



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WREC Becomes the Nation's First Purple Heart Electric Cooperative, Strengthening Its Commitment to Veterans

Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative (WREC) has been officially designated as the first Purple Heart Electric Cooperative in the United States, following a proclamation signed by WREC General Manager David Lambert on February 17, 2026. WREC's commitment was highlighted publicly and shared with the community during the 20th Annual Purple Heart Ceremony in Citrus County, where Gary Steele, WREC's Manager of Member Relations and a proud U.S. Marine Corps veteran, read the proclamation and addressed hundreds of veterans, Gold Star families, and patriotic supporters.

Gary explained the deeper meaning behind the designation, noting that it is not tied to discounts or free power but instead represents a sincere and ongoing pledge to support the well-being of local veterans. He emphasized that the recognition reflects far more than a symbolic title. "This designation represents our promise to the men and women who have sacrificed for our freedoms," Steele said. "At WREC, veterans will always be remembered, respected, and welcomed. This commitment is woven into who we are as a Cooperative and as a community."

WREC's recognition as a Purple Heart Electric Cooperative is rooted in years of active support for veterans and their families. In keeping with that commitment, newly designated veteran parking spaces have been added at all district offices, offering a visible daily tribute to those who have served.

Employees across the Cooperative participate in numerous veteran focused community initiatives, including Wreaths Across America, Veterans Day programs at local schools, and other ceremonies honoring military service. WREC also supports the Magnolia Oaks Veterans Housing project, providing affordable homes for veterans in need, and serves as a proud sponsor of the Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments in Pasco County. Additionally, the Cooperative recognizes and honors its own veteran employees, whose leadership and service continue to strengthen the organization.

WREC General Manager David Lambert also reaffirmed the Cooperative's longstanding support for veterans, noting that the Purple Heart designation reinforces WREC's mission of service, community, and respect. By becoming the first Cooperative in the nation to receive this honor, WREC has further solidified its pledge to stand with veterans and ensure their sacrifices are never forgotten.

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

Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative, Inc. is a not-for-profit electric cooperative serving over 280,000 homes and businesses in Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Polk, and Sumter counties since 1947. WREC is dedicated to providing safe and resilient energy and services at the best possible value to its Members while actively contributing to the communities it serves.

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Gary Steele, WREC’s Manager of Member Relations, at the 20th Annual Purple Heart Ceremony



