wedding venue. The rustic barn has hosted about 15 weddings since opening business in 2016.

parents got married," Hollie says. "People can relax more. They can go in and out, and you don't have to close by 9 o'clock."

There is also a lot of flexibility.

"Their imagination can make their day any way they want," Hollie says. "We have had no two weddings that are alike."

## Foggy Hollow

Foggy Hollow owner Mike Epler agrees.

"The sky is the limit," he says. "You

## PAiD program saves time, stamps and late-fee worries

**IF YOU** are looking for ways to simplify your life, Claverack's Payment Automatically Drafted (PAiD) program may be for you.

By signing up for Claverack's automatic bill payment program, you can avoid the hassle of searching for stamps, licking envelopes and worrying about whether your payment arrives on time.

When you participate in the PAiD program, the payment for your electric bill is automatically drafted from your checking or savings account or charged to a credit or debit card each month.

Even if you are out of town, your bill will be paid on time. You'll never have to worry about paying a late fee again.

Here's what happens after you sign up:

- The first automated payment will be made the second billing period after we receive your completed form. The first month will be a trial run to verify account numbers. No money will be moved.
- You will continue to receive a monthly bill statement.
- Your bill statement will alert you to the date that your payment will be automatically withdrawn.

With Claverack's PAiD program, paying your electric bill is simple. There are no sign-up charges or transaction fees. And you can cancel PAiD at any time by notifying us in writing.

To sign up for PAiD, simply fill out the coupon below and mail it to: Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative, 32750 Route 6, Wysox, PA 18854. The PAiD application can also be found on our website, [www.claverack.com](http://www.claverack.com), by clicking on "Payment Options" under the Your Bill drop-down menu at the top of the homepage. For more information, please call 1-800-326-9799.

### AUTHORIZATION AGREEMENT FOR AUTOMATIC PAYMENT WITHDRAWAL.

#### CLAVERACK RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

I hereby authorize the CLAVERACK RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., hereinafter called COMPANY, to initiate savings/checking withdrawal debit entries; and to initiate, if necessary, corrections that may take the form of debit or credit entries as adjustments for any debit entries made in error, to my (select one):

CHECKING\*  SAVINGS account as specified below:

YOUR BANK NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR BANK ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR BANK TRANSIT/ABA NO: I: \_\_\_\_\_ :I (See Sample Check)

ACCOUNT NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ II°(See Sample Check)

\*IF CHECKING ACCOUNT, PLEASE ATTACH A VOIDED COPY OF BLANK CHECK FROM BANK OR CREDIT UNION.

This Authorization is to remain in full force and effect until COMPANY has received a written and signed notification from me of my desire to terminate or change the instructions contained herein. Said written notification of termination or change shall be delivered to the COMPANY before the first of the month of the next regularly scheduled debit.

CLAVERACK ACCOUNT NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ .

If you have more than one account, please list all account numbers you want automatically paid.

YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

DATE OF AUTHORIZATION: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ MEMBER SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please note:** Depending upon the date of enrollment, your automatic payment may not take effect for the current month's bill. We suggest making your payment as usual for the first month. Your next bill will state "Automatic Bankdraft - Do Not Pay." This signals that the payment will be made automatically on the due date each month going forward.

**Automatic Payment with MasterCard or Visa:** Enrollment in the PAiD Program is available with a MasterCard or VISA, but must be initiated and updated through SmartHub, our online account access system. Please visit [www.claverack.com](http://www.claverack.com) and select **Your Bill>Payment Options** for setup instructions. Select the Pay Bill button to access SmartHub directly. Visit the app store to download the mobile version.

PLEASE RETURN FORM TO:  
CLAVERACK RURAL ELECTRIC CO-OP, INC.  
32750 Route 6, WYSOX, PA 18854



**CLAVERACK**  
Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
*"Powered by Excellence"*

## Going away for the winter?

Claverack offers members who will be away from home for an extended period – including "snowbirds" who migrate to warmer climates for the winter – two convenient and timely ways to receive their electric bills while they are gone.

### ONLINE BILLING

Claverack's SmartHub program gives members the ability to receive and pay electric bills electronically, either online or through the SmartHub mobile app available for smartphones and tablets.

With SmartHub, members receive an email notification when a new bill is generated. They can then pay their bill electronically using a checking account, MasterCard, Visa or debit card.

SmartHub participants also have access to their account information 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To explore the features of SmartHub, visit the Claverack website, [www.claverack.com](http://www.claverack.com), and click on the SmartHub option on our home page.

### SEASONAL ADDRESS PROGRAM

The co-op also offers a Seasonal Address Program that allows members to receive their electric bills at an alternate mailing address.

It's easy to sign up for the program: just call our billing department and provide your alternate address, along with the dates you expect to be away. During this period, your correspondence from Claverack will be mailed directly to the seasonal address, eliminating the need for the postal service to forward it to you.

For more information on the Seasonal Address Program or SmartHub, contact the Claverack office at 1-800-326-9799.