

WITHLACOOCHEE RIVER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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Congressman Gus Bilirakis Experiences Life as a "Lineman for a Day" at WREC

Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative (WREC) was honored to welcome Congressman Gus Bilirakis for a special "Lineman for a Day" experience, providing him with a firsthand look at the work performed daily by the cooperative's line crews to deliver safe, reliable electricity to more than 281,000 Members across its service territory.

During his visit, Congressman Bilirakis spent time with WREC employees and line personnel, learning about the vital role linemen play in maintaining the electric system and responding to the needs of Members. The experience offered valuable insight into the extensive training, safety protocols, and technical expertise required to become a lineman and perform the essential work of keeping the lights on.

Working alongside WREC personnel at the cooperative's new Speros Substation, currently under construction near the new Moffitt Cancer Center campus in Pasco County, Congressman Bilirakis gained hands-on experience while learning about system reliability, operational safety, and the challenges linemen face each day. Because the substation has not yet been energized, it provided a safe environment for Congressman Bilirakis to better understand the equipment, infrastructure, and processes involved in delivering reliable electric service. The visit also highlighted the realities of working outdoors in Florida's often unpredictable weather conditions, including rain and lightning along the way.

"Congressman Bilirakis expressed a genuine interest in better understanding the work our employees perform every day and what it takes to become a lineman," said David Lambert, WREC's General Manager. "His willingness to step into the field and experience these responsibilities firsthand demonstrates his commitment to the communities we serve and his support of the electric cooperative industry."

The visit provided an opportunity for meaningful discussions about electric reliability, workforce development, safety, and the critical infrastructure required to serve homes and businesses throughout WREC's five-county service area. Congressman Bilirakis also learned about the importance of new infrastructure projects, such as the Speros Substation, which will support future growth and help meet the increasing electric demands of the region.

WREC greatly appreciates Congressman Bilirakis' continued support of the cooperative and the communities it serves. His participation in the "Lineman for a Day" experience allowed him to gain a deeper appreciation for the dedicated men and women who work around the clock to provide resilient electric service, often under challenging conditions.

As a special thank you for participating in the experience, WREC employees signed a WREC hard hat and presented it to Congressman Bilirakis as a keepsake of his visit. Congressman Bilirakis shared that he plans to display the hard hat in his Washington, D.C. office as a reminder of the hardworking men and women who keep the lights on and serve communities across West Central Florida every day.

The experience proved valuable for both Congressman Bilirakis and WREC employees, fostering greater understanding and strengthening the partnership between the cooperative and elected leaders.

"We are grateful to Congressman Bilirakis for taking the time to learn more about our operations and the hardworking employees who make reliable electric service possible," said John McCarty, WREC's Bayonet Point District Manager. "It was an incredible experience for everyone involved, and we were proud to share this unique opportunity with him."

About Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WREC):

Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative, Inc. is a not-for-profit electric cooperative established in 1947. WREC proudly serves more than 281,000 homes and businesses across Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Polk, and Sumter counties. WREC is dedicated to providing safe, resilient and affordable energy and services while actively supporting the communities it serves.

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Congressman Gus Bilirakis with WREC employees at the Speros Substation



Gus Bilirakis with WREC employees at their Bayonet Point office



Gus Bilirakis in front of the new Moffit Cancer Center







